

TOWN OF WATSON LAKE

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
CHAMBERS 6:00 PM

MEETING NO. 3
February 1, 2022

ATTENDANCE

ABSENT

CHRIS IRVIN – MAYOR
THOMAS SLAGER - COUNCILOR
DENINA PAQUETTE – COUNCILOR
LAUREN HANCHAR – COUNCILOR
DALE BURDES - COUNCILOR

PUBLIC (zoom)

C.Zozula
Corporal Jackson
Cst. Fisher
M.Prowse
P.McLeod

ADMINISTRATION

CAMERON LOCKWOOD – Chief Administrative Officer
TERRI CLOSE –Municipal Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Mayor Irvin.

AGENDA

MOTION 022-03-17

Moved by Councilor Hanchar, seconded by Councilor Paquette
that:

The Agenda be amended to delete item # 5 Lands Branch delegation, and add
correspondence from YG Minister Mostyn.

- CARRIED –

MINUTES

MOTION 022-03-18

Moved by Councilor Burdes, seconded by Councilor Paquette
that:

The minutes from the Regular Meeting of January 18, 2022 be adopted as presented.

- CARRIED -

**ACCOUNTS
PAYABLE**

MOTION 022-03-19

Moved by Councilor Slager, seconded by Councilor Burdes
that:

The Open Payables in the amount of \$215,426.36 be paid.

-CARRIED –

DELEGATION

RCMP

Corporal Jackson introduced Constable Caitlyn Fisher as the newest member of the detachment. Constable Fisher provided a brief summary of her background with the RCMP. Corporal Jackson provided Council with an update on upcoming transfers and staffing levels within the detachment. He updated Council on various situations that have occurred throughout the last two weeks. Mayor Irvin recognized February 1st as RCMP recognition day and thanked the RCMP for all that they do for the community and the service which they provide. Council thanked Corporal Jackson and welcomed Constable Fisher to Watson Lake.

BIOLIVE
PRESENTATION

Ms. O'Donovan, representing Biolivenergy provided Council with a presentation on Biomass.

Biolive Ltd is a renewable energy company based in Whitehorse working on project development for an Integrated energy and agriculture project to create value added solutions for the needs of YT.

Biomass is used for district heating, electric power generation and combined heat and power. Biomass encompasses a large variety of materials, including wood from various sources, agricultural residues, and animal and human waste.

Our Purpose
Yukon Territory has forestry which is enough to provide green electricity and heating through biomass production for homes, public buildings, agriculture and industry. In order to protect Yukon's air and future, we are keen to decrease fossil fuel usage and increase green energy production by Biomass power plant investment. The end of the day, Yukon will have a green national grid.

Our Target
When resources and needs are taken into consideration, Biomass power plant is the best fit for electricity and heat production for Yukon Territory. This technology provides sustainable & green energy production meanwhile wild land fire threat mitigation and landscape fuel management.

5 Stages in Yukon

What we are expecting from Yukon Community;
Long Term Partnership
Land Development
Fuel Guarantee
Power Plant Capacity Guarantee

Biolive is aimed to provide a solution to the food and energy security issues of the Yukon by renewable and sustainable practices that focus on digitalization, automation, system irrigation, remote monitoring and operations in energy, agriculture, and biofuel industry sectors. The Yukon Territory has the potential to provide decentralized electricity and heating power through biomass production through Firekill forests alongside with the waste fibre through Wildland Fire treatment/fuel abatement and with an integrated greenhouse and pellet production. Once the project is operational, it will create a number of jobs for the community.

Land has been identified for the project, but is open to discussion if the Town has an alternate site. Mayor Irvin advised the Town is having difficulties in securing land for future development due to ongoing conversations with Liard First Nation.

Councilor Slager asked various questions on the project and struggled with the concept of the number of jobs that will be created as he cannot foresee this working in the community where there is presently a problem with a shortage of people available to work.

Ms. O'Donovan needs the blessing of Council and Liard First Nation to move forward on the project and is aware of the YESAB requirement and process. Mayor Irvin believes the project is admiral and supports alternate energy and is supportive of the initiatives. Council thanked Ms. O'Donovan for her presentation and suggests that she keep the Town informed moving forward.

REPORTS

CAO Report

A meeting was held with YG Infrastructure Department. They have received verbal confirmation that the funding application has been approved for the Inground Infrastructure projects, so hopeful to move forward on projects this spring.

The consultant was in Watson Lake last week and spoke with residents in the areas that are being affected informing them of the dry hydrant project. They will be back in the community at the end of February to perform drilling tests on the lakeshore.

NEW & UNFINISHED

2022 O/M & CAPITAL BUDGETS

There were questions and discussion on various line items;

- Councilor Hanchar voiced her opposition to the purchase of the steamer truck and expressed concerns about competing with the private sector. Administration informed Council that the steamer truck will only be used for Town requirements and will not be in competition with local businesses.
- Administration was provided with a quote from the previous company, Yukon TV Inspection Services. The quote was \$52,228.00/ flush. Two flushes are required annually, so it is beneficial for the Town to purchase its own vehicle.
- Councilor Paquette questioned whether the town had ever explored the option of leasing vehicles as opposed to purchasing. Administration provided an explanation that both options have been explored in the past and based on the advice of the Auditors it was not recommended as the cost of leasing a vehicle cannot be offset. Mayor Irvin stated that he has asked this question several times over the years. Based on the size of the fleet and the small number of vehicles being replaced, looking at the costs overall in comparison, it is a better option to purchase as opposed to leasing.
- Councilor Burdes discussed the Signpost Forest and whether there is funding available to have the area updated with a landscaping and a re-posting plan. Highway signage and advertising would encourage growth as it is a Town tourist attraction. Mayor Irvin agreed and suggested that Administration research and provide information for a plan to update the site.
- Councilor Hanchar enquired about the street lighting to 2 & 2 ½ mile and questioned who provided the quote for the amount that was budgeted. Administration advised that the quote was provided to YTG by Atco at a cost of approximately \$1 million. The cost was shared between YG, LFN and the Town. The budget reflects the Town's portion of cost for 1 km of the installation of the streetlights. Administration has a call with YG Highways and will have more information for Council on the status of the street lighting.
- Councilor Hanchar questioned the status of the CDF funding application for the new projection equipment for the Northern Lights Centre. Administration advised the application has been submitted and may take up to 3 months to be approved.
- Mayor Irvin requested clarification on the \$24,000 budgeted from the Towns' own funds and where the funds came from. Administration informed Council that the \$24,000 is money left over from the potential increase in the 2022 tax levy on vacant land.

Council agreed to the O/M & Capital Budgets being introduced for 2nd reading February 15th and final reading to be held March 15th.

CEMETERY BYLAW

Council discussed the draft cemetery bylaw that was presented at the Town Hall meeting. One submission was made to the Town with recommended changes to the Bylaw. Council agreed the comments were very thorough and precise. Both Councilor Slager and Councilor Paquette agreed with the comment that the bylaw is very long and difficult to read. Council was disappointed that more input had not been received from the public. Councilor Hanchar discussed the overall concept of the new design and suggested simplifying the bylaw in order that the public are aware of the expectations. Mayor Irvin stated the Bylaw needs to provide clear direction to Administration prior to moving forward. It was suggested that members of Council review the bylaw, take it back to members of the public and provide feedback by April 15th.

Administration provided Council with an update from discussions with the hockey and curling user groups regarding use of the arena if the COVID regulations are not lifted. Minor Hockey do not want the ice plant shut down and the ice removed and are hoping that the restrictions will be lifted to continue minor hockey for the remainder of the season. The curlers agreed that if the restrictions are not lifted, the ice plant be turned off and any savings be put back into recreation for youth. The Oldtimers Hockey suggested that the savings by turning off the ice plant prior to the end of season be used to create an outdoor arena on the ball diamond. Council confirmed that the COVID guidelines are still in place and there has been no further updates regarding the regulations being lifted. Administration suggested to leave the ice plant in place until the end of the month. Council agreed this is a difficult situation.

MOTION 022-03-20

Moved by Councilor Slager, seconded by Councilor Hanchar that:

If the Town does not receive notice of the COVID restrictions being lifted by February 14th, that notice be provided to user groups that the ice plant will be shut down February 15th.

-CARRIED –

Opposed: Councilor Burdes
Opposed: Mayor Irvin

CORRESPONDENCE

Mayor Irvin was in receipt of a letter from Minister Mostyn regarding additional COVID relief funding for Watson Lake. The letter addressed that the Town of Watson Lake had previously received \$411,223 in funding through the COVID Safe restart fund. It was suggested that if there are significant and new expenses due to the new health & safety measures that cannot be covered, that the CAO contact Community Services to bring a request forward internally and YG will work to determine if additional funding is available.

Councilor Hanchar does not agree that the taxpayers should have to pick up the slack. Mayor Irvin addressed the struggles from within the community to keep the youth active and the affects that the pandemic is having on the community. Disruptions to physical activity and mental health are strongly associated. The COVID pandemic is taking a toll on the community, primarily the effect it is having on youth and recreation. Mayor Irvin suggested that a letter be drafted to Minister Mostyn requesting additional funding that will allow programs and activities to keep the youth active to get through these difficult times. Councilor Hanchar will assist with preparing the letter to Minister Mostyn.

**COUNCILOR
OPEN FORUM**

Councilor Hanchar enquired as to the status of the Visitor Information Centre and what are the plans for the facility. Administration advised there are 2 different sides from Yukon Government. Tourism is still in discussion with LFN on what will happen. Councilor Paquette questioned what the Town does in that area and was advised that the Town provides maintenance of the lawn and signpost forest upkeep.

Councilor Hanchar requested an update on the Municipal Services Building. Administration advised there are still issues dealing with the mechanical system deficiencies. The Town will not sign off and take possession of the building until such time that all deficiencies are corrected.

Councilor Hanchar asked about the By-Law Enforcement Officer position and was informed that interviews have been completed and the Town is willing to offer the position to the candidate. Councilor Slager referenced the section of the Municipal Act that addresses designated Municipal officers that are appointed by Council.

Councilor Slager provided Council with an update on the Yukon Lottery funding intake that was held January 22nd. There were four funding applications submitted and approved by the Recreation Advisory Committee. As there is still funding available, an additional funding intake will be held with a deadline of February 15th.

Councilor Paquette posed the question as to accountability if a commitment is made which is later reneged on. If obligated, is there a means to ensure the obligation is enacted upon. Council discussed and agreed that due diligence needs to be practiced otherwise there is no recourse.

GALLERY
OPEN FORUM

Ms. Patti McLeod enquired about the delegation by YG Land development Branch and why they were not in attendance. Ms. McLeod asked whether there is any commitment that lots will hit the market this year. Administration advised that YG is working on some developments before presenting them to Council, and will provide an update at the March meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION 022-03-21

Moved by Councilor Hanchar, seconded by Councilor Paquette
that:

There being no further business the meeting be adjourned at 8:00 pm.

-CARRIED –

Lauren Hanchar – Acting Mayor

Terri Close – Municipal Clerk

