

TOWN OF WATSON LAKE

Committee of the Whole Meeting  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS

MEETING NO. 5  
March 2, 2021

ATTENDANCE

ABSENT

CHRIS IRVIN – MAYOR  
LAUREN HANCHAR – COUNCILOR  
JOHN DEVRIES – COUNCILOR  
THOMAS SLAGER – COUNCILOR  
ERIN LABONTE – COUNCILOR

PUBLIC

J. Carlson  
Jerry/Lelah Bruce  
R. Wilkinson  
G. Vigeant

ADMINISTRATION

CAM LOCKWOOD – CAO  
TERRI CLOSE – Municipal Clerk

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

AGENDA

MOTION 021-05-33

Moved by Councilor Labonte, seconded by Councilor Devries  
that:

The Agenda be adopted with the amendment that By-Law 21-03, the 2021 tax rate  
bylaw be introduced for Second Reading.

-CARRIED –

MINUTES

MOTION 021-05-34

Moved by Councilor Labonte, seconded by Councilor Hanchar  
that:

The minutes be adopted from the last Regular meeting of February 16, 2021 as  
presented.

-CARRIED –

ACCOUNTS  
PAYABLE

MOTION 021-05-35

Moved by Councilor Slager, seconded by Councilor Hanchar  
that:

The Open Payables in the amount of \$110,554.44 be paid.

-CARRIED –

BY-LAWS

MOTION 021-05-36

Moved by Councilor Labonte, seconded by Councilor Hanchar  
that:

By-Law 21-03, being a By-law to set the property tax rate for the year 2021 be  
introduced for Second Reading.

-CARRIED-

Mayor Irvin addressed the Tax Rate By-Law, and the decision of Council not to  
increase the tax rates. He suggested a marginal incremental tax increase to assist with  
extra costs incurred by the Town annually. If there is no increase now, then there is  
the potential of a greater increase going forward.

Council reviewed various properties with a projected 1% tax increase and the extra amount that would be charged. Councilor Labonte suggested that the tax rate be increased on the vacant lots as the \$600.00 tax rate for vacant lots does not encourage property owners to develop the lots, and more pressure is needed from the Town that it be mandated based on building commitments. Council discussed the rates on vacant property and the increase in the rate over the years. Administration advised this is a common topic amongst all communities and need a solution that all can agree on. Mayor Irvin suggested more discussion needs to be done prior to Third Reading of the Bylaw.

MOTION 021-05-37

Moved by Councilor Hanchar, seconded by Councilor Labonte that:

By-Law 20-01, being a By-law to establish a Recreation Review Committee for the Town of Watson Lake be repealed.

-CARRIED-

Council discussed Recreation and it was suggested that an in-depth review of recreation in the community is needed.

REPORTS

Administration provided an update on the plowtruck, and delays in the delivery to Watson Lake due to the COVID pandemic.

-Progress is being made on the new Municipal Services building. YG will be in Watson Lake to conduct an inspection of the facility this week.

-Ace Asphalt will be in the community this summer and will look at the site.

-The vaccination clinic went very well and there were many vaccines that were administered. YG is still gathering cumulative numbers on the vaccine rate in the communities, and won't publicly release community-specific vaccination rates yet.

-A meeting is scheduled with LFN to address a potential Solar project they are planning.

NEW & UNFINISHED

BY-LAW 09-08

Council discussed By-Law 09-08, being a By-Law to provide for the indemnities and expenses to be paid to Mayor & Council for the Town of Watson Lake. Council reviewed and compared what is paid in other communities. As the last increase was done in 2009, it was agreed that the indemnities bylaw be reviewed.

WL DISTRICT HEAT  
ASSESSMENT

Council was in receipt of a draft District Heat Energy Report prepared by Clean Energy Consulting (CEC) to assess the condition of the current system and determine the feasibility of system expansion. The report investigated opportunities for additional energy sources to supplement the system. It also identified the current risks of the system and provided an economic summary of various system remediation and expansion options. Council discussed the potential cost for upgrading the system and the provision of a backup heating system for the Recreation Centre.

DRAFT CEMETERY  
CONCEPT

Council reviewed a draft concept for the Watson Lake cemetery prepared by Lees & Associates.

The draft concept identifies the potential of an additional 224 burial plots with several upgrades to the existing site. Council discussed various aspects of the concept and agreed there were a few minor items to address but overall many good options were provided. The cemetery Bylaw will also be rewritten as part of the process. Councilor Labonte suggested consultation be done with LFN for their input. Council will provide feedback to Administration. A public presentation will be done once the bylaw and cemetery concept are complete.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

**RCMP POLICING  
REPORT**

Council reviewed the RCMP Policing Report for January. Administration informed Council that the new Sergeant will be arriving mid-month. There is also an option for an extra member of the RCMP to be stationed in the community for a three-month period. Administration has been in discussion of renting the CAO house to the RCMP during that time for the extra member.

**COUNCILOR  
OPEN FORUM**

Councilor Devries addressed the mandate of the Recreation Committee and what was the purpose of having two separate Committees. He discussed the Parks & Recreation budget and suggested having the departments separated as the budget is misleading. Council then continued discussion and agreed that recreation is at a critical crossroad as the Recreation Centre is not being used to its full potential, and there is a need to identify the delivery of recreation services in the community as the dynamics of recreation has changed. Council agreed to revisit the situation as more in-depth conversation is needed on the subject as it has been difficult to manage.

Councilor Devries asked Councilor Labonte if the Tourism report is available as he is working on a Tourism plan and would like to utilize the report for developing and marketing Watson Lake. He was advised the report is not completed and will be available to him as soon as it is done.

Councilor Hanchar expressed concern with the intersections and corners and the amount of snow at the stop signs. Administration advised that Public Works is working on addressing the situation.

Mayor Irvin advised that he is working on scheduling a meeting with Liard First Nation to discuss matters such as the OCP.

Mayor Irvin suggested that once the asphalt plant is in town, that interested businesses be invited to share the cost.

**GALLERY  
OPEN FORUM**

Mr. Gerry Bruce addressed the district heat report that was presented to Council and questioned what is the short-term direction for the District Heat Committee. Mayor Irvin advised that Council is waiting for further information on the report prior to giving direction to the Committee and suggested to contact Administration to schedule a meeting.

Mr. Bruce expressed concern with the direction of the recreation facility. He believes the focus should be directed on providing a health centre and suggested to work in partnership with First Nation and with the assistance of a consultant to provide the direction needed going forward.

Mrs. Ruth Wilkinson discussed the vacant lot tax rates and expressed her concern with the incremental tax increases on vacant properties over the years with no provision for garbage collection.

**ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION 021-05-37

Moved by Councilor Hanchar, seconded by Councilor Labonte  
that:

There being no further business the meeting be adjourned

- CARRIED -

  
Chris Irvin – Mayor  
Terri Close – Municipal Clerk