

**TOWN OF STELLARTON
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
March 24, 2025**

MEETING

A Committee of the Whole meeting of Stellarton Town Council was held on Monday, March 24, 2025 at 4:30 p.m. in the large Committee Room, Stellarton Town Hall.

PRESENT

Chair Deputy Mayor S. Eis, Councillor S. Campbell, Councillor G. Pentz, Councillor M. Fortune and Mayor D. Stroud. Also present CAO S. Higdon, Town Engineer B. Murray, Communications P. Draper and Chris O'Brien, Ridgeback Security Inc.

1. **Call to Order** Chair S. Eis called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. Chris O'Brien of Ridgeback Security Inc. was welcomed to the meeting.

2. **Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was approved with the following additions: 1. Under Item #9 Flag Raising Requests, add two flag raising requests, 2. Under Item #6 Correspondence, add: c. Healthy Pictou County Re: Doctors Day, d. PCP Update on Staffing, and e. UARB Name Change on Motion Councillor G. Pentz, seconded by Councillor S. Campbell. **Motion carried.**

3. **Approval of Previous Minutes**

The Minutes of the February 24, 2025, meeting was approved as presented on motion Councillor G. Pentz, seconded by Councillor S. Campbell. **Motion Carried.**

4. **Business Arising from the Minutes**

No business arising from the Minutes.

5. **Presentation – Ridgeback Security - Chris O'Brien**

Ridgeback Security conducted a physical security assessment for the town hall a year ago. Chris O'Brien of Ridgeback Security made a presentation to the committee on his findings. His audit report outlines his observations of the Stellarton Town Hall which included identifying vulnerabilities and potential risks, as well as recommendations. Recommendations focused on: enhancing public and staff safety, improving surveillance measures, optimizing access control protocols, and strengthening preparedness strategies. Mr. O'Brien also commended the current security efforts in place. He was then thanked by members for his presentation.

6. **Correspondence**

a. *Emergency Management Office of the Minister re: Response to EOC Activation Processes*

S. Higdon reported that a letter was received from the Minister in response to our letter dated January 29, 2025 re: provide context surrounding municipal EOC activation processes. S. Higdon said it is still the Minister's position that municipalities put the required protocols in place during an emergency response.

b. *Municipal Affairs Office of the Minister Re: Minimum Planning Regulations.*

The Department of Municipal Affairs is making amendments to the Minimum Planning Regulations in the Municipal Government Act to implement a provincial standard for wind turbine setbacks. Presented as information only/reading material for members.

c. *HPC Doctor's Day*

S. Higdon reported receiving a request from Healthy Pictou County to place signs at the rotary and the town hall for Doctor's Day which is May 1, 2025. Doctor's Day in Nova Scotia is an opportunity for Nova Scotians to come together to celebrate our physicians. All agreed to this request.

d. *PCP Update on Staffing*

Pictou County Partnership Board of Directors – leadership transition. Wade Tibbo will still be with the partnership, but he is stepping back from the CEO role. Scott Ferguson is coming back as Interim CEO for the 25/26 fiscal year effective April 1, 2025.

e. *UARB – New Name*

As of April 1, 2025, the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board will become The Nova Scotia Energy and Regulatory Boards Tribunal. The Tribunal will have two new operating divisions – the Nova Scotia Energy board and the Nova Scotia Regulatory and Appeals Board.

7. **Equity and Anti Racism Plan – Paige Draper**

A draft copy of the Equity & Anti Racism Plan for 2025 was reviewed – the plan is a regional approach to eliminating barriers and providing equitable opportunities in Pictou County. P. Draper reported two word changes in the plan:

1. In the Executive Summary, change “the Municipality of the County of Pictou” to “the Municipality of Pictou County, and
2. In the Overview, the word “towns incorporating us all”, be changed to “municipalities incorporating us all”.

It was moved by Councillor G. Pentz seconded by Councillor S. Campbell to recommend Council approve and adopt the Equity & Anti Racism Plan presented by P. Draper. **Motion Carried.**

8. **Volunteer of the Year Selection**

P. Draper reported twelve nominations were submitted for the Francis Bud MacKay Volunteer Award. All submissions considered by Council and nameless selection is based on description only. S. Higdon said all nominees will be honored at the Volunteer Recognition Reception on May 1st, but the selected Volunteer of the Year will be our provincial representative. It was unanimously decided to honor #1 on the list of submissions; to be announced at Council on April 14th.

9. **Flag Raising Requests**

Council members reviewed the Proclamation and Flag Raising Ceremonies Policy. The policy came into effect October of 2020. The purpose of the policy - to set out the policy of the Town regarding requests from groups and organizations to have proclamations signed and to have flag raising ceremonies. Mayor D. Stroud felt that it was important for members to familiarize themselves with the policy before making decisions around it. He does not think it is warranted to try and undo this policy, but he wanted members to consider if there is anything we should tweak or consider incorporating in it. He said the danger with a policy is we don't use the discretion that's embedded in it and suggested that we weigh in the merits of these requests and do our due diligence around what it entails in making that decision.

Mayor D. Stroud said if the committee is comfortable that the current policy provides discretion for us to evaluate it as we get these requests. After a lengthy discussion, members agreed with the policy as is.

Flag Raising Requests:

1. International Disability Pride - request for flag raising ceremony July 2025.
Moved by Councillor G. Pentz seconded by Councillor S. Campbell to approve this flag raising request. **Motion Carried.** P. Draper will contact Willa Kray with People First Nova Scotia for the specifics.
2. Gaelic Nova Scotia Month – request for flag raising and/or proclamation ceremony May 2025.
Councillor G. Pentz said in the past request, this group has not sent a representative to the ceremony. He said he would like to request that they send a representative to the ceremony. Moved by Councillor G. Pentz seconded by Councillor S. Campbell to approve this flag raising and/or proclamation request. **Motion carried.**
3. Pride Pictou County – request for flag raising ceremony June 16-22, 2025.
Moved by Councillor S. Campbell seconded by Councillor M. Fortune to approve this flag raising request. **Motion Carried.**

10. Strategic Plan 2025-2028

S. Higdon reported that the Council & senior staff met on February 4th at the Holiday Inn for a strategic planning session to identify four priorities which align to the Town's vision, mission, and values to be executed over the next three to five years. The strategic plan derived from that session was presented and discussed by members. S. Higdon said this plan is a working document that can be changed at any time and should be visited annually to see if we are on track. A few changes to the plan were discussed. S. Higdon stated as long as the four principles are the same, the verbiage can be tweaked.

11. Permit Application Summary 2024

A permit application summary for the Town of Stellarton for 2024 was presented to members and reviewed as information only.

12. Next Meeting Date: April 28, 2025

13. Adjournment motion by Councillor G. Pentz.