
Rural Municipality of West River Finance Committee

Meeting No	3	Chair	Stephen Gould
Meeting Date	Tuesday, March 2, 2021	Phone	902-675-7000
Start Time	7:00 PM	E-mail	admin@westriverpe.ca
Location	Online	Session	Public
Present	Mayor Helen Smith-MacPhail, Councillor Stephen Gould, Councillor Sabrina Loughran, Councillor John Yeo		
Also	Laala Jahanshahloo – CAO, Deputy Mayor Robert Clow, Anson Grant-NRFD Fire Chief, Kevin Bernard- NRFD Treasurer		
Regrets	Nil		

● **Call to order**

Chair Stephen Gould called the meeting to order via Zoom at 7:05 pm.

● **Approval of Agenda**

It was moved by Chair Stephen Gould and seconded by Mayor Helen Smith-MacPhail; the agenda be approved as circulated.

Motion Carried

● **Declarations of Conflict of Interest**

No conflict of interest was declared.

- **Approval of Minutes**

It was moved by Mayor Helen Smith-MacPhail and seconded by Councillor John Yeo that the minutes of February 4, 2021, Finance Committee meeting approved as circulated.

Motion Carried

- **Business Arising from Minutes**

- CAO has filled and mailed the MCEG claim for the 2019-2020 fiscal year.
- CAO contacted Ryan Pineau's office. Suzanne Pater confirmed both numbers had been polled from the same database, but MAPCO is a dynamic assessment and changes on a daily basis. The official reference for fire district is the numbers in the Assessment Roll and Tax Certificate published by Taxation and Property Records of the Department of Finance.
- The North River Fire department was consulted during the amalgamation process, as their feedback can be found in the West River growth management study assessment and evaluation report.
- Former communities of West River, New Haven-Riverdale, and Bonshaw MCEG claim that the fiscal year 2019-2020 has been submitted under one form.

- **FIN3.1**

- Chief Anson Grant and treasurer Kevin Bernard from NRRFD joined the meeting to discuss the increased rate of fire due.
- The NRRFD technically is a Non-Profit organization but operates as a business.
- In NRRFD, Officers prepare the budget and get approval by voting, as each volunteer member has a vote.
- No annual full external audit is required for NRRFD.
- NRRFD will reach out to the community and open communication channels this year.
- NRRFD gets its numbers for calculating the taxable area from Ryan Pineau's office.
- NRRFD, As a private company, reviews its budget to create the revenue and, based on the set the fire due rate.

→ As they need an X amount of money for their expenses, the fairest way only increases the commercial rate to cover it.

- The fire due rate for Non-Commercial is \$0.0775 and for Commercial is \$0.16 for 2021.

The Chief mentioned the following reasons causing the rate increase:

- New ladder truck
- The increasing cost of replacing equipment and vehicles

→ The Committee informed the Chief regarding the promises made during the amalgamation to keep the tax rate for five rates without an increase.

- Chief Anson told NFRD was not consulted.
- Mayor was sure the NFRD was among the stakeholders.
- The CAO will check the growth study and report back to the Committee.

→ Chief Anson confirmed all the communities using the fire service are subject to the same fire due rate.

→ The discussion with NFRD revealed the fire rate would stay at \$0.16 for Commercial and \$0.0775 for Non-Commercial properties, and different approaches for phasing or negotiating this rate would have the same outcome.

→ After exploring different avenues, the finance committee recommends the Council keep the tax rate as 2020 and subsidize the commercial properties for 2021.

→ The Council needs to increase the tax rate, establish a new tax rate group, or subsidize the Commercial properties for 2022.

→ The Committee informed the Chief regarding the promises made during the amalgamation to keep the tax rate for five rates without an increase.

→ The Chief was asked to secure a fixed rate for 3 to 5 years, and he would bring it to the NFRD meeting and inform the municipality accordingly.

→ The property owners can ask NFRD can provide Water Tanker Shuttle Accreditation Certificate for the insurance company so the property owner could get a lower fire insurance rate.

- **FIN3.2**

- Councillor Sabrina Loughran joined the meeting at 8:31 pm.
- PEI Infrastructure Secretariat of Department of Transportation and Infrastructure approved, West River can submit an MCEG claim for West River, New Haven-Riverdale and Bonshaw for the fiscal year 2019-2020 expenditures (the period of April 1, 2019, to March 31, 2020) under one form.

- **FIN3.3**

- The Committee reviewed and finalized the operating and the capital budget for the 2021-2022 fiscal year.
- The Committee accepted the capital budget and operating budget to be presented to Council And the public at the March 11, 2021 meeting.

- **FIN3.4**

- The Committee reviewed the received quotes from different firms providing bookkeeping and accounting services and accepted the CAO's choice to use ArsenaultBestCameronEllis on a fee-for-service basis.
- The Committee agreed with the CAO to consult with Linda Hicken from MSRB to review the accounting data every month on a fee-for-service basis.

- **FIN3.5**

- The CAO will attend the information sessions on the application and fulfill the submission requirements for ICIP and report back to the Committee at the next meeting.

- **Adjournment**

- ➔ The meeting adjourned at 10:15 pm.

- ➔ The next meeting will be on April 6, 2021.

STEPHEN GOULD _____

CHAIR