



Village of Arcadia

Council Meeting Minutes

Location: Upper Gagetown Fire Hall

Date: Monday, February 20, 2024 – Regular Meeting of Council

Time: 7:00 pm

1) Call to Order

Mayor Pleadwell called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm. It was held in person and online via Microsoft Teams. Present were Mayor Pleadwell, Deputy Mayor Sharpe, Councillor Black, Councillor Gahan-MaGee, Councillor Gordon, Councillor Mennier, and Acting Clerk LeBlanc.

2) Approval of Agenda

The agenda was reviewed and approved as presented.

- *It was moved by Deputy Mayor Sharpe and seconded by Councillor Gordon to approve the agenda as presented.*

With no questions and all in favour, the motion carried.

3) Disclosure of Conflict of Interest

Mayor Pleadwell asked if anyone present had any conflicts to declare based on the agenda. No conflicts were declared.

4) Approval of the Minutes – Regular Meeting held January 15, 2024

Council reviewed the minutes from the Regular Meeting of Council on January 15, 2024.

- *It was moved by Councillor Mennier and seconded by Deputy Mayor Sharpe to approve the minutes as presented.*

With no questions to the motion and all in favour, the motion was carried.

5) Presentation by Anita Elste and Lisa Smith, Owners, Sweet 'Evans Cakes – challenges for businesses

Anita Elste and Lisa Smith introduced themselves and explained that after meeting with them, Mayor Pleadwell and Councillor Mennier invited them to share their thoughts with Council about the difficulties of starting a small business in Gagetown.

Ms. Elste and Smith shared the following:

- They were told at the onset if their product were good that people would come and that was true. They have a core group who come often and a smaller group who come occasionally and, in the summer, it is better frequented. However, their business is failing because during the rest of the year, they cannot sell enough product to cover their costs.

- While they learned from Mayor and Councillor that Arcadia is working on several fronts to help small business it is not happening fast enough to help them. Their story is a cautionary tale and hopefully it will help for future businesses.
- There is a need for a critical mass of population, but building it rest on other needs:
 - o Housing – there is a need for rentals for people to move here.
 - o Not enough is being done to encourage population growth.
 - o Buildings are being left vacant in the downtown.
- Off season tourism promotion is not sufficient. “Winter” in Gagetown is September to June.
- Property owners are responsible for clearing the sidewalks in front of their buildings, but people do not maintain them and there is no enforcement, so visitors have no safe place to walk – clients have difficulty finding how to get into the bakery.
- There is no beautification done; the wharf is not being developed/maintained.
- Those clients who come in the summer from the other side of the river do not come in the winter because the ferry does not operate.
- There are no grants or incentives to open rural, retail, immigrant businesses. Their business did not even qualify for NB Power support for energy efficiency improvements they had to make.
- There are no tax breaks. The property taxes doubled on the building when they purchased it. They are appealing the assessment but do not see hope. Full taxes due at the month of March will be the death knell to their business.
- They were dismayed there was a surplus of \$700,000 in the 2023 budget with tax rates staying the same.
- They closed by asking Council to consider ways to attract new residents and businesses, welcome them and help them to stay in business.

As chair of the Economic Expansion and Tourism Committee, Councillor Mennier expressed his empathy for the situation. He noted that there are dips and valleys in the economy and winter has been difficult and he spoke to some of the ongoing work and challenges:

- Arcadia is working with Fredericton Tourism to promote the attractions, historical places particularly, but admitted that the village is shy on events.
- Winter tourism is a big issue – the freeze thaw has made it difficult to promote skating or snowmobiling or any of those things that can make winter tourism attractive.
- The Chamber of Commerce has worked to attract people here.
- There are structural issues that need to be addressed including housing. The free market is supposed to work on supply but there has been no activity, so the municipality is working with the federal and provincial governments.
- Along with housing, there is a need for immigration, jobs, and more industry.
- Orchardview Nursing Home needs more LPNs and RNs and while they go to the Philippines to recruit there is no where for them to live.
- Arcadia is a bedroom community of Fredericton, and the community goes to town to get things they cannot get here and then spend their discretionary dollars there.
- Sweet ‘Evans has an excellent product. We thank you for coming and will continue to work on solutions.

Councillor Gordon spoke to the great promotion work done by Sweet 'Evans Cakes on social media and thanked them for sharing their concerns.

Mayor Pleadwell also thanked Ms. Elste and Smith, noting their presentation was poignant. He explained that while Arcadia is moving on some issues, sometimes they can only move at the speed of other governments; cost sharing is needed to make things happen. The village is participating in housing and tourism projects with the Capital Region Service Commission. While the municipality has little ability to address things like financial support and grants and NB Power incentives, Arcadia can look at what might be done with property taxes, business improvement and vacant buildings with levers like by-laws and rural planning. Council will work to keep moving things forward and spend the time on the things to keep this vibrant community.

6) Presentation to Council by Al Giberson and Corneilus Tym – Concerns regarding bonus

Al Giberson introduced himself and thanked Council for the opportunity to present. The following were his main points:

- He was shocked at reading in minutes of November 2023. A single substantial bonus was awarded that was higher than what might be expected.
- There seemed to be a lack of deliberative process in approving the bonus.
- Council justified the action on a staff shortage but by his count, Council failed twice between August and November to hire a clerk.
- From the record, a search committee arrived at a recommendation for a candidate for clerk and it was to council in August 2023. It is not clear why council rejected the recommendation. From the record, I can only assume a member of the committee, Councillor Black, made the motion to accept the recommendation and then voted against it. This is not consistent with Roberts Rules. Council created the staff shortage due to its rejection of the recommendation.
- Was there research done to reveal any historical precedents re bonuses in the region or in this type of work?
- How was the amount determined for two to three months?
- Is there a line item in the 2023 budget for this discretionary remuneration?
- Is this \$15,000 seen as fiscally responsible amid increases in the cost of living and taxes?
- Each of the village's 3700 residents contributed to amount paid. There has been no communication on the issuance of such as large discretionary expense. The minutes show no discussion of the motion accepted unanimously.
- The bonus was awarded where there were no improvements to municipal services or infrastructure.
- His disturbing conclusion was that there was questionable conduct and accountability with Council that was driven by misunderstood fiduciary responsibilities which should be the development of Arcadia's potential and prosperity.
- Mr. Giberson thanked Council for allowing him to speak his mind.

Mr. Cornelius Tym introduced himself and expressed his outrage after reading the minutes of November 2023 and the amount of the bonus approved. His comments were as follows:

- Mr. Giberson raised most of his concerns, so he requested that the following questions be answered:
 - o How long was the discussion of the item at the meeting? It does not appear from the minutes that it was very long.
 - Councillor Mennier noted the discussion at the Council meeting had been brief.
 - o Who raised the issue at Council?
 - Councillor Black indicated it was raised as part of the Finance Committee report.
 - o Where did the figure of \$15,000 come from?
 - Councillor Black explained that the figure was derived from calculating the difference, over 17 weeks, of the salary of the Treasurer and that of the Clerk; a conservative estimate of an average of 2 hours of overtime per day, paid at straight time, not the overtime rate of 1.5, paid for 10 weeks while working alone; and reimbursement for 4.5 weeks vacation the Deputy Clerk was unable to take.
- Mr. Tym expressed his outrage at a bonus of \$15,000 for 14 weeks of extra work, approved with little or no discussion.
 - o He followed up asking if there had been any discussion.
 - Councillor Black responded that the matter had been discussed previously at a meeting of the Finance Committee and that the membership included herself, Councillor Gordon, and Deputy Mayor Sharpe.
- He asked if Councillors could raise an issue not an agenda how can citizens raise an issue?
 - o He asked Councillor Black why she put forward the motion to hire the recommended candidate and then voted against it.
 - Councillor Black responded that according to Roberts Rules, only a positive motion can be put forward and a discussion cannot take place without a motion.
- Mr. Tym disagreed and indicated that if a motion is tabled and no one seconds it then it ends there. He felt there is a lack of understanding of how things work. He went on to state he felt there was duplicity, there is an issue with the position of clerk in Arcadia and it has been deliberately kept vacant with a large bonus given to an employee of Arcadia.
- He stated further that a precedent had been set and nothing would stop Council from voting themselves a \$15,000 bonus. He recommended that the \$15,000 should be recouped from the councillors' stipends and that any future bonuses be taken from Councillors stipends. He questioned the validity of the calculations, and the amount of \$15,000 bonus was unheard of. Mr. Tym concluded by thanking Council for letting him speak and that he was upset by the issue.
- Councillor Black concluded that one of her biggest regrets was calling it a bonus. The motion was brought to Council to make the payment transparent. She has the actual calculations that demonstrate that the amount owed was greater than the actual bonus if overtime had been paid at the overtime rate.

7) Business Arising from The Minutes

- Complaint regarding trail initiative
 - Acting Clerk LeBlanc consulted with the Capital Region Service Commission (CRSC) and learned the issue was not within the mandate of the CRSC and that further questions should be directed to provincial officials. A/Clerk LeBlanc will review the specific concerns of each resident and approach the appropriate departments in terms of any regulatory or legal implications. The matter will be raised later with Council for further discussion.
- Complaint regarding illegal dumping on Lawfield Road
 - Acting Clerk LeBlanc spoke with an official from Environment and Local Government (ELG) and an inspector was assigned to investigate the site. He will be completing his investigation including contacting the private owner of the property where the dumping occurred, and he will return with a report.
- Aviva Charge for Change Program
 - Aviva is inviting applications from across the country for funding to install EV chargers in communities where there are few or none. A review of the location and installation requirements to meet the eligibility criteria suggested there could be additional infrastructure costs not included in the 2024 budget. Also, the March deadline made it unfeasible for a competitive application from Arcadia for this round. We can consider an application for next year should the program continue.
- Solid Waste pick up concern
 - The office received a concern from a resident that their solid waste was not being picked up. The contractor responsible for their area has been in contact with the resident and the matter has been resolved.
- Radon Survey
 - The survey received by the municipality has not yet been completed but the deadline has not yet passed so there is still time to complete it. It is looking at understanding the issues for municipalities around radon education and awareness and in ensuring residents understand the importance of radon testing.
- Governance Transition Funding
 - In correspondence shared at the last meeting, the Province advised applications would still be accepted for partial or full reimbursement of costs associated with implementation of the new municipal governance structure. It is the intention of staff to complete the application by the next meeting of Council.
- UMN – review funding opportunities
 - This is an update to Council that the funding opportunities listed in the UMN newsletter shared at the last meeting. These were reviewed and none were relevant to Council at this time; some have already been pursued, such as housing, and others were more relevant to larger municipalities.
- UNB Legal Clinic
 - The information shared with Council in January about the initiative to assist persons with low-income through a free legal clinic was posted on the Arcadia website and on our Facebook page and it has been seen and shared.

- Terms of Reference of Governance Committee
 - The terms of reference were updated to reflect the decision taken to make the Governance Committee a committee of the whole.
- Engage an HR Consultant
 - Mayor Pleadwell reached out to Pivot Consulting for a proposal and had hoped to present it at this meeting; however, it is still with one of the partners for approval. He proposed that a special meeting of Council be held to consider the proposal once it is received to move forward on HR matters.
- Engagement with Shannon Buffett
 - Acting Clerk LeBlanc confirmed with Arcadia's auditor the information being requested fits well in the audit management engagement. Mayor Pleadwell noted a resolution is also in place to engage for additional services should work be needed which exceeds the audit process.
- QuickBooks Training
 - Councillor Black reported that QuickBooks online has been researched and it has been determined to be the best option. The office has been looking into what it takes to move from the desktop version to the online software and it should be a smooth process. Mayor Pleadwell confirmed his understanding that training is not a concern in this transition but rather that any supports needed be implemented to develop budget and expenditure reports reflecting Arcadia's ward system.

8) Council Committee Reports

Economic Expansion Committee

- Councillor Mennier reported that the Committee's Tourism Focus Group met recently to discuss the upcoming solar eclipse and Arcadia's strategic position for viewing totality and near totality. Cumberland Bay is the best situated area as it will have totality. Councillor Mennier discussed with Councillor Gordon the idea of purchasing ISO approved eclipse viewing glasses that could be distributed to the village's fire departments. These could then be distributed to the public by donation, and fire departments may hold fundraiser BBQs and viewing parties to provide a sense of community around this rare event.
- Councillor Mennier is currently looking for someone who could lead the Environment and Natural Resources focus group and someone who could lead the Housing group as he is not able to give all the focus group the attention they deserve.
- The Agricultural and Forestry Survey is ready to go after a year of work and the ad is ready to go into the March Jemseg Newsletter. He will collaborate with Acting Clerk LeBlanc to complete the remaining work. Copies of the 20-question survey will be available at the office, and the Cambridge-Narrows, Youngs' Cove and Gagetown post offices, as well as online. The focus group is hopeful for uptake to inform the development of an Arcadia strategy to improve the amount of farmland being used for production.

- The CRSC Economic Expansion Committee met on February 15th. Staff is developing a survey to establish priorities. Councillor Mennier recommended a focus on Housing.
- Councillor Mennier attended the CRSC Board meeting with Mayor Pleadwell and Councillor Mennier. Reports were provided on marketing, education, planning and development, solid waste, finance and governance. If they aren't on the OneDrive, will ask Acting Clerk to put them on there this week so Council can review at their leisure.
- Mayor Pleadwell updated Council that funding for housing has been announced for Fredericton and for Harvey. He is still holding some hope that with the assistance from CRSC our application may still be funded.

Public Safety:

- Councillor Gordon reported that she is still working on the emergency response plan for Arcadia.
- At the last Council meeting, reaching out to other communities in the Capital Region regarding the Voyent system was discussed. She will be reaching out to municipalities, with assistance from the Acting Clerk, and to the Capital District Firefighters Association as well to understand the pros and cons. Councillor Black noted that the system is noted on the Valley Waters website.
- Councillor Gordon reviewed statistics on fire calls for the month, meetings attended, training undertaken, and testing/maintenance being undertaken by fire departments.
- Mayor Pleadwell inquired about resident concerns received regarding warming centres. Councillor Gordon noted that is part of the emergency response planning process.

Buildings and Properties Committee

- Deputy Mayor Sharpe reported the Buildings and Properties Committee met and discussed several projects underway. The contractor has confirmed the Cambridge-Narrows medical clinic repairs will be completed in the coming weeks; updated Hendry Lighthouse quotes have been requested; the Cambridge-Narrows Fire Hall audit was completed some months ago and updated quotes have been requested to complete the work required; a request has also been made to staff to obtain a quote to conduct safety audits on the municipally owned wharves, and in a separate step, to look at those in the community that are not municipally owned.
- A preliminary discussion has begun regarding the Arcadia permanent office with a couple of options raised.
- The Gagetown Recreation Centre is looking to replace the water fountain and a concern was expressed by the committee that these were no longer available in schools, and questioning whether we should be replacing it. Acting Clerk LeBlanc reported that she had reached out to provincial public health to determine if replacement was best practice and confirmed that potable drinking water fountains were still recommended in public places. Closures in schools had been related to water quality, not a new policy.
- Deputy Mayor Sharpe asked whether water quality testing was conducted in the recent past. Acting Clerk LeBlanc noted that it was her understanding that water was tested on a yearly basis in the spring in municipally owned facilities.

- Mayor Pleadwell suggested a water found/bottle filling station combination be considered.
- The committee is discussing the need for a capital plan and will have more to report at the next meeting.

By-Laws Committee

- Deputy Mayor Sharpe reported that he had two people step up to volunteer for the committee but one of them has since reported that she is moving out of the community and would no longer be able to sit. Acting Clerk LeBlanc was not yet able to confirm whether there was any reason a non-resident would be unable to sit on a committee. Mayor Pleadwell and Councillor Mennier both spoke to that point and noted there appears to be nothing in legislation or regulation. Deputy Mayor Sharpe hopes to circulate to Council early drafts of by-laws on Noise, Animal Control, and if all goes well, one may be coming out on Unsightly Premises. The Department of Environment and Local Government is anxious to see something in place.
- Mayor Pleadwell noted that having a village structure from an enforcement perspective, when it comes to unsightly premises, allows for measures to be put in place that do not fall into the purview of the province.

Finance Committee

- Councillor Black informed Council that the Treasurer she is working on year end, has all the disbursements caught up, has been working on the sewerage bills and is almost ready to send those out.
- Councillor Black will be presenting two motions: one that deals with fire department funding, and one that deals with Benevity/Canadian On-Line Giving as it relates to the Gagetown Fire Department.
- Benevity is an online way to donate money to charities. In discussion with the auditor, it was recommended that a motion be made to track the funds from Benevity going into the Operating Account and transferred to the Gagetown Fire Department.
- There have also been remittances received from the Province of New Brunswick for Arcadia firefighting services provided under mutual aid agreements. These are funds paid for personnel and for equipment for fighting, as an example, forest fires. A comparable situation occurs with NB Power when a fire department secures downed power lines until they can be safely moved. The remittances fit under two categories – hourly wages, and compensation for equipment use.
 - *It was moved by Councillor Black and seconded by Councillor Mennier that those remittances from the Province of New Brunswick to Arcadia for firefighting services provided under mutual aid agreements be paid to the fire department providing the service, and that those remittances from the Province of New Brunswick to Arcadia for equipment provided under mutual aid agreements be retained by Arcadia for general operating by the ward of the fire department providing the service.*

Councillor Mennier asked for more clarity on the mutual aid situations this motion is meant to address. Councillor Gordon explained that when fire departments are called to a forest or grass fire, which falls under the responsibility of the Department of Natural Resources and Energy. Where the department does not have the resources available to fight those fires, the Province pays the costs related to it – the equipment cost, which goes to the municipality, and the fire fighters themselves are paid an hourly wage. Now that the fire departments are under the municipality, the Province is remitting those funds to Arcadia but where the firefighters are not employees of the municipality, the funds are to be transferred to the fire department to pay the fire fighters. A similar situation occurs with NB Power when fire departments secure downed power lines. The recommendation for a motion is for tracking purposes.

With no further questions and all in favour, the motion was carried.

- *It was moved by Councillor Black and seconded by Councillor Mennier that funds received through an electronic funds transfer (EFT) into the Arcadia General Account from the Canada Online Giving Foundation (through Benevity Inc.) be paid to the Gagetown Fire Department.*

Councillor Mennier requested further clarification. Councillor Black explained that to receive donations through Benevity an organization must have a business number. The Gagetown Fire Department does not have a business number, but Benevity has agreed to donate the funds to the municipality and have them transferred to the Fire Department. Acting Clerk LeBlanc has confirmed that Benevity supports this approach. Our auditor has recommended that a motion be made to track the funds.

With no further questions and all in favour, the motion was carried.

Public Works

- Mayor Pleadwell reported that the Public Works Committee has not met since the last Council meeting but will be meeting this coming Thursday. Items for discussion are the lagoon tender, the DTI summer maintenance contract, Gagetown ward tractor, the effluent plan, and the need for long term planning discussion. Mayor Pleadwell invited Councillors to forward any items they had for discussion to the committee.

Communications Committee

- Councillor Gahan-MaGee informed council that the committee has not met since the last regular Council meeting and there is nothing to report currently.

In closing the Council Committee Report item, Councillor Mennier requested that a motion be considered.

- *It was moved by Councillor Mennier and seconded by Councillor Gordon that Arcadia purchase 500 pair of eclipse glasses for distribution to fire departments and the Cambridge-Narrows Public Library for use on April 8th, at the purchase price of \$599 plus tax.*

Questions were called. Mayor Pleadwell asked whether the Gagetown Recreation Centre was considered in the distribution. Councillor Mennier explained that the Cumberland Bay area will experience totality but everywhere else it is a partial eclipse. The recommendation is to distribute most of the glasses to the Cumberland Bay Fire Department. The other areas would be given some if at the last-minute people might want some who do not have the ability to travel to Cumberland Bay.

With no further questions and all in favour, the motion was carried.

9) Correspondence

- Correspondence received since the last meeting of council was shared in the Council Package. Mayor Pleadwell invited discussion or questions on any of the items presented. The following items were discussed:
 - Estate of Joseph Chester McNamara subdivision – this item was just added to the package therefore Mayor Pleadwell read through the documents for the benefit of Council and shared them onscreen.
 - A request for a donation for elementary literacy – Acting Clerk LeBlanc called attention to this item, noting in the past Cambridge-Narrows had made donations to the school related to supporting literacy. She clarified that their donation request would not be directed specifically to one of the municipal schools. A donation was not recommended; however, a request from the schools or library would be considered.
 - CRSC newsletter January – It was noted they made mention of the Cumberland Bay Fire Truck Contest.
 - Letter from Judith Jones – Councillor Mennier asked whether this might be a revenue stream for the building. Councillor Black suggested it might be premature to invite a business to come in given decisions around housing staff have not been taken and renovations may be required at the municipal building.
 - Request to present to Council – Ambulance NB – Councillor Mennier asked whether we would want to get back to them? Acting Clerk LeBlanc explained they were invited to this meeting but were not available for this meeting, so they have been invited to present in March.

10) Financial Report

- Councillor Black noted the Council Packets included reports from December 19th to January 15 because these had not been available at the last meeting.
 - *It was moved by Councillor Black and seconded by Councillor Mennier to approve expenditures for Arcadia General from December 19th to January 15, 2024, in the amount of \$486,966.74.*

With no questions and all in favour, the motion was carried.

- *It was moved by Councillor Black and seconded by Deputy Mayor Sharpe to approve expenditures for Arcadia General from January 16 to February 19, 2024, in the amount of \$398,184.65.*

With no questions and all in favour, the motion was carried.

- *It was moved by Councillor Black and seconded by Councillor Mennier to approve expenditures for Arcadia Sewer from December 19th to February 19, 2024, in the amount of \$6,337.90.*

Mayor Pleadwell raised a question with respect to an expenditure for blowers. Councillor Black noted that there were two identical expenditures, and it could be a duplication. She will check with the Treasurer.

With no questions and all in favour, the motion was carried.

11) New Business

Councillor Mennier informed Council that he and Councillor Gahan-MaGee had attended a presentation organized by Butternut Valley regarding the development of a strategy for development in the Coles Island area. It was well attended, and the result will be a report and support toward the development of the strategy by Stiletto Consulting.

12) Closed Session

- Matters discussed in the closed session fall under Section 68 (1b) (1f) (1j) of the *Local Governance Act*.
 - *It was moved by Councillor Mennier and seconded by Deputy Mayor Sharpe to move into closed session.*

With no questions to the motion and all in favour, the motion was carried.

- *It was moved by Councillor Mennier and seconded by Deputy Mayor Sharpe to move out of closed session.*

With no questions to the motion and all in favour, the motion was carried.

13) Upcoming Meetings

- March 18, 2024 – Jemseg Fire Hall
- April 15, 2024 – Queenstown Orange Hall

14) Motion to Adjourn

- *It was moved by Deputy Mayor Sharpe and seconded by Councillor Mennier to adjourn at 9:15 pm. With all in favour and none opposed, the motion was carried.*



Mayor Derek Pleadwell



Acting Clerk Monique LeBlanc



