



Minutes

Meeting Regular Council Meeting
Date April 4, 2023
Time 7:00 PM
Place Municipal Hall - Council Chambers and by electronic means

Present Mayor Martin Davis
Councillor Meggan Joseph
Councillor Sarah Fowler
Councillor Cheryl Northcott
Councillor Douglas Elliott

Staff Mark Tatchell, Chief Administrative Officer (by video)
Adia Mavrikos, CPA, CA (by video)
Janet St-Denis, Corporate Services Manager (by video)
Wanda Waksdale, Admin Assistant (by video)
Amanda Knibbs, IT Coordinator (by video)

Public 22 Members of the public. (10 by video)

A. Call to Order

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Land Acknowledgement

Mayor Davis acknowledged and respected that Council is meeting upon Mowachaht/Muchalaht territory.

B. Introduction of Late Items

None.

C. Approval of the Agenda

Fowler/Northcott: VOT 0151/2023

THAT the Agenda for the April 4, 2023 Regular meeting of Council be adopted as amended.

CARRIED

D. Petitions and Delegations

None.

E. Public Input # 1

Several members of the public commented meeting conduct and procedure.

There was a comment on the lock on the garbage dumpsters at the school.

A member of the public questioned Council on employees use of social media.
There was a comment on the contents of the minutes.

F. Adoption of the Minutes

1 Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held on March 21, 2023.

Fowler/Northcott: VOT 0152/2023

THAT the Regular Council Meeting minutes of March 21, 2023 be adopted as presented

CARRIED
1 "no vote"
registered to
Councillor Elliott

G. Rise and Report

None.

H. Business Arising

1 Councillor Northcott's Resolution Re: The Village of Tahsis - as a living wage employer.

WHEREAS A living wage is the hourly amount a family needs to cover basic expenses (based on a two-parent family with 2 children and both parents working fulltime);
and

WHEREAS the living wage for the Comox Valley, our nearest living wage region is \$20.26/hr (including benefits) and Village of Tahsis is already compensating most of its employees at that rate or better;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that staff prepare a report on what would be required to certify the Village of Tahsis as a living wage employer.

Fowler/Joseph: VOT 0153/2023

THAT this resolution be received.

CARRIED

fowler/Joseph: VOT 0154/2023

THAT this resolution be approved

CARRIED
1 "no vote"
registered to
Councillor Elliott

J. Council Reports

Mayor Davis

Report to Council April 4 2023

We have just received a 100% grant from the Island Coastal Economic Trust to offer the temporary fulltime one year position of Rural Economic Advisor. The specific focus of the Advisor position will be on helping build capacity in one or more small business fundamentals including: business planning, finance, human resources, legal, partnerships, digital technology and e-commerce, grants, and marketing. Compensation will be \$65,000 for the one year position. Contact the Village Office for more information; the deadline for applying for this position is April 30.

While on the subject of the Island Coastal Economic Trust, I have an update on the future of the Trust. I had spoke previously regarding how the Trust is running out of money and will have to dissolve, but we have received a recent reprieve. While leaving the Trust out of their budget, the provincial government is quite flush for cash and has decided to give the Trust \$10 million to keep it afloat for the time being. Our request for \$150 million had been turned down, which is the minimum required to make the Trust self-sustaining, using investment income. More than one Trust in BC has funds of more than \$600 million. We will continue our negotiations in order to find a long term solution.

There will be some significant funding announcements in future but we are not in a position to provide details until higher levels of government do.

On March 22nd we initiated a Federation of Canadian Municipalities grant funded project to map all of the Village's assets using GIS technology and develop an asset management plan. This will greatly increase our capacity to monitor, manage and plan work with respect to the complete inventory of our infrastructure.

With legacy Rural Dividend funding, we are working on a strategic economic development strategy to support and guide economic development over the next 10 years. We have engaged the same consultants who recently prepared the economic development strategy for the Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation, as we see tangible opportunities to work closely with the Nation. A community-wide meeting will be held later this spring for businesses and residents to have their say with this plan.

Councillor Joseph

No report

Councillor Fowler (verbal report)

In addition to a lengthy written report I provided on March 25th

I present this certificate of achievement and my Directors report that was presented to the Regional District on March 15, 2023.

submitted respectfully

s. fowler

Councillor Northcott

An update from my March 25 library board meeting.

There was a lot to get through including the draft Strategic Plan Framework, Procedural Bylaw revisions, and Facilities Master Plan review.

Masset's new library is finally a go. There was a lengthy discussion about it, given both the size and cost have increased significantly. However, most of the trustees agreed that it made sense to build for the future and approved plans to initiate construction of the new Masset branch.

Unfortunately, there is no timeline on when we'll get a new library. However, priorities will be reviewed annually, and the priority list will be publicly available.

Councillor Elliott

Ladies and Gentlemen

Since the last council meeting, I've had numerous conversations with residents concerning the affairs of the village. As a politician, I realize that I am wide open for criticism and I appreciate your input. I have stood firm against deficit spending and will continue to inform the public of the consequences of high interest rates over a long term. My goal is to discuss ideas that will put us on a financially sustainable path that will promote growth and maintain a reasonable taxation rate that will attract investment into our community.

It is my opinion that the administrative overhead is far too high. I have been denied information concerning the overhead which in my mind, raises a red flag. It is my opinion that the administration needs to change. In the past 7 years, there has been no new house construction. The cash reserves have been depleted down to 800K from 3 million in 2015. There has been no commercial development to create employment. Quite simply, this village, under the present administration, is closed for business. The only growth that I am aware of is the legal expenditures conducted by the CAO. This individual has violated the laws by publishing a private email of mine and has threatened legal action against me. The attorney that was hired by the village has advised the administration that they have no right to launch legal action against me and a member of the public pointed out to the council that the CAO violated privacy and copyright laws by publishing a private email sent to my supporters. In spite of this, The CAO has once again violated those laws by publishing my email on the village web site. This I suspect is a violation and a breach of his employment contract. The CAO has also deceived the council when providing false information concerning the loan authorization for the waste water project. It is my opinion that the CAO has sat there far too long for any good that he may be doing. In the name of decency, he should resign and let us be rid of him. The time has come for the Mayor to show leadership and put in place an individual that possesses the skills to put our financial house in order. This council needs to put forth motions to mandate contributions towards our cash reserves and restrict all future councils from deficit spending.

This community needs to live within its financial means and each council should leave the village in a better financial state than when they were first elected. This bylaw should be protected by the public and only through voter assent, that any deficit spending be considered. Our core responsibility as a council is to oversee that the infrastructure and village assets are properly maintained. To promote positive growth and maintain a peaceful and pleasant environment for the community. I am more than willing to work with the council to achieve this goal that I believe is in the best interest for the entire community as a whole.

As a former public works employee, I would like to see an investment into that department that would give them the resources to better serve the community without the intervention of the CAO, unnecessary legal expenditures and out of town contractors. Our existing Superintendent of Public Works is extremely knowledgeable of the infrastructure in this community and needs to be put in a position where he answers directly to the Mayor and Council. This individual needs to hire a young suitable candidate to apprentice under his leadership before he reaches retirement age. Time is of the essence. This will save the community a substantial amount and I firmly believe that hiring an outsider to replace our existing Superintendent would be a colossal mistake.

I have sent a letter to the Municipal Affairs concerning the conduct of the administration. I have requested mediation that I feel is necessary due to the infractions of the *Community Charter and the Code of Conduct*. Councillor Fowler's husband and the Mayor's conduct on social media is another example of the violations of the *Code of Conduct*. This is having a negative impact on the community and their slanderous comments towards members of the community is defamatory and unprofessional. Mr. Bosecker should resign his position in the fire department for such conduct and he is not entitled to legal representation financed by the taxpayers.

In the public council meeting on March 7th, I received another couple hundred pages from the lawyer that is conducting the legal action against me on behalf of this administration. This was followed by the Mayor's insincere apology for an incident that took place at the local store where he called me a psycho, accused me of threatening the re-elected councillors in which he would contact the RCMP if I continued, this followed with profanity referencing *Fornication Under the Command of the King*. I have sent the Mayor an email that I do not accept his apology. This incident occurred in front of witnesses that were horrified with his conduct and they expressed a deep regret that they supported this Mayor in the last election.

This Mayor has since accused me of being an alcoholic, a drug addict and for spreading hatred throughout the community on social media. I resent that labeling however I have lost no sleep over it. I do not hate this administration. I simply disagree with them when it comes to borrowing millions of dollars.

Here is an example. If we borrow 3 million dollars for their capital project list that they decided upon before the last election. At an interest rate of 4%, the payment per month would be \$14,300.00 for the next 30 years. This would amount to 2.156 million dollars in interest totaling 5.156 million dollars after 360 payments. Divided by 430 homes, that's approx. \$400 tax increase per year for the next thirty years. That's a \$12,000 deficit per household.

If the council borrows the maximum allowed by the provincial government. A 3.7 million dollar loan at 4% interest would amount to a payment of \$17,512.00 per month. 2.6 million dollars in interest for a total of 6.3 million after 360 payments. Divided by 430 homes, that's approx. \$486 tax increase per year for the next 30 years. That's over a \$14,600 deficit per household. Keep in mind that the majority of the payments for the first twenty years is applied to the interest owing. The principle is paid off toward the end.

This would make it severely difficult for all future councils to replenish our cash reserves. This debt will be passed onto future generations. This would have a negative effect on our property values and make our community less attractive for investors. This is referred to as a Property Tax Death Spiral by the UBCM.

What is even more disturbing, this council is not interested in answering your questions or engaging in discussions concerning these projects. Since the Mayor has changed his mind and decided not to follow the *Robert's Rules of Order*. I have come to the conclusion that the *Council Procedure Bylaw* is unconstitutional and should be reviewed by an expert. As a public official, we have the right to answer your questions. We also have the right not to. The Mayor has no authority to deny us of this right nor to discriminate against selected councillors. This is undemocratic and shows a lack of respect to you, the taxpayer.

Rather than borrowing for projects, the council should be focused on increasing the tax base by selling off the property towards West Bay. If that property were subdivided and the funds used to provide the necessary infrastructure, this would open up further opportunities for the owner of the farm to subdivide his property thus increasing the tax base substantially. This would provide year round employment opportunities that would lead to more services throughout the community. The lots on Alpine should have been listed on MLS which would give Tahsis exposure to investors throughout North America.

As far as the fire hall plan, McElhanney has recommended that the wood shop at the school is a more suitable location rather than repairing the existing facility. This has been taken out of context and according to the legal documentation that I received, the Mayor stated on January 3rd that the fire hall is not repairable. McElhanney has never stated that, nor are they experts in repairing foundations. In my experience, this village has not always had access to drainage rock. I experienced similar issues with my own house and had 70 yards of drainage rock distributed around the perimeter of my house and through my neighbour's property to resolve the foundation and drainage issues. In the valley, the majority of homes that are built on hog fuel have experienced this problem. Without proper drainage, the foundation is subject to damage from erosion which could lead to other problems throughout the building. As homeowners, we are on our own to repair and patch the damage due to these poor construction methods that were implemented 40-50 years ago. We are still paying for those mistakes today.

The fire hall is merely a storage facility for the fire engines and equipment. It is not a residence nor was it designed to accommodate living quarters for our volunteer firefighters. The foundation has been subject to erosion due to improper drainage around the perimeter of the foundation. This needs to be addressed and once completed, the electrical and plumbing throughout the building should be re-inspected. The roof is a poor design for the west coast and should be modified with a proper slope to ensure adequate protection from the elements. The village has not hired the appropriate experts to review these issues. Another consideration is that the village would lose all its equity in its most modern building if we fail to repair the damage.

Relocating the fire department to the Wood shop at the school would put the taxpayers on the hook for lease payments for decades. I have not received any information concerning the lease payments. We would also be on the hook for cost overruns that are sure to happen with the existing inflationary rates. The debt incurred would also be subject to high interest rates. This is not a wise path and I believe that this will have a profound effect on our future taxation. The Mayor has stated that the wood shop would be a safer location from a tsunami event, it is my opinion that both facilities are not safe from a tsunami event. It is also my opinion that the wood shop could be severely damaged as a result of an earthquake. The administration is also using fear tactics claiming if we do not relocate our fire hall, we risk being forced to suspend our entire fire department thus resulting in higher insurance rates. I am not aware of any provincial document that is threatening this action. Our fire department has continued to service this community despite the fire hall issue, and continues to train and provide support for the ambulance service. What is disturbing is that this administration has been closed minded towards the taxpayers of this village and continues to avoid a referendum. The grant was set up to help improve fire halls throughout the province. We need to use that grant where it benefits our community and protects our valuable assets. I am not the only councillor that has voted against various aspects of this fire hall plan. I believe this community should be given the final say on how the grant is to be used and not allow this to be decided by the elected officials that avoid answering our questions, utilizing fear tactics and have launched legal action against a councillor that disagrees with their plan. Once again Mr. Mayor, why are you delaying a referendum?

As far as the request for an apology from Councillor Northcott, you are perceived to be in a *Conflict of Interest* by the electors that submitted a petition to this council. I have described you as such in my mail out since you refuse to seek legal advice concerning the petition. Advising you to seek legal advice is not an attack. It is friendly advice. Since I have been elected. You have consistently shown animosity towards me and made it very clear that you are unable to work together as a team. The Mayor and I tried to come up with a solution before the election however I have been unsuccessful in my attempt to open up dialogue concerning this issue. Before the election, you also ran a very negative campaign against me and spread untrue rumors about me throughout the village. Although I didn't care at the time, I find it absolutely preposterous that you have the audacity to ask for an apology. If you wish to take me to court, it should be you financing the legal action and not the taxpayers of this village. As far as I'm concerned, it should be you that apologies to the taxpayers for wasting their money on a lawsuit that you have absolutely no chance of success. I will address the mayor's request for an apology in my next report.

Thank you for coming out tonight. I look forward to hearing the public's concerns and hope the Mayor will allow the councillors to address your questions without discrimination.

Fowler/Northcott: VOT 0155/2023
THAT the Council Reports be received.

CARRIED
1 "no vote"
registered to
Mayor Davis
CARRIED

K. Bylaws

- 1 Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No. 654, 2023**
Adoption

Fowler/Northcott: VOT 0156/2023

THAT the Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No. 654, 2023 be received for consideration.

CARRIED

Fowler/Northcott: VOT 0157/2023

THAT the Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No. 654, 2023 be reconsidered and finally passed and adopted this 4th day of April, 2023.

CARRIED

- 2 Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No. 655, 2023**
Adoption

Fowler/Northcott: VOT 0158/2023

THAT the Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No. 655, 2023 be received for consideration.

CARRIED
1 "no vote"
registered to
Councillor Elliott

Fowler/Northcott: VOT 0159/2023

THAT the Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No. 655, 2023 be reconsidered and finally passed and adopted this 4th day of April, 2023.

CARRIED

1 "no vote"
registered to
Councillor Elliott

L. Correspondence

- 1 March 24, 2023 email to Local Governments Re: Land opportunities for housing**
- 2 March 20, 2023 email on behalf of Oceans Protection Plan Re: Renaming of the Oceans Protection Plan Newsletter.**

Fowler/Northcott: VOT 0160/2023

THAT these correspondence items be received.

CARRIED

Fowler/Northcott VOT 0161/2023

THAT correspondence item #2 be pulled for discussion.

CARRIED

- 2 **March 20, 2023 email on behalf of Oceans Protection Plan Re: Renaming of the Oceans Protection Plan Newsletter.**

Council Fowler spoke to this correspondence item. A discussion followed.

M. New Business

None.

Public Input #2

There was a question regarding attendance at the 2022 UBCM convention in Whistler to which Councillor Fowler responded.

A member of the public spoke about the "banter" on Facebook.

Several members of the public inquired into the use of the \$650k Growing Communities Grant

After public input Councillor Fowler issued an apology for her conduct at the March 21, 2023 Regular Council meeting.

Adjournment

Fowler/Northcott: VOT 0162/2023

THAT the meeting be adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Certified Correct this

the 18th Day of April, 2023

Chief Administrative Officer

