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**Town Council Meeting Minutes
April 8, 2025
Town Hall**

IN ATTENDANCE:

V. Joan Nolan, Mayor
Gerard Linehan, Deputy Mayor
Don Corrigan, Councillor
Paula Linehan, Councillor
Brenda Pike, Town Clerk

Absent: Loretta Nash, Councillor

No members of the public were present.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting is called to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA: APRIL 8, 2025

Motion #2025-21: Don Corrigan; Gerard Linehan

Adopt the Agenda of April 8, 2025.

All in Favor; None Opposed

Motion Carried

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES: MARCH 11, 2025

Motion #2025-21: Don Corrigan; Paula Linehan

Adopt the Minutes of March 11, 2025, with the amendment to rescind motion #2025-18 (donation to St. Catherine's Academy).

All in Favor; None Opposed

Motion Carried

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES: MARCH 26, 2025

Motion #2025-23: Don Corrigan; Gerard Linehan

Adopt the Minutes of March 26, 2025.

All in Favor; None Opposed

Motion Carried

4. FINANCE

a. Monthly Financial Report

Motion #2025-24: Gerard Linehan; Don Corrigan

Adopt the financial report for the month ending March 31, 2025.

All in Favor; None Opposed

Motion Carried

5. NEW BUSINESS

a) Reports

i) Town Clerk Report

- The Clerk contacted Bell Aliant re high cost of service. Bell agreed to adjust the bill, from \$297.95 to \$152.38, including a second line for faxes. The Clerk questioned whether we need a fax line as it hasn't been used in at least two years. Without a fax line, the bill would be adjusted to \$84.95 per month. **Council advised the Clerk to cancel the fax line with Bell Aliant.**
- The Clerk spoke to Paul Taylor regarding Ripple Pond and Halls Gullies. He updated her on the progress of the reserves. They are getting their report ready for submission to the Minister. Once it is accepted by the Minister, they anticipate releasing it to the public in April. The report captures Paul's work and the questionnaire responses on their website. Once accepted, the reserve will have provisional ecological status. They will most likely be approaching the town for a letter of support, and addressing any concerns the Town may have. (name change is addressed in the report and will be considered as part of the final process before submission to Cabinet). Paul would like to meet with Council and present the report and answer any questions. He suggested that once the report is released that it be made available to residents (Facebook page/gov. website) for their comments and concerns before the meeting. Any concerns would be submitted to Council before the meeting for presentation to Paul.
- Mr. Taylor is going to send a number of photos they took when they were doing their work on the reserve, including drone footage. Council can use the photos for social media, etc. with credit to the photographer.

- Emergency Plan: Government is working on a new template for the Emergency Plan as it relates to the new legislation. They will be in touch once this is finalized to review the Town's Emergency Plan.
- Jennifer Brown of Municipal and Provincial Affairs will be conducting a municipal Inspection of the town on April 22.
- 911 Mapping is in the final stages. Webpage work is ongoing.
- Brenda and Joan went through the town and have assigned individual civic numbers to each property. A letter will go out once Council decides if they want to include the letter re vacant land and businesses in the mail-out.
- The Town's Special Assistance Grant application was turned down. It was suggested the Town should apply under Gas Tax. (\$33,044 balance)
- Questions re Property Taxes and Business Taxes
 - A resident visited the Town Office on Monday, April 7, with concerns over the high mill rate as it applies to homeowners of properties with a high assessed value. He had been speaking to a property owner who felt that some tax assessments are too high for a small town such as Colinet. He brought to the Clerk's attention that:
 - New legislation allows for a base amount plus a percentage. They felt that Council should look at tax rates which are spread more evenly among all residents so that some taxpayers are not left paying significantly higher property taxes. It was stated that all taxpayers avail of the same services and should be taxed accordingly.
 - The Clerk said she would bring this to Council's attention and invited the resident, as well as the person on whose behalf he was speaking, to attend the meeting to express their concerns.
 - **AT THE MEETING:**
 - The Clerk presented Council with a spreadsheet showing how property taxes would increase or decrease with a base amount of \$500 and a mil rate of 1%, in line with the suggestions by the resident.
 - This would reduce the taxes for those with properties with higher assessed values, while increasing taxes for those with properties with lower assessed values.
 - At a base amount of \$500 with 1% mil rate, total property taxes collected would be \$58,814. **This would reflect a decrease in property taxes for 26 property owners**, with 17 property owners with a savings of over \$100.00. **It would reflect an increase in**

property taxes for 56 property owners, with 11 homeowners with an increase of over \$100.00.

- With a mil rate of 4.5%, total taxes collected are \$57,504.
- As legislation governs, tax rates cannot be changed after April 1 so property taxes for 2025 stand. Council will take all suggestions under advisement when preparing the 2026 budget. Future changes will only be considered if they make fiscal sense for all citizens. Council noted that all taxpayers have access to the same services; however, property taxes are based on the assessed value of properties.
- Terry O'Neill would like to install a culvert between his property and Route 91. Council advised he needs to contact Transportation and Works.

ii) Infrastructure Committee

Town of Colinet sign – Deputy Mayor Linehan and Councillor Corrigan will remove the existing sign so it can be repaired.

iii) Administration/Human Resources

a. Property Tax Collection and Arrears

The Clerk noted that she had submitted a copy of the draft by-law to Municipal Affairs and they didn't find any issues with it. Council did a final review of the by-law.

Motion #2025-25: Gerard Linehan; Don Corrigan

Council accepts and approves the by-law for Property Tax Collection and Arrears for the Municipality of Colinet, effective April 8, 2025.

All in Favor; None Opposed

Motion Carried

b. Building By-Law

The Clerk noted that she had also submitted a copy of this draft by-law to Municipal Affairs; their suggestions are highlighted on Council's copies. Council will review and submit suggestions to the Clerk before the next meeting. Acceptance and approval has been laid on the table for the May 6 meeting.

iv) Business Tax

The Clerk received written confirmation from Mr. Linehan that neither the sawmill nor D & R Trades are operating in the Town of Colinet.

Council discussed whether there may be other businesses operating in the Town which may not be paying taxes; Council will send out a letter (see below) requiring business owners to identify any businesses they may be operating in Colinet. Council also discussed the new Accommodations Tax. They will review it as part of the 2026 budget.

v) Vacant Land

The Mayor distributed a letter to Council for approval to send out to taxpayers requesting they come forward and identify any vacant land they may own in the Town by June 1, 2025. After that date, the Town will Gazette their intentions on any unidentified vacant land. This letter will also include the request re business taxes, as noted above.

b) Fire Department

A retirement celebration will be held at the Town Hall on Sunday, April 13, in honor of the retirement of Gordon Hearn from the town's volunteer fire department. The Clerk will pick up a card; Council approved a \$100 gift card as well.

c) Correspondence: Request from St. Catherine's Academy

Upon consideration of the town's budget for 2025 and several recent expensive projects, Council rescinded the motion to donate \$500.00 to the St. Catherine's Lunch Program. They expressed their willingness to donate to this very worthy cause; however, due to budget restraints, it was agreed they would donate \$100.00 at this time.

Motion #2025-26: Gerard Linehan; Paula Linehan

Council rescinds Motion #2025-18 allowing for a \$500 donation to St. Catherine's Academy. Council will donate \$100 towards the SCA Lunch program.

All in Favor; None Opposed

Motion Carried

d) Community Clean-Up

Council will promote a community clean-up during the weekend of June 7 and 8. Property owners will be requested to collect garbage in front of their property (both sides of the road) and between neighboring properties, as well as anywhere else garbage may have collected over the winter. The clerk will purchase bags and gloves to be available to residents. Residents will be asked to include anything they collect during the weekend in their regular garbage.

Information on the community clean-up will be posted to Facebook and at the store.

6. ROUND TABLE

- a. The Clerk will look after having the locks changed on the office and storage room doors.
- b. The Clerk brought to the attention of Council that she had forwarded information on an Age-Friendly Grant to Councillors today. It may be a great opportunity to apply for funding for the playground – maybe a walking circuit and re-paving of the basketball court for multi-use sports (basketball, volleyball, pickleball). Councillors will review it.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for May 6, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion #2025-27: Don Corrigan; Gerard Linehan

The meeting is adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

All in Favor; None opposed

Motion Carried

V. Joan Nolan, Mayor

Brenda Pike, Town Clerk