



WEST HANTS  
NOVA SCOTIA

**MUNICIPALITY OF THE DISTRICT OF WEST HANTS**  
**Special Council Minutes**  
**August 21, 2018 6:00 p.m.**  
**Sanford Council Chambers**

1. Call to Order

Warden Zebian called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Call of Roll

Present:	A. Zebian	Warden
	R. Jannasch	Councillor District 1
	K. Monroe	Councillor District 2
	D. Keith	Councillor District 3
	T. Leopold	Councillor District 4
	D. Francis	Councillor District 5
	R. Hussey	Councillor District 6
	J. Daniels	Councillor District 7
	P. Morton	Deputy Warden
	R. Zwicker	Councillor District 10
	M. Laycock	Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)
	B. Carrigan	Director of Public Works
	R. Brown	Municipal Clerk
	J. Woodman	Administrative Assistant

There were 39 members of the public in attendance.

3. Announcements

Warden Zebian reviewed the fire evacuation procedures and informed the meeting was being broadcasted on Facebook Live.

Councillor Hussey noted that the Crossing is holding and open house this weekend.

4. Approval of Agenda, including additions or deletions

**MOVED and SECONDED that the agenda be approved as circulated.**  
**Motion Carried.**

Warden Zebian welcomed Councillors Bibby and Ivey from the Town of Windsor. He admitted that he made some comments on social media recently that were unbecoming of an elected official and clarified that his words or actions in no way represented the opinion of Council and he offered his sincere apologies to the Town of Windsor.

5. Report(s) of Committee

a. Report of the Chief Administrative Officer

i. New Rink (Request for Direction)

CAO Laycock reported he was requesting direction from Council on submitting a proposal for a new rink. He explained the report addresses some facts and key issues of a proposed new rink, including pro's and con's; the report also provided a draft of the Provincial funding application which would required a motion of Council guaranteeing funds He reviewed the three options for Council in the report.

CAO Laycock advised that the Municipality and Town of Windsor had been working on a joint venture however it fell through in February in an effort for the Town to move the project forward and now that has not come through. He felt this has left an opportunity to use the available \$6 million in Federal and Provincial funding for a new project. He confirmed September 15<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for an application to be completed by the Province to the Federal Government, and so there is a tight turnaround time. He noted the proposal includes an attached building but clarified this would be a potential second phase project for an indoor soccer field, he confirmed the focus for the current proposal is only the rink. He reviewed the pro's and con's in the Request for Direction Report for the project. He also reviewed all the financial implications that could occur with each option.

**MOVED and SECONDED that Council guarantee \$4,592,535 in projected project contributions for the construction of a new rink, plus any additional cost overages that may occur during the construction of the project.**

Councillor Hussey advised that it was disappointing that the original joint project did not happen and suggested this is the last opportunity to make this project happen. He confirmed he has reached out to the community for their opinions on the project and noted that he received overwhelming support to build a rink. He suggested that many were concerned it would have an impact on the tax rate but felt that fundraising could occur to lessen the burden. He expressed the importance of bringing a project into the area which is community supported and beneficial.

Councillor Daniels advised that she also reached out to citizens, businesses, and developers about the project. She suggested that everyone contributed a lot of very good, positive feedback and clarified that they were aware there are risks but felt there would be a reward. She suggested this project would have positive benefits for existing and potential new people and businesses moving to the area. She offered this is a great opportunity to work with the new Economic Development Officer and felt there are opportunities for potential partnerships in the future.

Councillor Keith reminded Council of the issues that occurred with the collapse of the Newport Rink and the lack of ice time for players in the area who were inconvenienced and had to travel a significant distance to play or practice. He suggested that the area needs two rinks and felt that Council needs to support the motion as it is a positive change for the future.

Councillor Monroe offered she has struggled with this issue since receiving the Request for Direction Report and spoke to citizens but received different responses. She pointed out that Council had declined a partnership with the Town of Windsor as it was too much of a risk to the taxpayers and that Council was going to withdraw the \$1 million contribution with the Town without providing a reason. She reminded that Council has repeatedly stated that hockey rinks do not make money and didn't want to be on the hook for ongoing expenses. She questioned if anyone else saw the hypocrisy of the Municipality now wanting to become sole partner and take on the ongoing management expense and possible operational losses.

Councillor Monroe pointed out every time this project comes back there is less money available. She indicated the initial proposal had the backing of the Hockey Heritage Society, Kings Edgehill, Town of Windsor and other governmental funding sources. She stated the first project included a heritage component which was a logical linkage to make it a unique draw to this area. She noted the proposal failed for several reasons, the last-minute acceptance of a secondary proposal site, the inappropriate communications with one of the principles of the proposal and the increase public discourse felt by the second proposal site. She stated the second project proposal had the backing of the Hockey Heritage Society, the Town of Windsor and other governmental funding sources, the Municipality's support to the end, retained the heritage component and West Hants eliminated their exposure by not to participate in the ongoing management of the facility.

Councillor Monroe advised the third project proposal only had the backing of other governmental funding and West Hants would be responsible for the cost of management and required drawing down the reserves and increasing taxes. She felt quite confident that there has been a plan to derail the Town's prior proposals and the source of this activity is a rural bias both against Kings Edgehill and the Town of Windsor.

Councillor Monroe clarified that she ran for her seat on Council because she truly felt that a radical change in its membership would lead to a more unified, hopeful and progressive community and suggested that she could not be more deeply disappointed in the actions of those on Council who used their tactics to damage this potential. She offered there are good citizens in the area who live in this community because of Kings Edgehill and who represent the municipal government of Windsor. She felt the Municipality was too small and

insignificant of a community to see our success only at the expense of others. She felt that the Municipality should be leading the effort to work with all parties and felt we must evolve to properly serve our community. She clarified there is nothing she wished more than to see a cash windfall that will aid in creating a recreational space for our citizens. She explained she is more conflicted on this vote than any taken to date. She confirmed a greater level of transparency is required before she agrees to move forward with the project and recommended only moving forward if there is support from the Town of Windsor and the fundraisers who have already worked to move forward with this project; adding if this cannot be accomplished it should not move forward or it would be disrespectful to the Newport Rink who fundraised for their rink.

Councillor Leopold offered her support to the motion and noted that she is not in agreement with the comments made by Councillor Monroe. She advised that the Newport & Windsor Rinks has been in existence for decades and are used equally and equitably by West Hants Minor Hockey Association. She suggested each rink has their own strengths and weaknesses, adding that Newport is new, and Windsor needs to compare to that. She agreed that hockey rinks don't make money but reminded neither does the Hants Aquatic Center but that Council has noted on several occasions that it is a service to the community and the same would go for an arena. She suggested as a representative for the area she can not justify losing \$6 million and that it would be a significant amount of infrastructure in the center of Windsor and West Hants and the opportunity can not be passed up. She appreciated that this proposal is not just an ice service but includes a walking track which will appeal to a much broader base of communities. She suggested the reality is this is a top-quality site that is supported by a Provincial Government sanctioned feasibility study.

Councillor Leopold offered that the location has already been tried and true as a facility has been there for decades and it works. She asked that Council for the sake of the community to please get behind the project, adding if people have pledged money in the past to please pledge it again. She suggested that the communities need something exciting and positive to work towards and this proposal could possibly be the last chance but felt it is the best chance to build a rink for everyone.

Councillor Jannasch suggested in terms of potential economic impact Council's time would be better spent determining how to proceed with amalgamation then discussing the possibility of a new rink; however, money has been offered for a new rink and Council must determine whether it is a good option for the Municipality. He added when speaking to his constituents those on a fixed income expressed concern about an increase in taxes; however, families felt there is a need for a new rink. He felt there is a considerable uncertainty with the proposal and noted after recently speaking with experts he has learned more about the rink business and how it could be done successfully. He asked if the proposal included the cost for a flood mitigation component to the construction. CAO Laycock responded it was brought to his attention that the building would have to be raised between 18-24 inches from where it currently sits and suggested he understood it was included in site preparation.

Councillor Jannasch asked if taking from the operating reserve to fund a capital project would be the same as borrowing. CAO Laycock suggested it is not the same as borrowing because borrowing would have direct, predictable consequences. He explained taking from the operating reserve has a direct but manageable cash-flow impact on the operations of the Municipality at the end of the fiscal year. He noted taking from the reserves would also be a direct impact on the FCI's (Financial Condition Index). Councillor Jannasch asked if there would be a risk that other projects would not be funded. CAO Laycock responded there would be a risk of more unforeseen projects not being funded, he offered that there is good predictability of the upcoming capital projects.

Councillor Jannasch asked whether there was still a heritage component tied to the Provincial funding. Warden Zebian responded to his knowledge it was not. Councillor Jannasch suggested in other circumstances it would be irresponsible to approve this funding without additional information but understood the time restrictions. He advised he is not convinced that replacing one rink with another will generate more economic development. He agreed there is a reasonable argument that we need to make this a multi-use facility to generate

growth, however funds being offered are only for a rink. The best plan is to build an arena in a way to allow the addition of other components in separate phases. He confirmed he would support the motion if the project does not cost the Municipality more than what is proposed in the current preliminary budget. He offered he is hopeful that Council can buy some time to initiate a true community fundraising drive and determine whether there might be other contributors to the project to reduce the tax burden as outlined in the CAO's report. Councillor Jannasch advised he will not support a new arena if the Municipality is the intended operator as he thinks it would be very hypocritical to change direction with such short notice. He suggested there are other options for how the rink could be operated.

Councillor Francis commented that she would support the motion. She suggested that fundraising should begin as soon as possible if the project were to move forward and hoped that the money that was given in the past would be given again. She offered that the area needs this rink and suggested that the Hockey Heritage Society should still be offered a space if they choose to use it in the facility. She indicated that there would be economic spin offs from the projects adding that there will be a building that can be used all year and will be well received.

Councillor Zwicker agreed and felt the area needs attraction so people will come to the area. He suggested if you "build it, they will come", but agreed the Municipality should not be in the business of operating a rink. Councillor Morton advised he would be supporting the motion as that is what his constituents want.

Warden Zebian reported that he had met with Kings Edgehill recently and discussed the project, the history and the future. He confirmed their board is meeting next week and they will discuss the project and contact the Municipality. He added the Town of Windsor is meeting on Thursday morning as well to discuss the issue. He noted that the Municipality would very much like to have the Town's support on the project as it is going to be one community in the future. He suggested this would be a monument to celebrate the birthplace of hockey and is something for everyone to be proud of.

Councillor Daniels asked if Council would be discussing points such as green funding to make it energy efficient before the RFP is submitted. CAO Laycock responded given the timeframe these issues were not considered but suggested all these concerns could be brought forward as the process occurs over the next few months.

**Motion Carried.**

6. Adjournment

**MOVED and SECONDED that the meeting be adjourned.**

**Motion Carried.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

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Abraham Zebian, Warden

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Rhonda Brown, Municipal Clerk