



The Village of
PORT CLEMENTS
"Gateway to the Wilderness"

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Minutes of the Regular Meeting of Council, Monday, October 5th, 2020

Present:

Mayor Daugert
Councillor Cumming
Councillor Falconbridge
Councillor Gould via teleconference
CAO Ruby Decock

Members of the Public and Press: Lindsay Seegmiller, Marilyn Bliss, Maureen Bailey, Bev Lore, Julia Breese, and Carey Stewart

Meeting Called to Order at 7:07 PM

Mayor Daugert: I call to order this meeting of the Council of the Village of Port Clements being held on the traditional territory of the Haida People.

1. ADOPT AGENDA

2020-10-200—moved by Councillor Cumming, seconded by Councillor Falconbridge
THAT the October 5th, 2020 Regular Council Meeting Agenda be adopted as presented.
CARRIED

2. PETITIONS, DELEGATIONS & OPENING OF SEALED TENDERS

D-1- Housing Needs Assessment Report- Lindsay Seegmiller

Questions/Comments to presenter:

Mayor Daugert: Unlikely that we would be doing anything by January 2021, simply because anything we identified would have to have appropriate zoning that followed the Official Community Plan. So, we would have to basically move things from the top-down to make sure the things we did were legitimate in our bylaws and so on, and that is a fairly lengthy process. More like 6-months a year, just for that portion. It would be a handicap to do two things at the same time.

This looks like a good snapshot. I have been around for 40 years, and have seen Port Clements go one way and then another over them, since we are dealing with such small numbers... I have some confidence in the accuracy of the numbers, as it is near the average of the experience here.

Presenter Answer: The community has declined, while it could grow, it is probably likely to stay similar and maybe continue to decline and maybe what kind of housing interventions are appropriate. Anything major would not make sense, given the size of the community. With the Seniors Housing complex, 6 small units that 6 people could move into would open 6 new houses. It is not a huge number and it would accommodate – there are more than 6 people that will need homes to downsize into or to change. Not all of them would like to build, it might not be the right fit, timing, whatever it is. 6 is a small manageable number that could be administered and taken care of a couple of houses in the community that might bring in a couple of new families in and just get the wheels moving. Some people

wanted to see 20 new Seniors' units, but it is relative to the scale of the community and likely for anyone to manage. There is any number of interventions that could be made, focusing exclusively on Seniors' with possibly two policy options alongside, seem to be fitting where the community has been and where it has been going, and not a dramatic pivot in one direction or another.

Councillor Falconbridge: I have a vision of that space by the Community Park for 6 or 10 units, but it also has a health centre or something with hydrotherapy, hot tub, sauna, pool, workout room and also combined with some busing so that people from all over the Island can get access to some things for Seniors that are not supplies in other areas. Like what was done with the Multiplex, with the School and the Council, could have a similar kind of building and then instead of only old people there, there could be activities for young people, services for younger people as well – a career or business ideas. The more complex it is, the better it is for the community. The whole Island would love a pool. Have you seen a facility like it in any of your case studies?

Presenter Answer: Yes, you're picking up on a ton of things that are supported by evidence. First, the Seniors interviewed wanted to be close to other services. Research supports that if you can walk to other places, keep as much movement and activity low-barrier, that is good for people's health. Having a Seniors Complex on the outskirts of town where no one could get anywhere, it would have challenges. There are other examples coming out of Finland (Scandinavian country?) where bringing different generations together – projects, co-living – was tremendously successful and beneficial. The case studies used for this report were of similar sizes to Port Clements. Second, every project co-host has had a pool brought up. It feeds into the question of how to build community and draw people here. A lack of housing is one of the reasons that keep people from moving here, but it is not the only reason.

2020-10-201—moved by Councillor Falconbridge, seconded by Councillor Cumming
THAT Council receives the Village of Port Clements Housing Needs Assessment Presentation written by Co+Host Collective.

CARRIED

3. MINUTES

M-1—September 21st, 2020 Regular Council Meeting Minutes

2020-10-202— moved by Councillor Cumming, seconded by Councillor Falconbridge
THAT the September 21st, 2020 Regular Council Meeting Minutes be adopted as presented.

CARRIED

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES & UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councillor Brigid Cumming declared a Conflict of Interest as she is a member of the Port Clements Housing & Restoration Society and left the meeting at 7:42 PM

UB-1 —Housing Needs Assessment Report

2020-10-203— moved by Councillor Falconbridge, seconded by Councillor Gould
THAT Council approves the Village of Port Clements Housing Needs Assessment report as presented.

CARRIED

Councillor Brigid Cumming returned to the meeting at 7:43 PM

UB-2-Request for Support - Recycling Council of BC

2020-10-204— moved by Councillor Cumming, seconded by Councillor Falconbridge

THAT Council makes the proclamation of the Waste Reduction Week in Canada for October 19th – 25th, 2020 in Port Clements.

CARRIED

2020-10-205— moved by Councillor Cumming, seconded by Councillor Falconbridge

That we email the Recycling Council of BC to request them to help us to reintroduce recycling in our Islands communities since COVID-19 has impacted it with the reduction of recycling services.

CARRIED

5. ORIGINAL CORRESPONDENCE

2020-10-206— moved by Councillor Cumming, seconded by Councillor Falconbridge

That we receive the update from the Resource Benefit Alliance.

CARRIED

6. FINANCE

7. GOVERNMENT

8. NEW BUSINESS

9. REPORTS & DISCUSSIONS

R-1- COVID-19 Update – Verbal Mayor Daugert

CHN announcement that they are going to allow travel again for medical and family affairs. They were in discussion with Pacific Coastal and that flights will tentatively resume on October 29, 2020 with two flights a week on Sundays and Thursdays with a 13-passenger plane; service will expand with demand. Air Canada is looking to start service to Sandspit on November 1, 2020 but have not firmly committed to this. Desi Collinson was going to contact them again to express the wish that this would continue to open the service.

At this time, the Haidas have rewritten their SOLE declaration, while it still included forbidding leisure travel to Haida Gwaii, they were permitting essential service workers, family members and close friends to visit the Islands. There was some objection to requiring the permitting process for visitors that were visitors or close friends, because the permitting process was seen as unnecessarily discouraging. There are still no new cases in Haida Gwaii of COVID-19, they are still recommending but not requiring self-isolation when returning from the mainland, but they are saying if you cannot self-isolate you should wear a mask when in contact with others and limit your activities as much as you can. Stay in a small circle. The announcement was also in green rather than orange, so it seemed almost friendly. It was a slight let-up on the situation of the SOLE.

Gagwiis also indicated that, at this time, they were looking at April 1st, 2021 as the approximate date that they would be welcoming visitors. They were pressed on that date as tourist-based operations need to know in advance, as they need to do bookings in the winter for activities in the summer. They took it under advice and are going to run it through their chain of command, reaching out to SBC and OMVC to discuss. Notice would be given about the end of December whether this is still on track – everything could change depending on what happens with COVID-19.

R-2—SD#50 Busing Concerns – Verbal Councillor Cumming

Background:

At the September 8, 2020 Regular meeting of Council, Bev Lore expressed her concern about the cancellation of the Tlell-Port Clements Elementary School bus run and the effect that this has had on the Port Clements Elementary School (PCES). CAO Ruby Decock, a member of the Tlell Community Association, reached out informally and reported to the September 21, 2020 Regular Meeting that 6-8 Tlell children would attend PCES if busing was provided.

History of PCES busing:

Students from Tlell have been bused to Port Clements to attend school since the 1950s. In 1962 a road was opened to Juskatla, adding students from that community. In all islands' schools at that time — Masset, Port Clements, Queen Charlotte, Sandspit, and Tasu — Grades 1-10 were taught. Students boarded with families off-island to complete grades 11 and 12, receiving a subsidy to defray costs from the School District.

In 1970 Tahayghen Elementary was built and opened to accommodate the influx of military personnel dependents due to the expansion of CFS Masset, the newly renamed George M. Dawson Secondary School extended to cover grades 8-12, and Port Clements was reduced to a Grade 1-7 elementary school.

Busing costs mounted over the years, district enrollment declined, and by 2009, when the School Board briefly cancelled the Port Clements-Masset bus run for high school students, district busing cost \$385,000 but the provincial government supplied \$291,000 for student transportation, an amount that had remained unchanged since 1991 (Board Defends Bus Cancellation, Haida Gwaii Observer, April 15, 2009).

Catchment areas, which used to dictate the schools students could attend, were effectively removed in the mid-2000s on Haida Gwaii. Provided there is space, students can attend any school in the district.

In April 2018, a report on Student Transportation by then-Secretary Treasurer Shelley Sansome proposed cancelling the \$567,000 contract with First Bus Canada and the \$15,000 contract with Eagle Transit. The Ministry of Education would provide capital funding allowing the School District to provide busing services at an estimated annual operating cost of \$408,000, including \$40,000 contingency.

Two lines of this 2-page report state "Eliminate the route from Tlell to Port" and "There will no longer be a bus to transport students residing south of Port Clements to travel to Port Clements Elementary School."

No rationale for this decision is given, although it appears to be tied to the decision to leave the school buses in Masset and Queen Charlotte during the day, which means that bus drivers are actually driving white cars owned by the district to/from the schools during the day. This effectively eliminates the 'back haul' for bus runs, as the drivers are unable to transport students in the cars.

The recommendations were adopted by the district and effective September 2018, no busing was supplied to PCES.

Planning for cancellation of bus service to PCES

In a word, none. Apparently, there was no discussion or planning done between April and September 2018 to anticipate or ameliorate any educational or social or other impacts on what is already a small community school.

The PAC chair Kazimir Falconbridge says that to the best of his recollection, no one was advised at the meeting around the district taking over the busing held in October 2017 that the Tlell-Port Clements bus run would be cancelled.

PCES teachers were simply told what their teaching assignments would be in 2018.

Results at PCES:

Since this decision to cancel busing services to PCES has seen:

1.sustained drop in school enrollment from 35-38 FTE (2015/2016/2017) to 19-23 FTE (2018/2019/2020), or 35%-50%;

2.concomitant drop in Parent Advisory Council membership, leading to erosion of participation --notably, in 2020 budget input, PCES is sole PAC unrepresented;

3.reduction from 3-classeswith double/triple grade splits to 2-classes with quadruple grade splits;

4.concomitant reduction in staffing levels, with associated reductions to or elimination of everything from extra-curricular sports offerings to social events such as Christmas concerts;

5.virtual elimination of students attending PCES from anywhere other than Port Clements itself, reinforcing isolation and insularity in Haida Gwaii's smallest incorporated community;

6.lowered enrollment pushing school to borderline financial viability, even with supplemental funding for isolated rural schools.

Results for Tlell parents/students:

Elementary students are boarding the bus at 7:30 in Tlell and arriving at their school at 9a.m. Students are driven past their school in Skidegate at 8:15, but because supervision is not provided on school grounds until 8:30, they cannot be dropped off then.

Students, potentially as young as 4-5 years old, ride to the Queen Charlotte high school as it picks up high school students (thus mixing cohorts), wait while the bus is disinfected (Covid-19 protocol) and then reboard for the drive back to Skidegate. This means triple the time on the bus compared with the Tlell/Port Clements run, 3 hours versus under an hour.

Tlell parents have been told that they are not eligible for the transportation subsidy if they choose to drive their children to PCES. The subsidy is quite limited, based on \$0.20 per km plus \$0.40 per student to a maximum of \$13/per student/per day. In contrast, the standard School District mileage allowance for employees and trustees is \$0.55/km and a Tlell-Port Clements round-trip is reimbursed at \$23.10, not capped at \$13.

Additionally, private transport of children is far more risky. Transport Canada cites the following:

“According to the National Collision Database (NCDB) statistics, school buses are the safest means of transporting students to and from school. As of 2018, students are about 80 times more likely to get to school safely on a school bus than by car.

Fatalities on school buses account for less than 0.1% of all motor vehicle-related fatalities in Canada. In the last decade, between 2009 and 2018, there was 1 school bus passenger fatality on Canadian roads.”

Some parents have chosen to homeschool.

Complicating factors:

PCES principal, School District Superintendent and School District Secretary-Treasurer are all new to the job, having been hired 2019-2020.

Suggestions:

I recommend that the Village of Port Clements:

- write to the School District 50 Board of Education asking them to reconsider their decision to cancel the Tlell/Port Clements school bus and to refuse transportation subsidies for Tlell parents choosing to send their children to PCES, identifying the results;
- ask the PCES Principal and the School District Superintendent to immediately develop a plan to ameliorate the notable and continuing educational and social effects that this has had on the PCES students and residents of Port Clements and Tlell;
- ask the Tlell Community Association to conduct a more formal assessment of the number of affected families/students in their community;
- look at transportation alternatives such as the Sandspit Community Bus;
- once the provincial election is over, write to the Minister of Education and our local MLA advising of the drastic impact of this decision, which is pushing our sole local school to the thin edge of viability;
- this is especially shocking given the effort the community has gone to creating the school within the multipurpose building;
- ask the regional officer of health to assess the safety implications of putting children on a bus for 3 hours a day alongside secondary students – mixing cohorts, expanded exposure.

2020-10-206 - Moved by Councillor Falconbridge, seconded by Councillor Cumming

THAT Council includes Councillor Cumming's SD#50 report with the letter to be written to SD#50

CARRIED

Mayor Daugert: Gwaii Trust – approximately \$50 million dollars with the Althii Gwaii Trust, that cannot be released at this time as it was originally provincial money done by a legislated act that was allowed to go to private businesses as well as non-profits which was a red flag to the CRA and basically illegal. Everything would be fully taxed included the \$50 million. The Federal Government agreed that the money should be released to Gwaii Trust, but not distributed until there was legislation passed Provincially identifying how it could be administered and released to Gwaii Trust under their terms. It is now waiting at the BC Legislature, which will not happen until it reconvenes after the election, and after they get emergency things off their plates, so it could be as long as a year. In the meantime, we cannot lose the money as it is in the control of the Gwaii Trust, so they cannot take it back, so there are good things and bad things, but it is coming our way. It is currently being looked after the executive of the Gwaii Trust, independently from the rest of the Gwaii Trust Society funds. They have to determine how it will be handled, but Gwaii Trust would

Althii Gwaii Trust – approximately \$50 million dollars in control of Gwaii Trust but cannot be spent. There is a hold on this because of uncertainty on how the funds can be properly disbursed. The legislature is to review this item, but it will be continued to be managed by the executive of Gwaii Trust. It is being handled independently from the Gwaii Trust Society funds. Three pillars to focus on will be restoration, revitalization, and renewables.

Attended a brief meeting with the Engineer on Rainbow Wharf to discuss additional changed works. Recommended that the wharf be washed prior to opening.

Councillor Cumming: Nothing to report. No committee meetings due to COVID-19.

Councillor Falconbridge: Attended an All Island Protocol table meeting

Councillor Gould: attended the VIRL meeting. VIRL facility is now open to the public with limited access. Meeting with Kelly and Andrew to go forward with grant application funding. Looking at the quotes for grant application improvements.

CAO Decock: Our EOC continues to be activated at a level 1 and we have now hired Cyndi Bird as the new EOC Director. Cyndi will be working part-time as we are aware of the current pandemic. We would like to thank Zena Thiersten for helping Cyndi transition into the EOC Director position and for extending her employment to assist our community during this pandemic. Currently working on getting the public works vehicle finalized, working on existing budget line items that we can deal with now that COVID-19 is now delayed. Working with the Small Craft Harbour to get the repairs finalized and preparing to get some of the projects underway. Working on digital council meetings, current issue with mic system with current option being looked at where mics used cause feedback for digital attendees, pending supplier update.

2020-10-207 - Moved by Councillor Falconbridge, seconded by Councillor Cumming
THAT Council receives Council's and CAO Decock's verbal reports.

CARRIED

10. ACTION ITEMS

A-1- Action Items List

2020-10-208- Moved by Councillor Falconbridge, seconded by Councillor Cumming.
THAT Council receives the report on the Action Items

CARRIED

11. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC & PRESS

Question/Statement – Julia Breese (SD#50 Trustee): Would like to know if the SD#50 report will be included with letter to the SD#50 Board of Trustees? Would also like to thank Councillor Cumming for writing this report, as a new Board Member she was not part of the decision and has been urging parents to write letters, and would like to thank VOPC Council for taking action on this as when large organizations and agencies get involved it gets more momentum.

Answer: Yes, it will be included with the letter to SD#50.

Comment/Assertion – Carey Stewart (SD#50 Superintendent): Thanks for the report as it has a lot of information and history. He will be taking this information to the Senior Team to address the busing situation. Out of the recommendations in the report, the health officer assessment and ones relating to health and safety always are good to focus on. The impact on the families, especially during COVID-19 are good to focus on, so getting parents to write a letter to SD#50 is important. It's the parent's voices that have the power to make changes. Having something in writing, something factual, it is hard to say no to that. Look at the alternate transportation measures – ie. Community busing like Sandspit - I do not have the answers, but this something to consider and I will be bringing it back to our Senior Team.

Question – Maureen Bailey: When can the Seniors' Room be reopened?

Answer: As soon as the Seniors' Group develops a COVID-19 safety/exposure plan.

Question—Marilyn Bliss: What is the Village doing with the M&B property subdivision?

Answer: It is being worked on, but the OCP and other bylaws need to be updated.

Question—Bev Lore (Recreation Commission): We are doing our meal program, but we could not locate the fire extinguisher in the Community Kitchen?

Answer: CAO Decock will look into the fire extinguisher first thing in the morning.

12. IN-CAMERA

90(1) A part of a council meeting may be closed to the public if the subject matter being considered relates to or is one or more of the following:

- (a) personal information about an identifiable individual who holds or is being considered for a position as an officer, employee or agent of the municipality or another position appointed by the municipality;
- (c) labour relations or other employee relations;
- (j) information that is prohibited, or information that if it were presented in a document would be prohibited, from disclosure under section 21 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act;

90(2) A part of a council meeting must be closed to the public if the subject matter being considered relates to one or more of the following:

- (b) the consideration of information received and held in confidence relating to negotiations between the municipality and a provincial government or the federal government or both, or between a provincial government or the federal government or both and a third party

Council had a 5 minutes recess before moving to in-camera

2010-10-209- Moved by Councillor Cumming, seconded by Councillor Falconbridge
THAT Council moves to the in-camera meeting as per section 90(1) (a), (c), (j) and 90(2)(b) at 9:01 PM
CARRIED

13. ADJOURNMENT

2020-10-210 Moved by Councillor Cumming
THAT this meeting be adjourned at 9:55PM.
CARRIED


Mayor Doug Daugert


CAO Ruby Decock