



The Village of
PORT CLEMENTS
"Gateway to the Wilderness"

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7:00 PM, Monday, December 4th, 2023
Minutes of the Committee of the Whole

Present:

Mayor Scott Cabianca – via conferencing
Councillor Brigid Cumming - via conferencing
Councillor Kazamir Falconbridge – via conferencing
Councillor Wayne Nicol
Councillor Dennis Reindl

CAO Marjorie Dobson
Deputy CAO Elizabeth Cumming
Public Works Superintendent Sean O'Donoghue

Members of the public: Andrew Hudson (Grant Writer) via conference, Marilyn Bliss, Maureen Bailey

Meeting Called to Order at 7:06 PM

Councillor Reindl: I call to order this committee of the whole meeting of the Council of the Village of Port Clements being held on the traditional territory of the Haida People.

1. ADOPT AGENDA

2023-12-303—Moved by Councillor Cumming,
THAT the Committee adopts the December 4th, 2023, Committee of the Whole Agenda as presented.

CARRIED

Mayor Scott Cabianca joined meeting at 7:15 PM

2. REPORTS & DISCUSSIONS

D-1-Water/Sewer

- *Andrew Hudson, Grant Writer, gave a presentation to the committee. In his presentation he identified that large municipal infrastructure projects in the Village (and on Haida Gwaii, and for municipalities generally) have been relying on two grants for funding that are sunseting this year (2023) and have not ad replacement grant funds identified/announced by the federal or provincial governments. While it is expected that there will be a replacement, there is no guarantee at this time. Unfortunately, he is only privy to publicly announced information. Outside of these two grants there are not many available funds to cover these projects (such as involving sewer systems, water systems, roads, etc) as these projects are viewed as typical municipal expenditures that they are expected to pay themselves and most funds explicitly make typical municipal expenditures ineligible for grant funding. However, there are more grant funding options for feasibility studies for such infrastructure projects (ex. Tingley Street, sewer extensions, etc). In general, funding application timelines tend to not be kind for communities on Haida Gwaii.*
- *Sean O'Donoghue, Public Works Superintendent, gave a presentation to the committee. He identified that on the topic of sewer, such as a sewer extension to the Bayview Rural Subdivision it is not the first time the idea has been brought up, it has been brought up several times over several decades. The most recent plan is a feasibility study/design plan from 2005 (which considers two designs), and it is recommended that if Council was interested in a possible extension that this feasibility study be*

redone as it is severally outdated now (18 years out of date with its cost estimates). As the cost of the extension (either in full or at least a percentage of it) would be borne by the property owners being serviced by the extension property owners have been polled several times, the most recent being in 2010 and 2014, and on both occasions the majority did not agree to the sewer extension so there is currently only water service going to the properties. The sewer extension offers the best solution to get sewer service to the campground, however, the sewer extension has not been a strategic priority of Council. On the topic of water, he identified that dealing the asbestos water line on Tingley Street has been a strategic priority for many previous Councils. The most recent infrastructure study on it was done by McElhanney c. 5/6 years ago. It includes replacement of the waterline – the engineers had wanted to cut out a portion of the line to test it (stress testing, etc) to determine its aged/condition, however, for safety reasons it was not done. Urban Systems later considered the infrastructure (c. 1967) in their asset management plan, and generally the age of the infrastructure, as it is the oldest part of the water system, prioritizes its replacement. There are more onerous legislative conditions for handling asbestos and it poses significant challenges to public works as they do not have capacity to meet those conditions – currently if there is an emergency break or maintenance need on the line, an outside contractor would need to be brought in to handle it. Engineers identify that replacement of the water line would be ideal when developing well #4. A feasibility study is also advisable for costing out expenses for the project, one that included an engineers assessment of costing and options of where to place. Such an engineered feasibility study would be a beneficial tool for applying to grant funding for the project. Additionally, if funding was in place for the feasibility study, it is possible that when construction work with the sewer lagoon is underway, and when the engineers for that project are already on island and in the Village for that work, that the feasibility study could be coordinated to be undertaken at the same time with the same engineers and thereby reduce costs for it (cost savings with mobilization/demobilization). In general, there is a strong staff recommendation for the asbestos waterline removal project.

- There was a question on the impacts of the asbestos pipes on the water quality if there were asbestos fibres in the water. Currently, the Northern Health permit does not require asbestos testing, nor is there a requirement or asbestos test identified in the guidelines for water treatment. This is probably due to asbestos fibres not posing a danger with ingestion, as their danger comes from inhalation of free fibres in the air (though it would be interesting to consider if laundry lint poses a risk of exposure). It probably is testable, which would mean setting up a testing program for months or a year.
- Discussion had questions with presenters. One prominent question to Grant Writer was how Daajing Giids proceeded with their Sewer Project grant application as it is a \$23.6 million project that they received \$20 million in funding for. Daajing Giids made their application in 2022, but it was identified that the application had been long in development and had been revised. Likely, a large factor is that Daajing Giids is one of the last communities in the province that provides an untreated sewer service.
- Another question posed to the grant writer, was the ongoing funding issue with the sewer lagoon project. Council had talked with the member of Parliament weeks ago, who talked with the Minister and suggested they can look for funding, however, later on the Minister identified no funding possibilities and told the Village to borrow the money for the new sewer lagoon. This reflects how generally municipalities are expected to fund water/sewer projects themselves – historically the Village was incorporated in order to set up the sewer and water system and borrowed to fund it which was recovered through property taxes (the Village was still paying off the initial project costs in 2001). Would it help to talk to our update the Member of Parliament of the Minister's response, that there has been no progress? The Grant Writer did not see why not but is not involved with this political aspect.
- Regarding water, the discussion identified a priority to deal with the asbestos water line on Tingley Street, ideally at the same time as the well #4 installation project. There is a question on whether to bury the line in the ground – which is the current best practice – or removing it entirely. Concern that environmental and other legislation considerations will be getting stricter and may necessitate removal and at that time it will be very expensive and onerous to remove it (currently, restrictions and costs are increasing for removal of treated boards on docks, lead paint, etc) and in 5-10 years may not be an option to leave it in the ground. Grant money needed to fund the project.

- *Regarding sewer, the discussion identified desire to find grant money to redo the report and undertake any projects. Heavy obligation to put on the taxpayers to pay for sewer extension, so they have to be in agreement to pay the costs – for the rest of the sewer system, the rest of the property owners did pay its costs, were taxed for it, so not unusual/unfair if these property owners to pay for the costs if they want the service, though finding grant money would be ideal. Concern that property owners failing/aging septic systems and potential environmental impact may pose liability on Village, especially with potentially stricter legislation and oversight down the road. Some discussion that the likely cost of extending the sewer into the area would be \$2-4 million, replacing the whole sewer system would probably cost around \$20 million (however, these are only guesses). All the sewer lines are old, most around 40+ years in age and need maintenance. Debate about need to prioritize projects, with the sewer lagoon coming before considerations for extensions. General consensus to redo the 2005 Mechlanney Report for the sewer line extension and extending it to the campground and looping it (new design) so it was not a dead end. It was brought up for consideration that the Village, if they are undertaking that extension, should look at starting it at the Williams Road connection and replacing that part as part of it as it was poorly constructed and problematic, and identified potential Village liability.*

2023-12-304—Moved by Councillor Cumming,

THAT the Committee recommends to Council to go ahead and plan to replace, leaving the ascrete in situ, the water piping along the top two blocks of Tingley St (the old M&B Subdivision water piping) and also not forgetting the extension that goes to the water tower AND THAT we couple this with installing the access to well #4.

CARRIED

2023-12-305—Moved by Councillor Cumming,

THAT the Committee recommends to Council that we look at updating the 2005 engineering study with the addition of extending water and sewer as far as the campground and that we also include the Williams St sewer extension that was done in the 1990s.

CARRIED

2023-12-306—Moved by Councillor Cumming,

THAT the Committee recommends to Council that if an engineering study is required to address the asbestos pipe situation in the old M&B subdivision that Council do the engineering study.

CARRIED

2023-12-307—Moved by Councillor Cumming,

THAT the Committee recommends to Council that, ideally, in conjunction with completing the hookup for well #3 that we do an engineering assessment of the water treatment plant.

CARRIED

2023-12-308—Moved by Councillor Reindl,

THAT the Committee recommends to Council that, before we delve too deeply into any of these things, we determine what the engineering costs might be and we look into some grant money for feasibility studies to do these things that we think we need to do.

CARRIED

Meeting end at 8:36 PM


Councillor Dennis Reindl


CAO Marjorie Dobson

