

**MONTAGUE TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
JANUARY 9, 2006**

The regular meeting of the Town Council for the Town of Montague is hereby declared in session by Mayor Richard Collins this 9<sup>th</sup> day of January 2006 beginning at 7:00 pm.

Richard Collins, Mayor  
John MacFarlane, Deputy Mayor  
David Mabon, Councillor  
Wilbur Naddy, Councillor  
Peter Doucette, Councillor  
Niall MacKay, Councillor  
Rick Beck, Councillor

Staff: Robin Campbell, CAO

**Welcome & Remarks**

Mayor Collins called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance. He informed Council that Patsy Hayes was unable to attend this evening, therefore the Island East presentation will be deleted from the agenda.

**Approval of Agenda**

Moved by Councillor Beck  
Seconded by Deputy Mayor MacFarlane  
“That the agenda be approved as circulated.” Motion carried.

**Adoption of Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Naddy  
Seconded by Councillor Doucette  
“That the minutes of the regular meeting held on December 12, 2005 and special meetings held on December 16<sup>th</sup> and December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2005 be adopted as circulated.”  
Motion carried.

**Business Arising from the Minutes**

Deputy Mayor MacFarlane raised a question regarding a policy on payments of grants which the Finance Committee was directed to discuss and make a recommendation. Councillor Naddy advised that he met with Councillor Mabon to discuss the matter and Councillor Doucette, who was unable to attend, but briefed on the discussion.

**Payment of Accounts**

Moved by Deputy Mayor MacFarlane  
Seconded by Councillor Doucette

“That bills amounting to \$21,823.78 are hereby approved for payment from the Town General Account.” Motion carried

Moved by Deputy Mayor MacFarlane

Seconded by Councillor MacKay

“That bills amounting to \$8,081.07 are hereby approved for payment from the Water and Sewer Utility Account.” Motion carried.

### **Presentation**

Councillor Doucette introduced the judges for the Christmas Lighting contest and, on behalf of Council, presented them with certificates of appreciation. The winners of the competition were then presented with awards by the judges. Tom Rath presented the commercial award to Country Garden Florists. Malcolm Patterson presented the residential award for the North side to George & Terri Cummings and Edgar Dewar presented the South side residential award to Merrill and Barbara Scott.

Councillor Doucette then commented on the success of the Christmas Tree Festival and publicly thanked the volunteer committee as well as George Matheson for his cooperation in allowing the events to be held in the Marina Inn.

### **Correspondence**

1. Correspondence from the Chairman, Communities in Bloom, inviting the town to participate in the 2006 program.

**Discussion:** Councillor Doucette stated it would be a good program for the town to enter. He expected there would be good cooperation from the Beautification Committee and residents, however, there is a cost involved which Council would be required to approve. The CAO then advised that there was a registration fee of \$450 for a town this size and in addition the town would be responsible for the transportation, accommodation and meal expenses for the judges to come to Montague. Councillor Doucette then stated that he would give notice of motion regarding this matter later in the meeting.

2. Correspondence from George Matheson regarding the bill for the hotel building permit fee and a verbal agreement made in 1998.

**Discussion:** Councillor Naddy - a verbal agreement was made with Mr. Matheson giving him from 5 to 7 years to pay the building permit fee. Councillor Mabon - he was not sure of the number of years, but it was his understanding that the fee only had to be paid if the hotel showed a profit. In response to a request, the CAO provided information with respect to the lack of documentation and the circumstances surrounding the bill being sent. Councillor MacKay - the agreement was designed to help Mr. Matheson out with this project and if the hotel made a profit, the bill would be paid. He then asked if there was a profit made on the sale. The CAO advised that the financial information was not available. In response to a question from Mayor Collins, Councillor MacKay stated that a closed door meeting was held with all Council present at the time but no records were kept.

Deputy Mayor MacFarlane - this was a verbal agreement, we sent a bill, Mr. Matheson responded in writing. With no paper trail he did not see any sense in going forward with it and litigation would be a moot point. Councillor Doucette – really concerned that a meeting was held without a written record being kept. Mr. Matheson is a valued member of the community, he provided a reputable service to the town while owner of the hotel. He hopes Mr. Matheson will consider future investment in the town. He would hope that any future negotiations would be handled in a much different manner, however, he would encourage Council to waive the fee as agreed to by the previous council. Councillor Beck – with no written record, and echoing Councillor Doucette’s comments regarding future investment, he to would urge Council to waive the fee. Mayor Collins – since coming into office all business has been conducted in a public forum. This is a can of worms that will not sit very well with the community. If Council was going to exempt this fee it should have been done in a public meeting with the public and press in attendance.

**Action: Moved by Councillor Beck  
Seconded by Deputy Mayor MacFarlane  
“That the Town of Montague waive the \$8,500 hotel permit fee in full.” Motion carried.**

3. E-mail from Tom Rath, President, Southern Kings & Queens Chamber of Commerce, applauding Council’s decision to take a proactive role in seeking new hospitality accommodations in Montague.
4. Correspondence from Hon. Elmer MacFadyen, Minister of Community & Cultural Affairs, acknowledging Mayor Collins comments regarding the report on Municipal Legislation Reform.
5. Correspondence from Businesses on Brook Street requesting Council to allow their “Lighthouse” sign to remain in place year round.

**Action: Moved by Councillor Naddy  
Seconded by Councillor Beck  
“That the ‘Lighthouse Sign’ be permitted to remain in place year round.” Motion carried by majority.  
FOR: Councillors Mabon, Beck, Naddy, Doucette & MacKay  
AGAINST: Deputy Mayor MacFarlane**

### **Public Input**

Mayor Collins opened the floor for public input requesting those who wished to speak to use the podium and identify themselves.

Janice Taylor addressed Council by stating how disappointed she was with the previous Council for making closed door deals. She feels that Mr. Matheson should pay this fee. This Council has now covered up the fact that an unpaid building fee was on the books for eight years and does not now have to be paid. A building permit when signed and issued should be paid for. It is ridiculous that it is now written off. Not one person voted

against the motion. It is not the Council but the taxpayers who will suffer from this decision. How can this Council justify waiving this fee when everyone else has to pay for their permits.

In response to these comments, Mayor Collins stated that it was always his policy to conduct business in the public. This was the worst piece of business he has seen in his twenty years of involvement in town affairs. The town is now out \$8,500 of taxpayers money.

### **Notice of Motion**

Councillor Doucette gave notice that he would move, or cause to be moved, at the February Council meeting a motion for Council to consider enrolling in the Communities in Bloom competition.

### **Planning Board Report**

Councillor Doucette, Chair of the Planning Board reported that three successful open houses were held on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of last week during which time many suggestions were made to the Planning Board and Administration. He reminded everyone that the Planning Board would be conducting a Public Meeting on Thursday, January 17 at 7:00 pm to receive presentations regarding the Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw.

### **Special Committee Report**

Councillor Doucette reported that several letters were submitted to interested parties with regard to securing a new hotel for Montague. The committee met local interested people and conducted preliminary discussions regarding land, placement and size. Another meeting is planned for tomorrow with other local interests. To date, everything is very preliminary and more of an investigative nature.

### **RCMP Quarterly Report**

S/Sgt Larry Kavanagh, along with Sgt. Don MacGregor, was in attendance to present a quarterly report on activities of the RCMP. S/Sgt. began his report by stating that he believed in an open and honest policy; that they were accountable to the public; and that it was important that taxpayers have a better understanding of policing services. Kavanagh then reviewed the information contained in the written report previously circulated to Council.

Mayor Collins extended Council's appreciation to the officers for attending this meeting.

### **CAO Report**

A written report for the month of December was presented by the CAO Robin Campbell. There were no items in his report that required Council action.

**Resolutions**

There were no resolutions presented.

**Closing Remarks**

Mayor Collins reminded the Council and public of the Planning Board Public Meeting scheduled for this Thursday evening at 7 pm and of the Public Hearing and Special Council meeting to be held on January 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Adjournment**

Moved by Councillor MacKay

Seconded by Deputy Mayor MacFarlane

“That the meeting be adjourned.” Motion carried

Meeting adjourned 8:45 pm.

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Richard Collins, Mayor

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Robin Campbell, CAO