



Minutes

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Tahsis Village Council
Held October 5 2010 at the Council Chambers
Municipal Hall, 977 South Maquinna

Present: Mayor Corrine Dahling
Councillors A.Cameron; M. Davis; J. Schooner

Staff: April Roth, Acting Corporate Officer

15 members of the public

Call to Order:

Mayor Dahling stated that she would like to acknowledge and respect that we are upon Mowachaht Muchalaht traditional territory, and called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

Introduction of Late Items:

Davis/Cameron

/2010

THAT: the late item as listed on the October 5 2010 addendum be added to the regular meeting agenda.

Approval of the Agenda:

Davis/Cameron

/2010

THAT the agenda for the October 5 2010 Regular Council meeting be approved as circulated.

CARRIED-UNANIMOUS

/2010

Petitions and Delegations:

**1. Nootka Sound RCMP
Re: Quarterly Policing Report**

Adoption of Minutes:

No minutes available.

Business Arising:

Public Input:

Scott Isley apologized for using his pressure washer during the water shortage.

Reports & Questions:

COUNCIL:

Mayor Dahling:

Report Pending.

Councillor M. Davis

As some of you may be aware, the new section of the Head Bay Road in the Pine Flats area has been opened. This has been a long time coming and eliminates several dangerous curves. Also, after a few months with only one grader on the road, we now have another grader and operator for the Tahsis end of the road. Since the major floods we recently experienced, the washouts on the road have been backfilled and repaired and grading will follow.

We have recently gone through another period of water issues in town following the blockage of our water intakes with sediment. Public Works spent many long hours ensuring that we had a continuous water supply despite the damage and I would like to thank them for all their efforts. I would also like to thank April and Sharon at the office for all their efforts during this crisis; Councillor Schooner also spent many hours at the office and I'm sure she will have a more thorough report on the issues. Due to work commitments, I was unable to offer much help although I did drive a few of the local kids around the south portion of town where we delivered information leaflets to the residents – thanks kids!

I would also like to talk briefly about our water system. The fact that it has failed two years in a row during major flood events speaks volumes about the aging and decrepit condition of the intake system. It is not sustainable and needs a complete rebuild. Back in July, I had discussions with our engineers regarding a new intake system that could be incorporated into the run-of-the-river power project that has been in the works for our community watershed.

Synex Energy has proposed to build this intake system under the riverbed for us as part of the deal that would allow them access to our watershed. If this system were currently in place, these flood events would not have affected our intake system. Where this type of system has been in use at Oyster River, they not only avoid turbidity and sediment clogging issues, but their water quality exceeds the new Vancouver Island Health Authority regulations which have yet to come into effect. If our old intake system was rebuilt, it could become the backup system that we currently don't have. My hope is that Council will meet soon with all stakeholders to first of all, do a post-mortem on the water crisis and more importantly, hammer out a solution that ensures that this doesn't happen again. This would involve all stakeholders including Public Works, VIHA, our engineers and finally, Synex Energy.

In closing, I would like to offer my apology for not attending the UBCM conference in Whistler. I had fully intended to but was not able to go due to work obligations. I do fully plan to attend next year.

Councillor A. Cameron:

Some people run for office, but I tell people I didn't run , I stood. I did not go door-to-door bothering people and interrupting their evening, I put up no posters, and I didn't hire a marching band and a corps of drum majorettes. I simply promised that I would do my very best to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of Council member.

I had no idea at all what I was getting myself into! And right off the bat I'll tell you that as things stand now, I have absolutely no intention whatsoever of standing for re-election. I will fulfill my term, I will continue to do the best job I can do as a councillor, I made a commitment and I will stand by it, but I wouldn't wish this job on my worst enemy, it is the most thankless pain in the face I have encountered and I've seen too much of the ugly side of some people.

At the last meeting individuals in the audience suggested mayor and council should resign. Disabuse yourself of that notion. I'm not resigning. It was also suggested that mayor and council had lost the trust of the electorate; that's only fair, I've lost a lot of the trust I had IN the electorate. One individual loudly and hotly demanded "decorum" from the chair: this same individual had spent the evening shuffling his feet, sliding his chair, pulling faces, talking to his neighbours, cat-calling and interjecting. If he wants decorum he might consider setting an example and presenting some himself.

Some individuals seem to have seized on the problem in the Finance Department in order to exploit it, misrepresent it and use it as the springboard for their own election campaign. Some of what went on at the last Council meeting put me in mind of the scene in the classic horror movie where the mob comes over the hill with pitchforks and torches.

If some of the individuals who sounded off could pitch a softball as well as they cast aspersions we'd have a championship team. Individuals whose own reputations are less than stellar were on their feet making snide personal observations about and against people who weren't present and so had no way to defend themselves. Pots were busy calling kettles black and people whose own houses are constructed of brittle glass had armed themselves with piles of rocks and were busy chucking in hopes that a year from now they can get elected and believe me, I hope they do, they deserve it.

We have a problem in the Finance department. Well, actually, we have several. We have no director of Finance, and yes, we have been looking. There are a lot of book keepers in the province, and there are a lot of accountants, but there are not a lot of either who are skilled in municipal finance. And we need someone with municipal training.

If you look at the auditors' report you'll see that there has never been any suggestion that anybody has at any time stolen any money. And yet there are individuals who seem to prefer to ignore that fact and repeatedly accuse staff of swiping money. It makes a great story, it could probably make a half decent movie for television, but it isn't true and however politically ambitious those individuals are, it doesn't bode well for Tahsis if the ones ignoring fact wind up elected.

There is a form of dyslexia called "dyscalculia". Some people call it "number dumb". It is marked by an absolute inability to handle numbers. For those of us who are blessed with it, the most simple arithmetic becomes hard, unremitting toil. We can memorize the times table, but that doesn't mean we understand any part of it. Go to Google, look it up...I have depended, in my time as a Councillor, on Elsie Horvath and Councillor Schooner, both of whom have been very patient as I plod along behind everyone else, trying to cope with numbers. But I have no problem with words. And when the accountant says there is no proof any money has been stolen, I have no problem understanding what that means. And while I may have problems because of being number dumb, I have no problem with the concepts behind the numbers.

The problem isn't that seventy thousand dollars has been stolen, it isn't that seventy thousand dollars has gone missing, it isn't that seventy thousand dollars has flown out the window and gone south with the migrating geese. The problem is that there is no paper trail of any kind for the seventy thousand dollars. Maybe receipts have been lost, or gone missing, or wait to be found. Maybe...any of a number of possibilities...the numbers do not add up, they do not balance.

That's a far cry from "fraud", which an individual suggested.

We're looking for the answers. I personally do not believe there will be one answer, unless "mess" is an answer. The previous administration introduced a new computer programme to the Finance department. And good on them for doing it. The new programme, when it is up and running, will take much of the confusion and duplication of effort out of the finance department. It was a forward stride into the future because eventually every city, town, and village in the province will use the same programme and everyone will be on the same page in the same book.

Unfortunately, it is dependent on computers. And most of us only think we understand computers. In truth, few of us do. Some of us can do a few things with computers, few of us can do what Councillor Atkinson can do with them. And maybe he can explain what happens when a new programme is incompletely fed into the machine. And then two members of the Finance Department tried to learn the programme over the phone.

Think on that. The entire programme was not in place, two neophytes were trying to learn a partial programme and is it any wonder the numbers didn't balance?

Our last Council meeting was a demonstration of demonization. In spite of which, the sky did not fall.

I am not a computer expert and I am not a professional researcher but I have checked how Public Input is handled in other places. And my research is incomplete and flawed. But a number of other municipalities have rules about Public Input, rules which restrict the amount of time a person can spend asking questions, restrict the number of questions one person can ask, and restrict the tenor and tone of the questions and statements. This mayor and council have, from the get-go, chosen a freer and looser Public Input. We have encouraged free expression of opinion and I have personally tried very hard to keep the lines of communication open.

There is a huge difference between “freedom” and “license”. My freedom to swing my arm stops just before the point that your nose begins. Snide aside is not communication, interruption is not constructive, nagging is not conversation and insult isn't going to replace information any time soon.

I think we need some rules and restrictions around Public Input. Oh, I know, “if you can't stand the heat get the hell out of the kitchen”. I know...but last Council meeting the kitchen was on fire and we should all of us have got out of it. And we don't have to do that. Some aspects of Public Input have been highjacked by the political aspirations of a very few individuals who seem to have chosen to be the self-appointed guardians of the morals of everything you can think of. And as they gas bag and hog the attention, other people are intimidated into silence, and still other people don't even bother coming to Council meetings any more.

You can pick up your agenda prior to the meeting. Read it. Acquaint yourself with it. Then formulate a succinct, hopefully brief, question. Some forethought would be constructive. It might cut down on the amount of knee-jerk attention demanding political campaigning. It might give other people a chance to express an idea.

Last week a home owner and tax payer sat across a table from me and outlined a very workable idea for social housing in Tahsis. And I committed myself to doing some investigation and trying to find a way to utilize his idea. I asked him to come to the meeting and to bring his idea with him, to present it to you, the audience, and to invite input. I figure some of you have some very good ideas, too. He said no, he wasn't coming to a Council meeting, that he didn't like the acrimony and the grandstanding, and he wasn't going to expose himself to the negative energy swirling and roiling during the heated quarrels.

And I left our last meeting with the unhappy feeling that he had made the right choice.

You might have noticed I'm driving a different van. Until last week I had only driven it during daylight hours. I left the meeting, navigated the parking lot, got in the van and...couldn't find the headlight switch. I might have had to walk home and leave the van there if it hadn't been for Dave Mac...he had no trouble finding the light switch. Thank you, Mr. MacIntosh, I owe you big time.

And thank you all for coming out tonight. I hope the meeting won't be too upsetting and onerous for you.

Our “storm of the century” knocked our water system for a total loop, and I want to publicly applaud our Public Works people, they really saved our bacon. They went far beyond the job descriptions of the positions they hold, they put in long, hard, miserable hours and I can only imagine how wretched it is to be in a speeding torrent of bitterly cold water to your waist, or higher, trying to clean gravel out of the intake chamber. My personal opinion is each and every one of them deserve a financial bonus, and I'm going to recommend that to mayor and council.

I know it isn't possible to pay people for the kind of loyalty and effort Public works demonstrated to us all at the time of crisis, but I do feel a bonus is always a nice way to say thank you. And thank you, too, to Mr. Sharma, for his help with the bottled water, and to Thrifty Foods for giving us that bottled water free of charge. We can show our gratitude by our shopping habits..nudge nudge wink wink...

Our mayor was at the conference in Whistler, and that put me in the position of being alternate mayor, which I tried to do, and wouldn't have been able to do if Councillor Schooner hadn't been involved and done what she did to help keep us afloat. Well done, Jude, you really are a brick, and I'm very glad to have you in my life, as a co-councillor and as a friend. You're a good woman.

We had a very long closed meeting last night, and I'm still very tired from it; we have some huge problems to try to clear up and at times it's like trying to dance with an anaconda. The meeting was not easy, but everyone saw it through to the end and we came to some difficult decisions.

The crow war continues on Edith Rd., and I personally find it very upsetting. It's not easy when you can see and understand everybody's point of view. I continue to hope we'll find a solution.

Again, thank you for coming out tonight, your presence is important.

Councillor J. Schooner:

Good evening and thank you for coming to this council meeting tonight.

Since the last meeting I have attended 2 Special Closed Meetings. The first on September 23rd dealt with the possible tax sale, personnel and the 2009 audit. The second meeting was last night and the agenda items were personnel and the water interruption incident.

Also since the last meeting I gave the Mayor brief written opinions regarding the UBCM 2010 resolutions particularly noting the resolutions that would effect small communities like Tahsis. Though I was unable to attend the UBCM I was pleased to see that the majority of municipalities voted to endorse and maintain the moratorium on offshore oil and gas exploration and development. A resolution to establish a moratorium on bulk crude oil tanker traffic was also endorsed, as well as, opposition to the shipment of tar sands oil in pipelines across the province. The UBCM also called on a local government exemption from CETA which was also approved by the union. Hopefully the provincial and federal government will listen to the many voices that endorsed these resolutions.

I had the benefit of working with April Roth and Sharon Taporowski after the storm last weekend that caused the water system for the Village to be compromised and the flooding of Head Bay Road. I found it beneficial to observe the strengths and the weaknesses of our emergency preparedness. Last night I presented a report to council concerning my observations which accompanied April Roth's detailed reporting of the incident. I was impressed by the many that assisted this community in resolving the temporary state of emergency. Again public works and the fire department personnel put in long arduous hours rectifying the situation and are to be commended.

The many children that drop what they were doing to distribute flyers was impressive. I discovered during the hours I helped out that PEP which is the Provincial Emergency Program does not cover the cost of bottled water if the Village needs to bring it in to the community. Council will look at a possible resolution to go forward to the AVICC and the UBCM to address this issue. Consequently, the cost of the bottled water came out of the Village's coffers - at least the first load - the second shipment of water was donated by Thrifty's in Campbell River and we can thank the manager, Jeff Ackinlose and also Phil Masini for this generous donation. Closer to home we are grateful to Raj Sharma who did not charge us to bring Thrifty's water in. Also council would like to recognize Gary Oliver who assisted us in transporting water and a needed pump. As the capable Mrs. Roth said, "We learn something each time we go through something like this". Now will be the opportunity to take what was learnt and put it in place for the possibility of another emergency situation.

Lastly, but far from the least, I have been asked to speak for council tonight regarding the 2009 unallocated expenditures, as stated in the audited financial statements. Council is being proactive regarding this serious matter.

The Mayor and Council have requested an RCMP investigation into the possible misappropriation of funds and this process will take place closer to the end of the month due to logistics. Also council has been asking for further clarification surrounding these unsupported expenditures and is questioning the DBO auditors. The cost of a forensic audit would be approximately \$60,000 to \$100,000 and a decision regarding this may have to be reached in the future. We are listening to your concerns and hopefully greater clarity will be reached as time allows.

As a Councillor and a concerned citizen the best news I have heard in a while is that we are hiring an accountant to assist in the office temporarily. This individual will be able to assist the Village in getting caught up and help with the recommendations put forth in the auditor's management letter ensuring that internal controls and proper accounting procedures are in place. We can go forward, but a full accounting of the past must happen first.

That is my report and thank you for listening.

Bylaws:

Correspondence:

**1. Pat Bell, Minister
Re: Wood First Resolutions**

/2010 Schooner/Cameron
THAT: the item be received

/2010 Davis/Cameron
THAT: the Wood First Resolutions information be brought forward to a Committee of the Whole Meeting.

**CARRIED-UNANIMOUS
/2010**

2. Carolyn Tatton, Executive Director, Mid-Island Science, Technology & Innovation Council

Re: National Technology Week Proclamation

/2010

Schooner/Cameron

THAT: staff be directed to send National Technology Week information to Captain Meares School.

CARRIED-UNANIMOUS

Other Business:

1. Travel Authorization for Greg Feser to Write Level 1 Water Exam

Re: Memo from April Roth, Finance Assistant

/2010

Schooner/Cameron

THAT: Greg Feser be authorized to write the Level 1 Water Exam with all expenses paid as per village policy.

CARRIED-UNANIMOUS

Public Input:

Kim Anderson enquired about fireworks for Halloween. Finance Assistant, April Roth, stated that the fireworks have been ordered and have arrived.

Barb Wanless commented on the crow issue Edith Street is having and stated that Council should be worried about the crows.

Virginia Mountan enquired as to whether the Pillage at the Village summary is ready.

Adjournment:

/2010

Schooner/Cameron

That: the meeting be adjourned at 8:05pm.

CARRIED-UNANIMOUS

Certified correct this 25th day of October, 2010

Adopted by Council this 2nd day of November, 2010

Mayor

Corporate Officer

/2010

