



**MINUTES**

**Special Meeting - Town Hall  
Wednesday, February 1, 2023  
Council Chambers 6:00 PM**

**COUNCIL PRESENT:** All members of Council were in attendance this evening.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Lindsey Lee, CAO/Clerk  
Angela Young, Deputy Clerk  
Mandy Cannon, Executive Assistant  
Christina Mulcahey, Administrative Assistant  
Kelly Coughlin, Treasurer

**MEDIA PRESENT:** Derek Dunn, Metroland Media

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

We acknowledge that we are on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe Peoples.

**2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof**

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest declared at this time.

**3. Adoption of the Agenda**

3.1 Dated February 1, 2023

**TH - RESOLUTION - 1- 2023**

Moved by Councillor Kevin Rosien, seconded by Councillor Scott Brum

***THAT the Agenda dated February 1, 2023 be adopted as submitted and circulated.***

**CARRIED.**

**4. Special Meeting Notice**

4.1 Dated January 19, 2023

The Deputy Clerk read the Notice of Special Meeting. The Notice of Special Meeting was posted in the Township Times, on the Township Website and Notice Board.

**TH - RESOLUTION - 2- 2023**

Moved by Councillor Robert Campbell, seconded by Deputy Mayor Lori Hoddinott

***THAT** Council accept the Notice of Special Meeting Notice dated January 19, 2023 as submitted and circulated.*

**CARRIED.**

**5. Delegations**

Nil.

**6. Matters Arising out of Delegations Heard**

Nil.

**7. Items of Business**

7.1 Town Hall Presentation

Mayor MacKenzie presented his slides and spoke to the proposed 2023 draft Budget.

**TH - RESOLUTION - 3- 2023**

Moved by Councillor Kevin Rosien, seconded by Councillor Scott Brum

***THAT** Council accept the Town Hall Presentation as submitted and circulated.*

**8. Public Questions/Comments**

- 8.1 Robert Wall asked if the ball diamonds in Arnprior are part of the ball association or if it's a different league than the MCP diamonds. Mayor MacKenzie indicated that the Arnprior Ball Diamonds are not part of the Recreation Agreement, it just refers to the Nick Smith Centre. Mayor MacKenzie acknowledged that there are ball diamonds in Arnprior, but further stated that we do not charge an out of Town fee for the use of our ball diamonds. Mr. Wall asked if Arnprior kids are signing up to play ball in McNab and if we are providing resources to manage that league? To which he was advised, yes. Mayor MacKenzie used the soccer field as an example stating that Arnprior does not provide any funding for Dochart Soccer Fields and it's about 50% Arnprior residents using the fields and 50% McNab/Braeside residents.
- 8.2 Henry Pawlak thanked Council for providing the financial information on our website. He indicated that as a retired person, his concern is that when having to pay for things like transportation, policing and fire there isn't a lot of discretion used. He urges Council to use discretion and consider how tax increases effect retired residents and lower income individuals.
- 8.3 Mike Groulx asked if the Recreation Agreement negotiations will be in a public setting and asked if there will be public engagement before a decision is made. Mayor MacKenzie advised that the Town of Arnprior and this Council will meet in closed session to discuss this Agreement but that the public is welcome to give their input at any time.
- 8.4 Robert Wall asked if Mayor MacKenzie's presentation from tonight's meeting will be available on the Township's website, to which Mayor MacKenzie said yes and the recording of this meeting will be available on YouTube.

- 8.5 Adam Cybulski stated that he found the use of the word misinformation about Facebook posts interesting. He asked about the open and transparent governance and using Committees and the public voice while making decisions, was the Recreation Committee consulted before making the decision to terminate the current Joint Use Recreation Agreement? Mayor MacKenzie indicated that the Recreation Committee was not a Committee of Council and explained the structure of a Committee of Council. Mayor MacKenzie confirmed that there is a great Recreation Committee that acts as a consulting arm for the Department Head. Mayor MacKenzie confirmed that the Recreation Committee was not consulted prior to cancelling the Recreation Agreement. Mr. Cybulski questioned why the agreement was cancelled without the public consultation that was promised during Mayor MacKenzie's election campaign. He stated that had the Committee been consulted, it would have been noted that the only thing he feels we have to bring to the bargaining table is our soccer fields, which does not compare to the Nick Smith Centre, he asked if Council feels we'll actually get a better deal than we had, especially with operating costs through the roof at this time. Mayor MacKenzie said he can't speak to that until sitting down and going over the numbers with Arnprior. Mr. Cybulski stated that he was disappointed in this decision. Mayor MacKenzie responded by confirming why it was a closed session meeting and indicated that this was not an election issue. He explained that what was on the election radar was the curve and bringing that curve back, 125% in ten years can't continue. He further indicated that this was a difficult decision and that this Council can be trusted as they have the whole Township in mind. He indicated that there are still a lot of hard decisions to be made and acknowledged that Council signed up for this and are aiming to get the tax increase within the Township under control. Mr. Cybulski further stated that 50% of the kids playing ringette and hockey in Arnprior are from McNab/Braeside, yet we were only paying 33% of the operating costs, which he feels is a good deal. Mayor MacKenzie disagreed. Mr. Cybulski also stated that the Township isn't on the hook for capital costs, to which Mayor MacKenzie disagreed and referred to his presentation to explain his position.
- 8.6 Sarah Groulx asked what Council feels is a fair target for this Joint Use Recreation Agreement? Mayor MacKenzie stated that he can't speak on behalf of Council as it hasn't been discussed yet and asked Ms. Groulx what she felt was a fair target and further indicated that all they're asking is that the program and community hall costs be removed from the Agreement.
- 8.7 Lisa Belton asked what the plan is if the renegotiations come back at a higher cost or the same price as it is now and how that will impact the residents, will Council just cancel the Agreement? Mayor MacKenzie stated that would be the worst case scenario, if no agreement can be negotiated then Arnprior will charge an out of Town fee but no one has said that residents will have to pay that extra fee and so far \$289,000 has been budgeted for these costs. Ms. Belton asked if the number comes in higher than what's budgeted, who's going to pay the difference of the out of Town fee, to which Mayor MacKenzie stated that the Township can but that hasn't been discussed yet, it hasn't been agreed upon yet. Once the Agreement topic is on the agenda it will be discussed in closed session. Ms. Belton stated that she sits on the executive for Ringette

and now this will be something the executive will have to differentiate between residents or non-residents. Mayor MacKenzie used 2014 as an example to explain how the Township would continue to pay the fee to the associations and the parents wouldn't know the cost difference as we have \$289,000 in the budget for those extra costs.

- 8.8 Oliver Jacob stated that the Joint Use Agreement with the Town of Arnprior does not include capital costs. Mr. Jacob further stated that the section of the Municipal Act in which Council went into closed session to discuss the Agreement states that it's optional for Council to go into closed for issues such as this. Mr. Jacob asked what will happen if a reimbursement program is instated and staff time is needed for this program and residents are out of pocket additional fees for using credit cards to pay for these charges, what is Council's ultimate goal when it comes to that piece if Council doesn't get the savings that they feel they need, will they let the Agreement lapse and why hasn't Council looked into implementing user fees for out of Town residents instead of cancelling this Agreement? Mayor Mackenzie stated that Mr. Jacob made some good points but that he also contributed to the misinformation. He indicated that not everybody will have to get out their credit cards and pay extra fees. Mr. Jacob indicated that without an Agreement in place, registration would take place individually with the Town, unless there is an Agreement in place that the Town charges the Township the additional fees. Mayor MacKenzie stated that individuals would register with the Associations, not the Town of Arnprior, and paying additional fees is not the preferred negotiation. Mayor MacKenzie stated if there is no Agreement then individuals will have to pay extra, but that hasn't been decided and there's money in the budget to reimburse the members for those extra costs. Mayor MacKenzie referenced a post on Facebook that stated the out of Town fee was double and asked if that was correct to which Mr. Jacob indicated it depended on the program. Mayor MacKenzie urged Mr. Jacob to provide more accurate information moving forward. Mr. Jacob clarified that residents would have to pay out of pocket and be reimbursed should Council fail to negotiate prior to June 30 and Mayor MacKenzie said that may be the case. Mr. Jacob asked if Council considered that possibility before cancelling the Agreement to which Mayor MacKenzie stated of course Council considered that possibility. Mr. Jacob asked if Council considered the conversation around capital costs as that was one of the items put off in the 2015 negotiations, and assuming it comes up that the Township should contribute to those capital costs now, to which Mayor MacKenzie stated yes and it would have to be a two way Agreement as the Township also has capital costs.
- 8.9 Rick Smith stated that if 75% of the players in his hockey league aren't from Arnprior or McNab/Braeside, the cost for the whole team increases as does the cost for swimming to which Mayor MacKenzie acknowledged that. Mr. Smith urged Council to consider how paying the out of Town rate would impact the overall cost of the program for the associations and the individuals and that this could get very complex and complicated. Mayor MacKenzie acknowledged that he is aware of that.

- 8.10 Jan Selles asked if it's possible to acknowledge an option of anyone interested in participating in a service provided by the Town of Arnprior that Arnprior records the names and on a monthly basis sends the Township a list of names and the Township could reimburse Arnprior directly to avoid out of pocket expenses to our residents. Mayor MacKenzie stated no one can say what will happen, he believes the Town of Arnprior is reasonable and they plan on exploring different options but hopes to use the current Agreement without the programming numbers. Mr. Selles indicated that he's just trying to provide potential solutions to which Mayor MacKenzie said that's great and with a cooperative attitude there are multiple solutions. Mr. Selles asked about the Building Cost Summary and the difference in the FCM numbers. Mayor MacKenzie advised that he started this process in 2014 and indicated that different grants are available based on different criteria, he indicated that if solar panels would have been installed, we could have gotten a higher grant amount, which will be explored at a future date. Mr. Selles asked for confirmation if additional funding will be received from FCM, to which Mayor MacKenzie stated this paperwork hasn't been finished and those are the working numbers right now, as is there is a \$182,000 grant funding available. Mr. Selles further asked about an FCM loan amount of \$2.4 million dollars, interest only loan, he asked what the payment would be for us in excess to what we're paying now based on our current interest rates. Mayor MacKenzie stated he can't answer that right now. Mr. Selles stated that this amount has to have an impact on the taxes, Mayor MacKenzie said yes, it will have an impact, and because of the balance in our bank account we're getting a good interest rate. Mr. Selles asked if we're earning more interest money than what we're paying in debt repayment and the answer was no. Mr. Selles asked if we'll be paying more once it's a debenture, to which the answer was yes. Mr. Selles asked about the propane charges for the Municipal building. Mayor MacKenzie indicated that he would get back to him with that information.
- 8.11 Nathan Mask acknowledged the work Council is doing to try to save money for the residents. He asked if there was any discussion as to how far the \$289,000 would go in reimbursing residents should that be the option. Mayor MacKenzie confirmed that half of that amount would be paid towards the current Agreement for the first half of this year. Mr. Mask asked if there was budgeting done based on current participation rates to which Mayor MacKenzie stated that Arnprior has never provided that data to us so it would be a guess. Mayor MacKenzie further stated that Council will keep the process as open and transparent as possible.
- 8.12 Robert Wall asked how much the Town of Arnprior pays compared to the Township, to which Mayor MacKenzie answered about double.
- 8.13 Mike Groulx indicated that he wasn't aware that the closed session "may" be closed. He requested that future negotiation discussions be held in open session. He asked if this request could also be made to the Town of Arnprior. Mayor MacKenzie stated that he operates by the rules and the information he was provided is different than what's being stated now and that negotiations will be held in closed. Mr. Groulx would like clarification if the wording states the meeting "may" or "shall" be closed.

- 8.14 Dominique Beaudin submitted a written question as follows: "Do we have data that the majority of the citizens of Braeside are benefiting from the recreation agreement"? to which Mayor MacKenzie stated that no, we have not received data. Ms. Beaudin's written submission further stated: "I think the data should lead the way, not the loudest voices. If the agreement was kept, we should at least make the benefits clearer and make sure they are realistically accessible to all. If a significant tax increase occurs, those in recently assessed houses will experience a much greater burden. Houses are selling for over 700K and are still only paying \$3,000 in taxes. Newer or more recently assessed houses are paying more than double that in taxes for similar buildings and the exact same services. Please keep those families in mind too. They are paying more than their share already. If taxes went up equally for everyone that would be great. But a 10% increase over \$3,000 is very different than a 10% increase on \$10,000. I don't mind paying a bit more than other, but these yearly increases are hard to bear and some may be taxed out of their homes completely at some point. Thanks". Mayor MacKenzie stated that the assessment is done at a provincial level and if you don't agree with the assessment, there is a process on the MPAC website that residents can follow to request a reassessment.
- 8.15 Harold Murphy submitted a written question as follows: "During the all candidate meeting, a number of you accused the previous Council of not being fiscally responsible and that cuts would have to be made, however, nothing was discussed about severing the Recreation Agreement with the Town of Arnprior. Will you be increasing taxes this year in McNab/Braeside?" to which Mayor MacKenzie stated yes. Mr. Murphy further submitted "Because of severing the Agreement, Arnprior will now be charging user fees, which I feel is a double edged sword". Mayor MacKenzie stated that Council has budgeted amounts to cover user fees in the very unlikely event that there is no Agreement.
- 8.16 Sarah Fraser submitted the following written question: "Is there a policy or guideline that provides more information about by-law enforcement and penalties? If so, could it be made available to the public to improve transparency? The by-law office is responsive to initial complaints but is not responsive to requests for information about whether a complaint has been addressed". Mayor MacKenzie recommended that this be brought forward at a Public Safety Committee Meeting. Mayor MacKenzie stated information pertaining to By-Law enforcement can be found on our website. Ms. Foster spoke to this submission and indicated that she couldn't find the information she was looking for in the By-Law, she can visibly see that the By-Law infraction is still occurring and would like an update but has not received any information. Councillor Brum indicated that a By-Law Enforcement Report is posted on our Meeting Agendas and the current status of the By-Law infractions should be found on the Agenda. Ms. Fraser thanked Council for this information.
- 8.17 Gary Mammoletti submitted a written question as follows: "Will Council pay special attention to a hefty increase in our 2023 Budget for our Public Works Department? Especially for maintenance of machinery and equipment. For

years, ratepayers have complained (one publicly, December 1 in the Arnprior Chronicle) about our crumbling road structure, potholes, curbside weed maintenance, noxious weeds and debris filled ditches, blocked culverts, poor water drainage causing spring floodings (Munroe Subdivision/Campbell Drive), etc.". Mayor MacKenzie stated that if there are specific issues in your neighbourhood, he encourages residents to bring these concerns to the Public Works Committee Meetings and explained the process of how the Committees will work. He stated that the crumbling road structure is off base as our current rating of our current road structure is "good".

- 8.18 Jan Selles asked with respect to the Committees, if there is a way to contact them to put in information? To which Mayor MacKenzie said yes, all Committee information will be found on the website. Mr. Selles stated that he appreciates the work this Council is putting in.
- 8.19 Lloyd Cameron asked if Renfrew County is going to take over Campbell Drive this year to which Mayor MacKenzie stated we are in discussions about Campbell Drive with the County's Public Works Department. Mr. Cameron asked if this would be extended from Stevenson Drive to River Road, to which Mayor MacKenzie said that has been discussed but it's not on the radar right now. Right now being discussed is the portion from Osborne Street to Russett Drive. This will be discussed by the Operations Committee at the County. Mr. Cameron asked what the new rink in Braeside cost? Treasurer Coughlin stated that these final costs would be calculated during her year end process. Mr. Cameron stated that the public skating times are not being adhered to at the Braeside Rink because of hockey and suggested that it be supervised better. Mayor MacKenzie indicated that the Recreation Department recently made some adjustments to the public skating times, the rink is meant to be shared but some changes will be happening to improve that. Mr. Cameron stated that a lot of money was spent on the John A. Gillies building for essentially just change rooms and very little else, to which Mayor MacKenzie indicated that there is revenue coming in. Treasurer Coughlin confirmed that the John A. Gillies Recreation Centre has approximately \$8,600 in revenue in 2022.
- 8.20 Shawna Cavanaugh asked what was budgeted for the 2021 Recreation Agreement versus what was actually spent, to which Mayor MacKenzie indicated that what was budgeted was spent. Ms. Cavanaugh asked for clarification on a rebate from the Town of Arnprior due to Covid shut downs at the Nick Smith Centre, to which Mayor MacKenzie confirmed that yes, the amount rebated was put into reserves. Ms. Cavanaugh asked in the event of a vote on how that reserve money is spent, who on Council votes on that decision, is the Mayor included as a voting member or just as a deciding vote only in the event of a tie? To which Mayor MacKenzie stated that all votes are equal.
- 8.21 Darrell Carson asked for clarification on the estimated budget increase at this time to which Mayor MacKenzie stated 5.5% based on revenue adjustments, reserve adjustments and various other cost savings. Mr. Carson asked if we're looking at using reserve money to keep costs down or other options to which Mayor MacKenzie stated that reserves are only going to be used when used for a specific purpose.

- 8.22 Oliver Jacob asked if the approximate tax increase started at 6.5% and is now 5.5%, when will the information regarding these changes be shared with the public? Mayor MacKenzie stated that before the next budget meeting, all the additional information will be posted and final decisions won't be made until the next budget meeting, as these numbers are just based on discussions.
- 8.23 Mike Groulx indicated that he sat through the budget meetings and he was of the understanding that the proposed increase was closer to 10%. Mayor MacKenzie stated that there is a lot of misinformation going around. Mr. Groulx stated that this number can be seen in the recorded meeting and is curious about how the number is now at 5.5%. Mayor MacKenzie challenged Mr. Groulx's insinuation and said that the meetings can be found on YouTube and further explained that this is a revolving process and the number may have been 10% at one time. Deputy Mayor Hoddinott confirmed the comments made at previous budget meetings and stated that the additional cuts made were from extraordinary expenses that aren't necessary, readjusting reserves and that nothing has been set in stone. Council confirmed that the estimated levy increase was 5.5% at the end of the last budget meeting. Mr. Groulx asked if he'll see the items that were subtracted to get to 5.5% to which Mayor MacKenzie stated that yes, that information will be presented at the next budget meeting. Mayor MacKenzie encouraged everyone to come to the budget meetings and further stated that we see what happens when public doesn't get involved with the budget process.
- 8.24 Henry Pawlak asked about police services and asked if Council considered if savings were possible if going with fixed costs, to which Mayor MacKenzie said fixed costs isn't an option.

## 9. **Adjournment**

This Special Town Hall Meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

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CAO/CLERK

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MAYOR