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The Municipality of Kings and the Towns of Annapolis Royal, Berwick, Kentville, Middleton and Wolfville

**Valley Region Solid Waste-Resource Management Authority  
Wednesday, March 18, 2020  
9:00am  
Valley Waste Boardroom**

**These minutes have been posted on our Website in keeping with the Directive from Minister Chuck Porter. The minutes are in draft form and subject to amendment upon final approval by the Valley Region Solid Waste-Resource Management Authority.**

**Attendees**

**Members Present:** By conference call: Jeff Cantwell, Eric Bolland, Barry Corbin, Martha Armstrong, Gail Smith and John Kinsella

**Alternates Present:** none

**Guests:** By conference call: Mike Livingstone, Manager Financial Reporting, Municipality of Kings and Sandi Millett-Campbell, CAO -Town of Annapolis Royal

**Regrets:** None

**Staff:** Andrew Wort, Jeff Martin, Andrew Garrett (by conference call), Geoff McCain and Brenda Davidson

**Agenda Item No. 1 – Welcome and Call to Order**

Chair Kinsella welcomed everyone calling the meeting to order at 9:07am. It was noted that this meeting is being held by conference call in recognition of the seriousness of the current conditions around mitigating the potential spread of Covid-19. All meeting participants were asked to identify themselves when speaking.

**Agenda Item No. 2 – Approval of the Agenda**

**ON MOTION OF ERIC BOLLAND AND SECONDED BY MARTHA ARMSTRONG THAT THE VALLEY REGION SOLID WASTE-RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY APPROVE THE AGENDA, AS CIRCULATED.**

**MOTION CARRIED.**

### **Agenda Item No. 3 – Approval of the Minutes:**

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#### **Agenda Item No. 3.1 - Approval of Draft Minutes from Regular Authority Meeting held February 19, 2020**

**ON MOTION OF BARRY CORBIN AND SECONDED BY GAIL SMITH THAT THE VALLEY REGION SOLID WASTE-RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING HELD FEBRUARY 19, 2020, AS CIRCULATED.**

**MOTION CARRIED.**

### **Agenda Item No. 4 – Business Arising from the Minutes**

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There was no business arising from the minutes brought before the Authority at this time.

### **Agenda Item No. 5 – General Manager Report**

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General Manager Wort noted that the Authority along with all Nova Scotians is facing a challenging time as it relates to Covid-19. While things are changing by the moment, Mr. Wort explained that he is asking for Board confidence as decisions will be required to be made and implemented quickly based on the recommendations being released. It was stressed that all municipal staff across the province are in the same situation. To date, arrangements have been made for all office staff to work at home with most municipalities taking the same step. Mr. Wort noted that he met with the Chief Administrative Officer's group on Monday to share information. He noted that he was very pleased to see the true commitment to intermunicipal cooperation as we all work through this challenging time. At this time, we have 2 administration office personnel in self-isolation after returning from a trip. We also have one equipment operator in self-isolation after returning from travel. Mr. Wort noted that in keeping with the decision of other municipalities, those who find themselves having to self-isolate will continue to be paid as normal at this time. The same will apply if someone becomes sick. It was the consensus to move forward in that way. It was noted that the office staff are going to be needed and as indicated most have been equipped now to work from home. The administration office has been closed to the public effective noon on Monday and the Reuse Centre has been closed until further notice.

Mr. Wort noted challenges he is facing with equipment operators. It was noted we have 15 operators between the East and West Management Centres. Two of those operators are currently on WCB with one not working at all at this time and the other working reduced hours under a modified work plan. There is 1 operator who is recovering from knee surgery, non WCB-related, and has not yet returned to work and we are awaiting medical approvals to determine how best to move forward with that individual. While that individual is quickly drawing to the end of available sick leave, Mr. Wort noted that he has made the decision to continue to grant sick leave until a final determination regarding his ability to work is in place. A recruit is also underway to replace an operator that recently resigned. Mr. Wort noted that with the challenges noted above, if there were to be an exposure by our team to a confirmed case requiring self-isolation or other significant illness, the Authority will face serious operational challenges.

In an attempt to address the matter, Mr. Wort noted he has reached out to other potential avenues to draw from existing employment pools who may have staff available and the best option appears to be drawing on expertise from Dexter's operations. Efforts are being made to confirm if operators could be made available to the Authority if the necessity arises.

Mr. Wort further noted that some operations have been scaled back. As the Authority knows, we are moving to a 4-day per week collection and communications team members will be working toward ensuring that they are able to respond to inquiries through social media, our hot line and e-mail.

Mr. Wort further noted that proceeding with the planned spring clean-up may pose challenges for both the Authority and for the collection contractor and it is his recommendation that the spring clean-up service may need to be postponed.

It was further noted that other issues have been discussed and addressed such as not asking clients passing through the scale house to sign tickets to reduce the opportunity of exposure by passing paper back and forth. Scale house operators are wearing gloves as well to offer another level of protection. Discussions have also been held internally regarding the elimination of the acceptance of cash with no final decision made at this point.

Signage has been posted at the scale houses noting that anyone who has recently returned from international travel will not be permitted to enter the site and further that any long-distance truckers are to remain in their vehicles while on site. Staff have been trained to ensure that there is a full understanding of social distancing and will not be helping any site users to unload materials. Management Centre staff were also given a refresher as to how to properly wash their hands. The step has also been taken to interrupt the general rule of having to use all available lieu time by March 31<sup>st</sup> to ensure that staff remain available for work.

If the situation deteriorates to the point that it is deemed necessary, the West Management Centre will be closed and all operations will be funneled through the East Management Centre. There are concerns around available scale house operators. We had one part-time operator who also works in a nursing home, so that person has been advised that she will not be required to work at the site at this time to reduce the opportunity for her to spread the disease to the most vulnerable.

In response to the question, it was noted that the scale houses are running as usual other than the steps taken above. It was further noted that with the impact on the business community and the closures that are taking place, the volume of material and number of vehicles being processed through the management centres should drop. At this point, there has not been any contemplation of reducing hours, but that could come shortly. There are other options as well to close the site to the general public with only commercial customers and the Authority's contracted services providers permitted to enter. The household hazardous waste depot could also be closed. If necessary all large commercial loads could be sent directly to landfill. Taking those steps could take 30-40% of volumes off site. The downside of that could be financial impacts – that is unknown at this time. The biggest priority will be to get residual waste and compost collected and processed and if necessary the collection of recyclable materials could be halted which may require consideration if the collection contractor experiences staff shortages.

Mr. Wort also noted that in recent conversations with the collection contractor it was stressed that the flow-control bylaws will be enforced for materials generated under the umbrella of the Authority's services. It was further noted that the collection contractor will likely experience a reduction in commercial client needs and therefore may cross train commercial drivers with their curbside collection drivers.

A discussion arose regarding the potential postponement of the spring clean up with it being stressed that considerations will have to be given to stated limits for any following special collection service. It was further noted that it is critical the Authority representatives and their respective Chief Administrative Officers are kept up to date with what is taking place to ensure a consistent message is available to share with constituents.

Chair Kinsella noted that with so many moving parts, he truly appreciates the efforts of the Valley Waste team asking that General Manager Wort ensure that he keeps the Board and Party Chief Administrative Officers up-to-date with regarding to activities and decisions.

It is anticipated that the public will be looking for information and the communications team is ready to address that as they work from home. Ensuring that the Board and Chief Administrative Officers are kept informed will be part of the overall communications strategy.

**Agenda Item No. 5.1 – Update: Joint Budget Session held March 9, 2020 and the status of approval of the Draft 2020-2021 Operating and Capital Budget**

General Manager Wort noted that he felt the joint budget session was positive with many Councillors in attendance and representation from all Parties. Feedback has been positive noting the information provided was well organized and informative. With that in mind, he suggested a round-table with regard to the status of the approval of the Authority's budget and the Bylaw.

- Town of Berwick – noted that positive comments were heard following the joint session. The Town of Berwick has passed the draft budget in its entirety. It was noted that debt service ratios for the Parties must be considered and checks should be made to ensure that all are within allowable levels. The Bylaw has been passed as well, but on hold as per the recommendation until the Municipality of Kings determines if any changes are required.
- Town of Kentville – concurred that feedback has been that the joint session was educational and informative. While not passed, no problems are foreseen with budget approval. The Bylaw has not come before Council as yet and it may be being held as well as Kings determines whether or not changes are required.
- Town of Wolfville –concurred the joint session was informative with clear and comprehensive information provided. The Authority's budget has not yet been approved, nor has the Bylaw been dealt with.
- Town of Middleton – the Bylaw has been through 2 readings, but the budget has not yet been dealt with and with the current situation, it is unclear when Council will meet again. It was noted that the Chief Administrative Officer will be contacted to further advise.
- Municipality of Kings – the Bylaw and Budget have not yet been brought before Council and it is understood that the Authority's budget will move forward as part of the County's total budget. It was noted the Chief Administrative Officer will be contacted to provide a status update.
- Town of Annapolis Royal – noted regrets for not being able to attend the Joint Session but did speak with both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor receiving positive feedback and support for the direction that the Authority is taking. It was noted the Bylaw has passed. It was further noted that it is hoped that there will be budget approval in April.

## **Agenda Item No. 6 – Staff Reports**

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### **Agenda Item No. 6.1 – Manager of Finance**

#### **Agenda Item No. 6.1.1 – Unaudited Revenue and Expense Statement for the Period ending February 29, 2020.**

Finance Manager McCain noted that this statement is unavailable at this time.

#### **Agenda Item No. 6.1.2 –Report to Authority: Request for Proposals for Investment Advisor Services, VWRP1907**

Finance Manager McCain referred to the Report to Authority: Request for Proposals VWRP1907 – For the Provision of Investment Advisor Services, as circulated and attached to these minutes. Mr. McCain reviewed the report in its entirety resulting in the following motion:

**ON MOTION OF MARTHA ARMSTRONG AND SECONDED BY ERIC BOLLAND THAT PURSUANT TO REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS, VWRWP1907, THE AUTHORITY APPROVES THE INVESTMENT COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION THAT THE VALLEY REGION SOLID WASTE-RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY ACCEPT THE PROPOSAL SUBMITTED BY SCOTIA MCLEOD, A DIVISION OF SCOTIA CAPITAL INC, FOR THE PROVISION OF INVESTMENT ADVISOR SERVICES FOR THE 5-YEAR PERIOD OF APRIL 1, 2020 TO MARCH 31, 2025 AND FURTHER, THAT STAFF BE DIRECTED TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH THE SUCCESSFUL PROPONENT AS PER THE TERMS OUTLINED IN THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL DOCUMENT AND THE RESPECTIVE SUBMISSION.**

**MOTION CARRIED.**

### **Agenda Item No. 6.2 – Operations Manager**

Operations Manager Martin noted that most operational issues were identified earlier under the General Manager's report adding that assuring the Authority's staff their safety is a first and foremost concern is a priority and all efforts are being made to assure the team of that.

### **Agenda Item No. 6.3 – Office Manager**

#### **Agenda Item No. 6.3.1 – Annual Review of Safety Policy**

Office Manager Davidson referred to the February 20, 2020 draft of the Safety Policy, AAP-08, as circulated and attached to these minutes, reminding the Authority that the Policy is brought before them annually for approval. Ms. Davidson noted that the only change to the Policy being recommended is the addition of wording targeting psychological health. Ms. Davidson noted that she is very pleased to see this step being taken as she had the opportunity recently to attend a Department of Labour and Advanced Education Engagement Session where it was indicated that addressing psychological health is on their list of emerging issues. Ms. Davidson noted the engagement sessions were provided to allow employers the opportunity to provide input related to impending changes to the First Aid Regulations which are being closely monitored.

Ms. Davidson also noted that the annual external audit on the Authority's Occupational Health and Safety System was recently performed and we have now received confirmation that we passed the Audit and will maintain our WCB Certification. We are awaiting the final report and will share that with the Authority when it becomes available.

**ON MOTION OF GAIL SMITH AND SECONDED BY MARTHA ARMSTRONG THAT THE VALLEY REGION SOLID WASTE-RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY APPROVES THE FEBRUARY 20, 2020 DRAFT OF THE SAFETY POLICY, AAP-08, AS CIRCULATED.**

**MOTION CARRIED.**

The Policy will be prepared for the signature of the Chair and General Manager as soon as possible.

**Agenda Item No. 6.4 – Communications Manager/Regional Coordinator**

Communications Manager Garrett noted that he and his family did enjoy a wonderful vacation south, but unfortunately are now in a 14-day self-isolation period in keeping with Provincial directives.

Mr. Garrett noted that starting today and for a period of 10 days there will be radio announcements regarding the impending change to the 4-day per week collection service. There is also a ½ page advertisement in local papers. Social media is being drawn upon as well with a positive response to date.

Mr. Garrett noted that while it may be moot under the current circumstances, DivertNS has moved forward with plans to have a waste management exhibit at the Discovery Centre. While 20 schools expressed interest, Dwight Ross and Aldershot were chosen to participate. It was noted that if the program proceeds, Authority members extend their help in any possible way with Mr. Garrett being asked to keep the Board informed.

**Agenda Item No. 6.4.1 – Communication and Enforcement Activity Levels Report**

There was no communication and enforcement activity level report to bring before the Authority at this time.

**Agenda Item No. 7 – New Business**

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There was no new business to bring before the Authority at this time.

**Agenda Item No. 8 – Correspondence**

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**Agenda Item No. 8.1 – February 18, 2020 Letter from Warden Allen Webber, Municipality of the District of Chester**

The Authority acknowledged the receipt of the letter, as circulated and attached to these minutes.

**Agenda Item No. 8.1 – March 11, 2020 Letter to the Honourable Gordon Wilson, Minister of Environment**

The Authority acknowledged the letter, as circulated and attached to these minutes.

**Agenda Item No. 9 – In-Camera Session in keeping with Section 22(2)(e) of the Municipal Government Act.**

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**ON MOTION OF MARTHA ARMSTRONG AND SECONDED BY ERIC BOLLAND THAT THE VALLEY REGION SOLID WASTE-RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY MOVE TO AN IN-CAMERA SESSION IN KEEPING WITH SECTION 22(2)(e) OF THE MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT ACT.**

**MOTION CARRIED.**

The March regular monthly meeting of the Valley Region Solid Waste-Resource Management Authority resumed at 11:03am.

It was stressed again that all efforts will be made to ensure that the Board and respective Chief Administrative Officers are kept up-to-date with any decisions that may be made impacting service levels and operations in general in response to the Covid-10 pandemic.

In response to the question, it was noted that should the Municipality of Kings return with suggested changes to the Bylaw, all Parties will have to revisit the matter which is why those who have approved the Bylaw have been asked to hold off from registering it with the Province until the Municipality of Kings as indicated their approval.

**Agenda Item No. 10 – Next Meeting – April 15, 2020**

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The next Regular Monthly Meeting of the Valley Region Solid Waste-Resource Management Authority will be held on Wednesday, April 15, 2020, beginning at 9:00am, in keeping with the normal meeting schedule. Depending upon the circumstances at the time, if the meeting proceeds it may again be held via conference call.

**Agenda Item No. 12 – Adjournment**

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**ON MOTION OF BARRY CORBIN AND SECONDED BY GAIL SMITH THE MARCH 2020 REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING OF THE VALLEY REGION SOLID WASTE-RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY ADJOURNED AT 11:06AM.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Brenda Davidson  
Office Manager  
Valley Waste-Resource Management