

UNAPPROVED MINUTES
VILLAGE OF NEW MINAS COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
JUNE 1, 2004

A Special Meeting of the Village of New Minas was held on June 1, 2004, immediately following the Recreation Advisory Committee meeting.

In Attendance

Chair Dave Chaulk
 Vice-Chair Linda Lockhart
 Commissioner Marvin Messom
 Commissioner Sherry Swanburg
 Commissioner Ted Nicholson
 Solicitor, Heidi Foshay-Kimball
 Clerk Treasurer Terry Silver

Call to Order

Chair Chaulk called the meeting to order.

It was moved by Commissioner Messom, seconded by Commissioner Nicholson that the meeting go In Camera. MOTION CARRIED

It was moved by Commissioner Swanburg, seconded by Commissioner Messom that the meeting go out of the In Camera Session. MOTION CARRIED

Union

It was moved by Commissioner Messom, seconded by Commissioner Swanburg that the Village Commission forward documentation to Nova Scotia Labour Relations Board, pursuant to the Trade Union Act, listing those persons shown in Schedule "A" in the Application Certification, who may not be eligible to be part of the bargaining unit. MOTION CARRIED

**Procedure Concerns-
Commissioner Swanburg**

Commissioner Swanburg voiced concerns with regard to informal meetings Chair Chaulk held with department heads and Commissioners. She stated the following as concerns she had with this process:

1. She was not part of any decision made to allow the Chair to arrange such meetings, and wasn't aware the meeting was happening (ref. Department heads meeting).
2. According to Cuff's Guide, it is not acceptable for any one Commissioner (Councillor) to act alone. The Commission has to speak as one voice.
3. The Clerk Treasurer's role is to deal with staff;

the Commission deals with Policy-making; why is there a Clerk Treasurer if the Chair takes on this role?

4. She would not take part in the informal Commissioners' meeting because it was not open to the public and no minutes were taken.
5. She fears that having non-recorded meetings the Commission is "treading on dangerous ground", as in previous Commissions. Commission will be seen as fragmented if "secret meetings" take place. She said she is sure Municipalities and Towns do not have informal meetings.
6. She wants to see the Village Commission as a unit, with a view to setting priorities. The members may not always agree, but that's okay.
7. She is very upset she wasn't informed of the meeting and wants to always be informed of everything in the future. She also wants to know anything else that might impact on the Commission's decision-making process.
8. The operations of the Village is as a public entity, not a workplace; everything must be discussed in public session.
9. She stated that the role of Mayors/Wardens is not the same as that of Commission Chairs because Commissions do not fall under the same guidelines as Councils.
10. She expressed concern that she wasn't aware of the Clerk Treasurer's Review until after the Review was conducted.

Chair Chaulk's Comments

Chair Chaulk responded to Commissioner Swanburg's concerns as follows:

1. As a new Chair, he wanted to speak informally with department heads so he could get a feel for how the operation of the Commissioner was going in general. He has been aware of some issues and wanted to get a handle on them from department heads and then discuss them with the Commission at an informal get together.
2. He went through the Clerk to set up the discussion period; the staff was thrilled at the opportunity to speak informally. There was no animosity. He did it in good faith, and made no apologies.
3. He stated he attempted to then speak with the

Commissioners, but Commissioner Swanburg wouldn't take part, and the meeting was shut down.

4. He prefers to deal with things and not let them fester; he felt as the new Chair, this was an honourable thing to do, and the staff provided concerns in writing so he could discuss them with the Commission. There were no **decisions** being made except to talk with people.
5. There was nothing going on behind the scenes; on the contrary, the discussions were meant to be open and frank with all parties. He meant to be the liaison between the staff and the Commission, and saw it as part of his role. He felt he does not have to inform the Commissioners every time he deals with the staff through the Clerk Treasurer unless things require the Commission's approval.
6. He has never felt there was anything underhanded being done at any level and suggested that the Commissioners should not feel that way either.
7. He agrees the Commission will not always agree, but this doesn't mean there will not be one voice.
8. He explained these were fact-finding/brainstorming sessions, and should not be carried out in public session. That is counter-productive in his opinion.
9. Had Commissioner Swanburg not declined the opportunity to meet informally with the Commission, the intent of the informal meetings would have been apparent.

Commissioner Marvin Messom

1. He had absolutely no problem with the Chair's approach in dealing with his new position as Chair; he would have done the same thing.
2. Was disappointed that the informal get together with the Commissioners was "shut down"; it would have been helpful to get the Chair's take on where the Commission should be going from the staff's perspective.
3. In years gone by, the Commission met informally all the time and hashed out issues – or not; just plain met socially.

Commissioner Ted Nicholson

1. He verified that informal get togethers always took place on a regular basis a number of years ago, and they were very productive and served as

a team-building tool.

Vice-Chair Linda Lockhart

1. She noted that the Union Vote probably would have had no bearing on the list of problems provided by staff because the timing was not right.

Clerk Treasurer Terry Silver

1. For information purposes, she noted that in her experience with Municipalities, after elections, the Mayor/Warden would most always have informal Management Team meetings.
2. The staff was impressed that the Chair would take the time to talk with the department heads informally and take their concerns to the Commission.
3. Municipal Councils very often get together informally to “brainstorm”, but would not make decisions at these sessions. Some Councils see it as an important networking tool.

Adjournment

On motion of Commissioner Messom, the meeting adjourned.

Dave Chaulk, Chair

Terry Silver, Clerk Treasurer