

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council

FROM: Justin Waugh-Cress, P.Eng.

DATE: November 25, 2019

RE: Public Sewer By-law Draft – Public Engagement Sessions

The draft Public Sewer by-law was presented to Council at their October 23, 2019 meeting. During the presentation it was identified that public engagement would be undertaken prior to bringing the by-law back to Council for first reading. Public meetings were held at:

- Pugwash Village Commission – November 14, 2019
- Springhill Community Center – November 18, 2019
- Parrsboro Fire Hall – November 20, 2019
- Joggins Fossil Institute – November 21, 2019

At each open house a presentation on the process, intent, and content of the draft public sewer by-law was given, as well as, discussion with attendees. Below comments and suggestions made at each meeting are presented by location.

Pugwash (Attendance: 3)

- Attendees were concerned that the Parrsboro sewer project would increase their sewer rates.
- The possibility of having a metered sewer charge (tied to metered water usage) was discussed.

Springhill (Attendance: 3)

- Attendees were concerned about an increase to their sewer rates if the County moved to a single sewer charge.

Parrsboro (Attendance: 45)

- Would like to see consideration given to seasonal users of the system (business and residential) that are required to pay a full year's sewer rate.
- Consensus that a metered sewer rate would be fairer than the proposed unit user values.
- Consensus that there should be a unified sewer charge across the entire county.
- There was concern regarding that Council has the power to mandate connection to the sewer system.
- Attendees did not agree with the sewer rate being charged on the tax bill.
- It was raised that consideration should be given to quarterly billing of the sewer charge (on the tax bill).
- Current uncertainty with regards to sewer fees makes budgeting a challenge. Residents are concerned with affordability.

Joggins (Attendance: 4)

- Concerns were raised about increased sewer rates as a result of the Parrsboro Sewer project.

The concern that sewer rates would be increased if we were to move from separate sewer charges for Springhill, Parrsboro, and the Rural systems to a single sewer charge for the whole County was raised in Pugwash, Springhill, and Joggins. Attendees at the Parrsboro open house came to the consensus that there should be a single sewer charge for the entire County.

The potential for a metered sewer rate was raised in both Pugwash and Parrsboro. The current draft by-law proposes a user unit value system. The user unit value system is used in the existing Parrsboro and Rural sewer by-laws.

Staff is requesting direction from Council on how they would like to proceed with the by-law approval process.