

REES' Pieces

\$20,000 and 4 months wasted

Of the hundreds of council meetings I have attended or endured since my first council meeting in Woodstock, NB in 1963, a few of them have caused the head to spin. Colchester's council meeting on February 28th is one of those near the top during a span of six decades.

Not only was the presented consultant's report poorly drafted; poorly presented; did not answer the original questions and contained inaccurate information of municipal population. Instead of spending approximately \$20,000 a cup of coffee and thirty minutes with someone in charge of handling employee payroll would have provided concise accurate and understandable information.

At the time of this writing, 18 hours after witnessing the episode my head is still spinning. Here's the backgrounder. In 2018 Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) issued a ruling the total amount of money paid to a mayor, deputy mayor or councillor would be calculated as income. (Previously, in most municipal jurisdictions two thirds of a stipend was calculated as taxable amount with one third a "non-taxable" amount to offset expenses).

With everything being counted as income, councillors, rightly so, asked: "How much increase should be added to the stipend to ensure the amount of money councillors were taking home was the same as previous years?"

Not a difficult question. Most elected representatives are employed elsewhere, or retired with pensions. In Canada the marginal tax rate varies based on total income which is taxable. Councillors were not intending nor asking for coverage on their overall income, just coverage for what they received from the municipality.

Even the payroll department at the municipality could have provided the answer, and one would not need to buy someone a coffee.

On evening of February 28th, it took over an hour; tensions got heated and councillors expressed frustration at the lack of clarity. As part of the report, population stats of municipalities, province-wide, was used as a leading contributing factor to determine the stipend for elected representatives. That might have been fine, but to further illustrate how far off base the consultant was, the figures used for Municipality of Colchester was listed as 51,464, which includes populations for Town of Truro, (12,260); Stewiacke, (1,405) and Millbrook First Nation, (758) when it should have been approximately 38,000 for rural Colchester.

It appears similar inclusion of towns and villages went into comparative analysis of other data province-wide.

After the meeting, I contacted Roy Thompson, Thompson Accounting Services, Truro who graciously volunteered to provide a revised gross pay scale, so councillors, deputy mayor and mayor had the same "take-home" monies, after CRA's new regulations were implemented. (His calculations are included elsewhere in this issue).

Let's hope one simple thing was learned: "Upwards of \$20,000 of taxpayer's money and four months were wasted to provide non-adequate answers".

Now onto the remainder of this month's submission.

As I have stated previously, I continue to be unimpressed how Nova Scotia is handling and proceeding to deliver "high speed" internet service to rural areas. Instead of managing the problem, implementing regulations and ensuring contractors are accountable. Develop Nova Scotia is trying to micro-manage everything from top down by pre-qualifying ISP contractors. Accountability and the ISP's financial investment will ensure qualifications are in place.

Not only has Develop Nova Scotia been set up for failure. Impossible to deliver what rural Nova Scotia needs when most of the people making and implementing accountability are Halifax based and don't know what Highway #2 river divides Cumberland and Colchester Counties. I am predicting, before completion: Cost \$-Millions more than necessary: timetable to completion will extend beyond acceptability and smaller local companies will overlooked.

Worse yet, is the public disappointment and business concerns about falling behind others in terms of productivity and competitiveness. Rural Nova Scotia residents are asking why are we being held hostage?

Why can't we keep up with New Brunswick and PEI? Both have obtained Federal Funding and signed contracts with private sector as investors partners to install 5G rated internet province-wide. Xplornet will deliver 5G services to over 20,000 rural homes in over 300 communities in PEI.

In NB and PEI Xplornet, as part of the contracts, is financing approximately 25-33% of the cost. Why are we being marginalized?

Maurice

Letters to the editor

This is an open forum for your opinions and comments.

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Dear Residents of the Truro area,

The elders and deacons of Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church (www.crpchalifax.ca) of Halifax wanted to let you know we are starting to hold public worship services at the former Erskine United Church (now Erskine ARP Church) at 983 Little Dyke Road, Glenholme.

But who are we and why are we doing this?

Our congregation in Halifax was started with two families just over 20 years ago. Now we have 53 adults and 36 children. We are a congregation that simply seeks to join sound biblical doctrine with zeal and love. We are a part of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (www.arpchurch.org) which was founded in North America in 1782 and has been committed to Biblical doctrine and practice ever since.

Please understand our burden for this new church. Many of us were in churches that had drifted away from the gospel. Things like sin and punishment were not spoken of; salvation in Christ alone through faith alone was compromised; God's commandments were set aside for popular morality; and worship was not according to scriptural guidelines. Others of us had nothing to do with God at all. But He graciously called all of us to repent and to return to His Word, and by His grace He has received us as His fumbling but grateful disciples. He has enabled us by His grace to bring up our sons and daughters in the true Christian faith and to introduce some of our friends to Christ.

Now we want to start a church committed to these things in Truro. Our plan is to begin the way we did Halifax;

to begin a congregation by holding worship services a couple of times a month on Sunday evenings. In this way, we can meet people, give them a taste of biblical worship and preaching, and hopefully both gather those Christians who are hungry for this and reach those who do not know Christ. So come if you are in a church that has left the faith, or if you are just curious, or if you have a great church, but would like to come to a second service and help us out. On April 14, at 6:15 we will have our grand opening followed by a meal. (We are suggesting everyone who wants to stay for the meal to bring something to share).

Please send your name and email address to Covenant@eastlink.ca and we will add you to our mailing list. You will receive information about our meetings, an-

nouncements, prayer requests, service opportunities, and other matters regarding this new church. Please forward this letter to anyone you think might be interested and tell them to send me their names if they would like to be added to our email list.

Your can visit our new website at: www.ErskineARP.ca or see us on Facebook at <https://facebook.com/erskine-arp>.

Yours in Christ,
Rev. John R Shearouse, Pastor,
Covenant Reformed
Presbyterian Church (ARP Synod),
Halifax
Covenant@eastlink.ca
902-876-1817

Chamber of Commerce to Honour Business Leaders APRIL 25TH

The Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce is currently seeking nominations to recognize outstanding business leaders at its Annual Gala Dinner and Awards celebration. Deadline is April 1st. Two awards will be presented at the April 25 event; the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC) Business Person of the Year Award and the Community Credit Union Business Excellence Award.

The Community Credit Union Business Excellence Award recognizes a business that has been in operation for at least 10 years and has had an outstanding impact on the community in Truro or Colchester. The BDC Business Person of the Year Award acknowledges a founder, owner, CEO, president or manager who has achieved significant success in business



showing strong leadership skills and business acumen contributing to the consistent growth of the business

To view the full award criteria and to access 2019 nomination forms, visit www.trurocolchesterchamber.com, or email ec@tcchamber.ca. Links to online nomination forms: BDC Business Person of the Year, <http://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07eg4zjgw-pjsm9z35f/start>

Link to online application

for Community Credit Union Business Excellence Award, <http://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07eg4zjgw-pjsm9z35f/start>

The gal dinner will be held April 25th at the Holiday Inn, Truro. Tickets are now available and should be reserved by April 17th. Cost for members \$50 plus HST (\$60 plus HST for future members). For more information contact the Chamber office at 902-895-6328 or email ec@tcchamber.ca.

Colchester Trefoil to meet at Truro Mall

By Goldie Chisholm

Colchester Trefoil Guild met at the home of member, Donna Taylor, for our March meeting. Co-Ordinator, Sheila Stewart, opened the meeting with a reading followed by the members repeating the Trefoil Prayer in unison. Seven members were present and regrets given by those not in attendance.

Co-Ordinator Stewart reported a donation had been

made to Cobequid Fire Brigade, Lower Truro, as well as a Certificate of Appreciation in thanks for being able to celebrate our 30th anniversary in their building.

Four members indicated their interest in attending the Annual Provincial Meeting in Westphal, N.S. April 13th. It will be hosted by Dartmouth Trefoil Guild. Ann Leggett has agreed to continue looking after our Trefoil albums.

Sheila Stewart reported having attended the Maplewood Area Day February 23. She was in charge of the singing session and was very complimentary of the events of the whole day.

Future meetings will be held at the Community Room in the Truro Mall. Next meeting will be held April 15th with a craft program and refreshments by a couple of our members.

The Shoreline Journal (circ. 1650) is a monthly community newspaper serving communities along the Glooscap Trail from Truro to Parrsboro, Nova Scotia serving the communities of Belmont/Debert, Wentworth/Londonderry, Onslow/Masstown along the shore to Great Village, Bass River, Economy, Five Islands and Lower Five Islands. It is published on the last Wednesday of each month (earlier in December) with a deadline of the 20th of the month.

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Shoreline
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Each classroom at the following schools will receive a copy of the Shoreline Journal:
Bass River Consolidated;
Great Village Elementary; Debert Elementary; Chignosis Elementary;
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We are interested in placing the Shoreline Journal in additional locations. If you have a suggestion, or wish to have the Shoreline available from your store, please contact:
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