

REES' Pieces

What a shock

It was totally unexpected when Colchester Council during an April 16th presentation meeting on grants for "not-for profits" to deny Scotia Pool at grant for \$175,000. The decision to deny has sent shock waves through Bible Hill and then swimming community, particularly seniors who use the heated pool for its therapeutic values not available elsewhere locally.

Historically, Scotia Pool has received an annual grant of \$75,000, but last year following its difficult time to recover from CoVid19, Scotia Pool's operating Society asked for special consideration to raise the grant to \$175,000 for a period of three years.

In 2023, the \$175,000 was approved, but requested come back next year to let us know how you are doing.

It was anticipated the matter would be back on the agenda for the April 25th monthly meeting. It certainly was and council had to make a decision, because documents were on the table to approve a balanced budget that evening.

During discussion on April 16th some councilors expressed concern they were being asked for large amounts of money, when Village of Bible Hill was not coming to the table with similar funding. Mayor Blair explained under the Municipal Governance Act (MGA) villages were prohibited from making cash contributions and could only support entities like Scotia Pool with "in-kind" contributions. She added Bible Hill performs its "in-kind" work through accounting / bookkeeping services.

Deputy Mayor Geoff Stewart did some investigative work and found several instances where some villages around the province have been giving cash to help a local entity. This changed the water on the beans at April 25th meeting.

Councillor Boutilier opened discussion on Scotia Pool stating council had to do something, because if more money in addition to the already approved \$75,000 was not approved Scotia Pool would close late summer or early Fall, and that happened it would cost \$10-20-Million to build a new pool. He also mention Bible Hill could possibly see a housing development started soon with plans for 3,000 houses and apartment units and there is other residential projects getting ready to start.

During the lengthy discussion amendments and amendments were made as council tried to find the place they should fit. Some amendments were defeated, but finally council voted to provide \$50,000 with a condition within 3 months Scotia Pool Society would ensure studies were completed including a business plan, sustainability and plan of action. Monies for the studies can be used from the \$50,000, if they are unable to find external funding from another level of government.

During the April 16th budget meeting there was a lot of discussion the RECC does not have the capacity to handle all swimmers needs.

Many taxpayers outside the central core – such as Tata-magouche and West Colchester do not use the RECC on regular basis, except for attending special events. Most reasoning is distance; problems regarding parking. There is a general feeling the more remote areas are underserved because RECC gobbles up a larger portion of the available funding.

No studies have been done, but it is assumed most users are within a 10-15 minute driving radius. If so, more than 50% of Colchester residents use the RECC for hockey games and concerts and major special events brought to the area as a result of major marketing.

Scotia Pool is an icon. It needs constant support to ensure it continues. The cost of annually supporting it is far less expensive than what it would cost to replace. In fact is Scotia Pool closed it would never be replaced, primarily because of cost.

Let's make some comparisons. Yes, RECC is co-owned by the municipality. Scotia Pool is operated by a Society, which has a long-term lease with the province for the facilities. Scotia's heated pool is favoured by those requiring aqua-therapy; rarely has reduced hours and turns people away. RECC's pool often has shortened hours or s closed because of a lack of life-guards. Some residents complain they have driven almost an hour to get to the RECC to find the pool is closed.

Out of this situation will be a plan of how working together better programs for swimmers will evolve.

Maurice

Letters to the editor

This is an open forum for your opinions and comments.

MAIL TO: The Shoreline Journal, P.O. Box 41, Bass River, NS, B0M 1B0
(902) 647-2968; Fax: 902-647-2194 Email: maurice@theshorelinejournal.com

Dear Minister Wilkinson

I have been asked to contact you on behalf of Green Nova Scotia First, a network of concerned Nova Scotians who are committed to decarbonizing Nova Scotia first, before the export of hydrogen/ammonia, in a manner that has minimal negative impact on the environment, biodiversity and communities. We are very concerned about the MOU resulting from discussions with German's Federal Economic Affairs and Climate Action Minister and Vice Chancellor, Robert Habeck and yourself at last week's Canada-Germany Hydrogen and Ammonia -Producer -Offtaker Conference. Reports indicate that this MOU could result in a signed agreement that will commit almost 300 million Canadian taxpayers dollars to support the development of the German Hydrogen market and subsidize the difference between the high cost of producing green hydrogen and the lower cost that customers are willing to pay for the product. You have indicated that you are committed to working with Germany to create the financial instruments and architecture to make Canada a favourite supplier to Germany and supporting decarbonization in Germany. Your commitment is deeply concerning

to our group and we are requesting that you answer the following questions.

Why, when in Nova Scotia where our electricity continues to be generated significantly from coal, would our federal (and provincial) government be committing taxpayers dollars to projects which will not contribute to the provincial mandate to produce 80% of its domestic energy needs from renewable resources by 2030? In fact these projects will compete for land base, suppliers, employees, natural resources, etc with projects currently planned that will contribute to the Province's domestic decarbonization goal

If these Green Hydrogen/ Ammonia Projects are the economic opportunities that both Federal and Provincial governments are stating, then why do they need such huge government subsidies to be economically viable? The projects are being proposed by groups controlled by large corporate interest (some foreign entities). It is the private sector who will ultimately be the benefactor of the return of profits from these projects. Therefore it is the private sector that should be responsible for the risk and investment required to "go forward".

In Nova Scotia how many

acres of land will be irrevocably changed to meet the massive renewable energy requirements of these Hydrogen/Ammonia projects? We are a small beautiful province - Canada's Ocean Playground. Much of our economy and culture is driven by our commitment to our environment, biodiversity, beautiful landscapes, wildlife and rural communities. Why are you and your government willing to sacrifice our ecosystems, species habitat, recreational activities, tourism opportunities and quality of life in favour of these mega projects, which some experts say are an inefficient use of our valuable resources?

We look forward to your answers to the questions posed.

We are asking you to please not sign an agreement with Germany based on the MOU signed last week and not to commit further taxpayers dollars to these "Green" Hydrogen/Ammonia projects.

We are also requesting to meet with you to discuss these massive industrial turbine projects and your response to our questions. We know you have met with the developers of these projects and foreign governments indicating your support and endorsement. We are expecting that you will

be also willing to meet and hear the concerns of community members who will be most affected by the negative impacts of what you are supporting.

*Respectfully submitted on behalf of:
Green Nova Scotia First
Nancy Frame*

To the editor,

We are hoping this information is very newsworthy to you and you might include it in The Shoreline Journal distributed here in Parrsboro. On April 1st enforcement of Cumberland Libraries budget cuts caused library hours shortened and lay offs. Our library went down to one staff member and shortened hours of operation.

That enforcement actually got reversed and here's the story: A group of concerned citizens plan to attend The State of the Library meeting in Springhill on April 25 at 7pm. We hope to have the opportunity to read the following letter to the audience expressing our concerns, priorities and hopefully getting some answers to our questions.

The following is the letter we hope to read: We want to thank our provincial and county governments for helping to keep our library open. We also want to thank the community of Parrsboro for coming together in support of our library here in Parrsboro.

A total of 350 people signed a petition in favour of our library, agreeing that the library is a unique and necessary part of a community's health, demonstrates social inclusion where financial or social status does not limit one's use or access and provides a space where people come together to learn and explore, and promote shared activities.

Residents also added comments such as:

"Our libraries are absolutely essential for many kids and community members to fill out forms and access education."

"As a retiree I depend on the closest branch which is Parrsboro" and "This is a great little library! One of the reasons we chose Parrsboro."

Our priority is to maintain at least the current level of services not just for this year but for many years to come. Ultimately, of course, we would like to see those services grow and improve.

We understand the 2025-2030 budget is being prepared. With that in mind we have a few questions:

How can we ensure that donations made for the Parrsboro library go toward funding the Parrsboro library?

Does this require a committee or Friends of the Library type of organization? We are willing to work towards establishing this if needed.

And this brings us to our final question:

If there is such a committee, who makes the decisions regarding how the funds are allocated?

We welcome any suggestions and comments from our local citizens who would like to get involved in the library's future changes and funding.

Gaby Ingram, Becky Brown, Linda Davies, and Caroline McGee

Deadline for the June issue of The Shoreline Journal is May 21.

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.

MAILING ADDRESS: The Shoreline Journal, P.O. Box 41, Bass River, Nova Scotia, B0M 1B0.

PHONE: 902-647-2968; Fax: 902-647-2194 Toll Free 1-800-406-1426; Cell: 902-890-9850 • E-MAIL: maurice@theshorelinejournal.com

EDITOR PUBLISHER: Maurice Rees • ADVERTISING: Maurice Rees • CIRCULATION: Maurice Rees

Canadian Publications Mail Products Agreement #40048924, ISSN #1209-9198

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

LOCAL SUBSCRIPTIONS: B0M / B2N / B6L - \$23.00, PLUS HST = \$26.45 • OTHER PARTS OF NS: \$28.00 plus HST = \$32.20

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HST: #890564404RT001. Printed by Advocate Printing & Publishing Ltd, Pictou, Nova Scotia

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