

COUNCIL COMMITTEE

The Regular Session of the Council Committee of the Municipality of the County of Colchester was conducted virtually, via Zoom Webinars on Thursday, September 16, 2021, beginning at 6:00 pm.

Roll Call

The roll was called with the following Councillors in attendance:

Mayor Christine Blair	
Councillor Eric Boutilier	District 1
Councillor Laurie Sandeson	District 2
Deputy Mayor Geoff Stewart, Chair	District 3
Councillor Mike Cooper	District 4 (<i>arrived at 6:04 pm</i>)
Councillor Tim Johnson	District 5
Councillor Karen MacKenzie	District 6
Councillor Michael Gregory	District 7
Councillor Lisa Patton	District 8
Councillor Marie Benoit	District 9
VACANT	District 10
Councillor Wade Parker	District 11

Staff Present

Rob Simonds, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)
 Scott Fraser, Director of Corp. Services/Acting Director of Solid Waste
 Michelle Boudreau, Director of Public Works
 Paul Smith, Acting Director of Community Development
 Dennis James, Municipal Solicitor
 Tracey Veno, Recording Secretary
 Devin Trefry, Research, Policy and Community Engagement Officer
 Craig Burgess, Recreation Manager (for Item 7)
 Jenn Martin, Acting Economic Development Officer
 Mollie MacBurnie-Haas, IT Support Technician
 Joanna Burris, Sustainability Planner (for Item 6)

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Councillor Boutilier
 Seconded by Councillor Johnson

“That the agenda be approved with the following amendments:

- Move Item 12, Request to Purchase Municipal Land, to Closed Session;
- Add Item 15b, Committee Vacancies; and,
- Add Item 16b, Returning Officer.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Councillor Cooper arrived at the meeting during this agenda item.

Moved by Councillor Johnson
 Seconded by Councillor Sandeson

“That the minutes of the meeting held on August 12, 2021, be approved as presented.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Business Arising from Minutes There was no business arising from the minutes of the meeting held on August 12, 2021.

Presentation

Grant Thornton, Consolidated Financial Statements

Alisha Mombourquette, Senior Manager with Grant Thornton LLP, advised that the Audit Committee met in August and reviewed in detail, the 2020-21 Consolidated Financial Statements of the Municipality. The intent of this evening's presentation is to provide a high-level overview to Council of same. Included in the presentation was a brief review of the Audit Report; the Consolidated Statement of Operations and Surplus; and, the Consolidated Statement of Financial Position. Ms. Mombourquette indicated that in the opinion of the Auditor, it is a clean audit report, and the statements present fairly in all material respects, the financial position of the Municipality of Colchester as of March 31, 2021.

At their meeting on August 26, 2021, Council granted authority to September Council Committee to approve the 2020-21 Consolidated Financial Statements.

Moved by Councillor Cooper
Seconded by Councillor Johnson

"That Council accepts and adopts the 2021-22 Consolidated Financial Statements as presented by Grant Thornton; and,

That the Mayor and CAO be authorized to sign the necessary documentation relative to the 2020-21 Consolidated Financial Statements."

Motion Carried Unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS

Amendments to Solar Colchester PACE Policy

Joanna Burris, Sustainability Planner, advised that the proposed changes to the Solar Colchester PACE Policy are to reflect the Solar Colchester Program expansion. Amendments to the Policy include adding energy efficiency upgrades; eligibility for financing; removing sections that describe program procedures, as this will be included in a new procedural manual; specifying the program uses a user-pay model and funding sources; criteria for qualifying properties; language giving the CAO discretion to approve or refuse applications; recommendations that projects aim to meet a 1:1 cost to savings ratio; removal of specific interest rate; and, other changes to reflect the proposed amendments to the Solar Colchester PACE By-law. Ms. Burris also provided information on PACE Atlantic CIC, a third-party program administrator who will be helping to administer the program, as well as a preview of the newly developed Cozy Colchester brand for the Energy Efficiency program.

Moved by Councillor Benoit
Seconded by Councillor Sandeson

"That Council Committee recommends to Council that the proposed amendments to the Solar Colchester PACE Policy be approved as presented."

Motion Carried Unanimously.

**Grants to Non-profit
Organizations Policy
Amendments**

Following previous directive of Council, an Adhoc Committee was formed to undertake a review of the Grants to Non-profit Organizations Policy. Craig Burgess, Recreation Manager, provided a summary of the recommended amendments resulting from the Committee's review. Amendments include a definitions section within the Policy; language providing clearer direction regarding funding limits; simplifying criteria of eligible and non-eligible expenses; and, focusing on submitting all financial documentation with the application. It also includes post grant reporting requirements, and information on a proposal process for grant requests over the \$5,000 maximum under this Policy. Additionally, following discussions with the Municipal Solicitor, it was suggested that Corporations Canada be included in the definitions section of the Policy, which would cover federally incorporated entities.

Brief discussion was held on dealing with requests over \$5,000 and whether another policy should be developed for these requests; presentation requirements; length of time allotted for presentations; and, developing guidelines and templates to assist with the application process. Minor language changes were suggested under the Application Process and Post Grant Reporting sections relative to requirements to include both a balance sheet and income statement.

Moved by Councillor Boutilier
Seconded by Councillor Benoit

"That Council Committee recommends to Council that revisions to the Grants to Non-profit Organizations Policy be approved with amendments including the addition of Corporations Canada under the Definitions section, as well as requirements to include both a balance sheet and income statement under Application Process and Post Grant Reporting sections."

Motion Carried Unanimously.

**Debert Water Utility Three-Year
Operating Budget**

Scott Fraser, Director of Corporate Services, presented a brief overview of the Debert Water Utility Three-Year Operating Budget. The Debert Water Utility has an accumulated surplus of \$103,698 as of March 31, 2021.

Moved by Councillor Boutilier
Seconded by Councillor Benoit

"That Council Committee recommends to Council that the three-year Debert Water Utility operating budget (2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24), be approved as presented."

Motion Carried Unanimously.

**Tatamagouche Water Utility
Three-Year Operating Budget**

Mr. Fraser presented an overview of the Tatamagouche Water Utility Three-Year Operating Budget. The Tatamagouche Water Utility Committee met to review the three-year operating budget and has made a recommendation to Council for approval.

The Tatamagouche Water Utility has an accumulated deficit as of March 31, 2021. A surplus is expected in year one of the proposed three-year budget, however, slight deficits are anticipated for years two and three. If this continues, a rate review will be required, likely in 2022-23.

Moved by Councillor Gregory
Seconded by Councillor Johnson

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the three-year Tatamagouche Water Utility operating budget (2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24) be approved as presented.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Ice Pond Drive Sidewalk Evaluation

Paul Smith, Acting Director of Community Development, advised that this report relates to a sidewalk request for Ice Pond Drive in Salmon River. Included in the report was background information on the Active Transportation (AT) Strategy and how projects are ranked; having an annual review of the AT projects; financial and staff resource implications of adding new projects to the approved list; the assessment and outcome of the evaluation carried out for the Ice Pond Drive sidewalk; options for consideration; and staff recommendations.

Discussion was held on the ranking criteria, specifically related to the Ice Pond Drive project and how it links communities/parks/trails, as well as safety and suggested times to carry out traffic counts.

Moved by Councillor Johnson
Seconded by Councillor Boutilier

“That Council Committee recommends that Council defer making decisions on any new sidewalk/active transportation projects until the annual Active Transportation review process in June of 2022.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Capital Budget Approval

The Director of Corporate Services advised that the Five-Year Capital Budget was presented at the August 26, 2021, Council meeting and was deferred to September Committee, with authority being granted to September Committee to consider and approve the Five-Year Capital Budget. Changes to the document include the addition of the sidewalk along Pictou Road to Crowland Drive and, the sidewalk along College Road from Old Courthouse Branch to Regency. It was noted that the Five-Year Capital Budget is a working document that can be modified from year to year, with Council approved changes.

Brief discussion was held on whether the airport upgrade funds were for hangar or runway upgrades. Mr. Fraser confirmed that these funds are allotted for runway upgrades but not for the paving of the full runway. Further discussion was held on criteria for sidewalks; tax revenues not being factored into the criteria, rather it being more safety driven; study numbers for the Crowland Drive project; and, not rehashing past decisions of Council.

Moved by Councillor Cooper

Seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council approve the Five-Year Capital Budget, as presented.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

J Class Road Policy

Michelle Boudreau, Director of Public Works, provided a summary of past discussions and directives of Council regarding J Class Roads. In May, directive to staff was to draft a J Class Road Policy. However, clarity is required on a number of issues as identified in the Action Item, including the main challenge of a funding mechanism, before proceeding with drafting a policy,

The CAO alerted Council of an email forwarded prior to this evening’s meeting regarding mandate letters from the Premier’s office. One of the mandates for the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing is regarding funding for municipal roads when renegotiating the Memorandum of Understanding. It may be preliminary to have discussions on the issue of J Class Roads prior to receiving further information from the Province.

Moved by Councillor Boutilier
Seconded by Councillor Johnson

“That discussion on J Class Roads be deferred to a later date until all information has been received from the Province.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

FCM Sustainability Conference

Historically, Council has approved participation/attendance at the FCM Sustainability Conference. This year’s conference is being held virtually and staff is seeking directive from Council on attendees.

Moved by Councillor Parker
Seconded by Councillor Johnson

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that attendance for the 2021 FCM Sustainability Conference be open to all Council members.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Finding the Path: Trauma & Grief in Colchester

The CAO advised that staff is seeking directive following the presentation received earlier this month on Trauma & Grief in Colchester. As part of the discussion at the presentation meeting, Council expressed interest in gathering information relative to the subject property. However, typically presentations are referred to Council Committee for a more fulsome discussion and clear directive to staff on what information Council would like.

Discussion was held on the importance of addressing trauma and grief in Colchester County; Council’s support for this initiative; and staff looking into the status of the building to determine if it is scheduled for demolition.

Moved by Mayor Blair
Seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That staff follow up on the status of the subject property from the September 7th presentation and make inquiries with the Province on their intentions regarding follow up on trauma and grief.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Committee Vacancies

The CAO indicated that direction is being sought regarding the vacancies on the three Committees, namely the Northern Region Solid Waste Committee; the Debert Business Park Advisory Committee, and the Equity Diversity and Inclusion Committee, due to the recent resignation of former Councillor Tom Taggart.

Moved by Mayor Blair
Seconded by Councillor Boutilier

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that filling the vacancies on the Northern Region Solid Waste Committee; the Debert Business Park Advisory Committee, and the Equity Diversity and Inclusion Committee be deferred until after the November 6th By-Election.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Debert Aviation Centre

The Director of Public Works provided a detailed presentation on the Debert Aviation Centre (hangar) project. Included in the presentation was information on the history and purchase of the building; renovations and costs as estimated at August 2020; approved budget for the project; status of expenses; estimated operating costs and revenues; summary of expenses versus budget; factors impacting the budget; and building plans. Detailed information was also included in the Item as distributed to Council.

Returning Officer

Council previously granted authority to the CAO to appoint the Returning Officer for the upcoming By-Election. The CAO advised that Guy Wheeler has been appointed and will start beginning September 27, 2021. Staff is working with the Returning Officer to ensure advertisements meet key date requirements and an item should be coming forward at the end of the month relative to establishment of fees and other administrative considerations for the By-Election.

Director’s Report

A report from the Director of Corporate Services was circulated in the package for tonight’s meeting. Brief discussion was held on the increased number of phishing emails being received. Staff indicated that this would be followed up with the IT Department.

CLOSED SESSION

Moved by Councillor Cooper
Seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That the meeting go into closed session at 8:27 pm.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Moved by Councillor Gregory
Seconded by Councillor Patton

“That the meeting reconvene in open session at 9:45 pm.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

**Request to Purchase Municipal
Land, Cross Road, Great Village**

Moved by Mayor Blair
Seconded by Councillor Sandeson

“That staff investigate the development potential of the property as discussed in Closed Session and report information back to Council.”

Motion Carried. (*Councillor Parker opposed*)

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Councillor Patton
Seconded by Councillor Gregory

“That the meeting adjourn at 9:50 pm.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Tracey Veno
Recording Secretary