

**COUNCIL COMMITTEE**

The Regular Session of the Council Committee of the Municipality of the County of Colchester was conducted virtually, via Zoom Webinars and in-person on November 9, 2022, beginning at 6:00 pm.

In peace and friendship, and in the spirit of truth and reconciliation, Councillor Cooper acknowledged that the Municipality of Colchester is in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq.

**Roll Call**

The roll was called with the following Councillors in attendance:

Mayor Christine Blair	
Cllr. Laurie Sandeson	District 2
Cllr. Mike Cooper, Alternate Chair	District 4
Cllr. Tim Johnson	District 5
Cllr. Karen MacKenzie	District 6
Cllr. Michael Gregory	District 7
Cllr. Lisa Patton	District 8
Cllr. Marie Benoit	District 9
Cllr. Victoria Lomond	District 10
Cllr. Wade Parker	District 11

**Regrets**

Cllr. Eric Boutilier	District 1
Deputy Mayor Geoff Stewart	District 3

**Staff Present**

Rob Simonds, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)  
 Michelle Boudreau, Director of Public Works  
 Scott Fraser, Director of Corporate Services  
 Paul Smith, Director of Community Development  
 Phillip Redden, Director of Solid Waste  
 Dennis James, Municipal Solicitor  
 Tracey Veno, Recording Secretary  
 Devin Trefry, Research Policy & Community Engagement Officer  
 Jenn Martin, Economic Development Officer  
 Kelly Gratto-McCarthy, HR Specialist (for item 5, 6 & 7)  
 Mollie MacBurnie-Haas, IT Support Technician

**Approval of Agenda**

Moved by Councillor Gregory and seconded by Councillor Patton

“That the agenda be approved with the following addition:

- Item #16b, Negotiations in Closed Session.” Carried unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Johnson and seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That the minutes of the meeting held on October 13, 2022, be approved as presented.” Carried unanimously.

**Business Arising from Minutes**

None

**ACTION ITEMS**

**Personnel Policy – Drugs and Alcohol in the Workplace**

Kelly Gratto McCarthy, HR Specialist, advised that there are three personnel policies before Council this evening for consideration. The first policy, Drugs and Alcohol in the Workplace, is a new policy prompted by provincial and federal legislations. This proposed Policy sets expectations, guidelines, and procedures as it relates to the use of substances that could impact an employee's ability to perform their duties safely, competently, and efficiently. Some highlights of the Policy include clear definitions; terms and conditions regarding employee's working in safety sensitive positions; expectations for employees and management responsibilities; procedures and guidelines for suspicion of impairment; procedures for handling substance dependency situations; list of resources to assist with substance problems; guidelines for aftercare plan for treatment of substance dependency. The Policy was vetted through legal.

Moved by Mayor Blair and seconded by Councillor Sandeson

"That Council Committee recommends to Council that the new personnel policy entitled Drugs and Alcohol in the Workplace, be approved as presented." Carried unanimously.

**Personnel Policy – Pregnancy and Parental Leave**

The second personnel policy is an existing policy, Pregnancy and Parental Leave, being amended to ensure compliance with current labour laws of Nova Scotia. Proposed amendments include new language for parental leave as it applies to standard and extended parental leave; timings for parental and adoption leaves based on maximum allowable of 18 months; seniority accruals; group benefits premiums and pension contributions; and, supplementary top-up benefits. The proposed amendments have been vetted through legal.

Moved by Councillor Sandeson and seconded by Councillor Lomond

"That Council Committee recommends to Council that the amended Pregnancy and Parental Leave Policy be approved as presented." Carried unanimously.

**Personnel Policy – Illness or Disability**

The last personnel policy, Illness or Disability, is an existing policy with proposed amendments and guidelines for the administration of paid sick leave for non-unionized employees. The proposed amendments include incorporating a sick leave bank to a maximum of 95 days and management of sick bank; addresses sick banks for existing and new employees; provisions for returning to work after receiving Long Term Disability or WCB; as well as housekeeping changes to assist with the administration of sick leave and disability benefits. The proposed amendments have been vetted through legal.

Brief discussion was held on the new proposed sick leave banks mirroring that of the Collective Agreement for unionized employees. Additional discussion was held on management of current banks; practices for sick time review process; and comparisons to other municipalities.

Moved by Councillor Johnson and seconded by Mayor Blair

"That Council Committee recommends to Council that the amended Illness or Disability Policy be approved as presented." Carried unanimously.

### EDI Committee – Statement for Job Postings

Devin Trefry, Research, Policy, and Community Engagement Officer, provided an overview of this item indicating that the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee has established a statement for job postings for consideration, noting that EDI is important to an organizations hiring and retention efforts.

Moved by Councillor Patton and seconded by Councillor Sandeson

“That Council Committee recommends to Council, the approval of the following statement for inclusion in job postings:

*The Municipality of Colchester is committed to treating people fairly, with respect and dignity. Our goal is to continue to move forward as a diverse and inclusive workforce representative of the citizens we serve by offering equal opportunities free of biases. We have formed an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee to keep us accountable and to help us reach this goal.*

*The Municipality supports the principles of the NS Human Rights Act and the principles of inclusion for person with disabilities in the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act. Applicants are encouraged to contact Human Resources at 902-843-4913, should assistance be required throughout the application and hiring process.”* Carried unanimously.

### Review of Dangerous and Unightly Process

Dennis James, Municipal Solicitor, advised that at a previous meeting, Council requested that options to address repeat instances of Dangerous and Unightly properties be investigated. The memo as distributed in the Council package outlines the current context of how dangerous and unsightly properties are managed; the volume of complaints handled by the Committee; the definition of dangerous or unsightly from the Municipal Government Act (MGA); and, possible options to enhance the current process. Direction is being sought if any of the options as outlined are of interest to Council to have more specific recommendations brought back for consideration. Options for consideration include:

- Introduce a Dangerous and Unightly By-law to provide for recovery of funds and introduce a greater range of fines;
- Introduce a Dangerous and Unightly By-law to define and enhance list as set out in MGA;
- Introduce a policy with more immediate collection of enforcement costs through tax collection process;
- Implement shorter deadlines around clean-up orders - this would have staff resource implications;
- Introduce a Derelict Building By-law;
- Introduce a Minimum Standards By-law.

During debate on this matter, a number of points were raised including imposing a by-law to deal with repeat instances with shorter deadlines, increased fines, shorter tax sale timelines; enhancements to the list as defined in the MGA; inclusion of derelict vehicles and lawns; clarity around the definition of unsightly; developing a policy to deal with clean-up times

Moved by Mayor Blair and seconded by Councillor Patton

“That staff be directed, in consultation with the Municipal Solicitor, to develop a by-law to enhance the definitions of ‘Dangerous and Unsightly’; and,

To develop a policy on dealing with turnaround times for repeat offenders.”  
Carried unanimously.

**December Committee Meeting  
Start Time**

Rob Simonds, CAO, advised that initially this was added to the agenda for Council to give consideration to changing the start time for the December Committee meeting to 7 pm to accommodate the annual Employee Service Recognition reception. However, it was noted that both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor will be away for FCM Board meetings on December 8<sup>th</sup> and it is being suggested that the date for December Committee be changed to December 15<sup>th</sup>.

Moved by Councillor Sandeson and seconded by Councillor Johnson

“That the December Council Committee date be changed from December 8<sup>th</sup> to December 15<sup>th</sup>, with a start time of 7 pm.” Motion carried (*Councillor Lomond opposed*).

**FCM Sustainability Conference**

Mr. Trefry advised that the 2023 FCM Sustainable Communities Conference is being held February 8<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup>. Past practice was Council approving two in-person participants. During the Covid Pandemic, the conference was offered virtually, and Council permitted attendance of anyone wishing to do so. The 2023 Conference is being held both in-person and virtually.

At their meeting on October 27<sup>th</sup>, Council granted authority to November Council Committee to make a decision on attending the 2023 FCM Sustainable Communities Conference. The CAO noted that Deputy Mayor Stewart has indicated that he is interested in attending this Conference virtually.

Moved by Councillor Johnson and seconded by Councillor Parker

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that Mayor Blair and Councillor Sandeson be approved to attend the 2023 FCM Sustainable Communities Conference in-person; and,

That any other Council member wishing to attend the Conference virtually be permitted to do so by registering prior to the early bird registration deadline.”  
Carried unanimously.

**Municipal Boundary Review**

Mr. Trefry provided a detailed presentation on the Municipal Boundary Review. Included in the presentation was information on why a boundary review is needed and requirements under the Municipal Government Act; the process for the review; public consultation process and results; comparatives with other municipalities; information on NS Utility and Review Board guidelines and allowable variances; district comparison on voter parity relative to target variance; results of comparisons; a request from the Lakewood Road Association; scenarios to improve voter parity; options for consideration; and next steps. Should Council wish to pursue possible boundary changes, further public consultation would be required.

Detailed discussion was held on districts falling outside the target variance, namely districts 1, 6, 8 and 9, and suggested ways to improve voter parity, as outlined in the presentation. The request from the Lakewood Road Association was also discussed with the consensus being not to divide up communities. Discussion was also held on the scenario to address the slight variance in District 9 with support for status quo.

Moved by Councillor Patton and seconded by Councillor Sandeson

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that staff continue with the preparations of the 2022 Municipal Boundary Review application with no changes to the existing boundaries.” Motion defeated (*Mayor Blair, Councillors Cooper, Johnson, MacKenzie, Gregory, Benoit, Lomond, and Parker opposed*).

Moved by Councillor Parker and seconded by Councillor Lomond

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that staff begin the public consultation process for possible boundary changes in districts 1, 6, 8 and 11; and,

That staff be directed to request an extension for the application deadline through the NS Utility and Review Board.” Carried unanimously.

## INFORMATION ITEMS

### **Grease Update – Robie Street Sewer System**

As per a request from Council, this item, as prepared by the Director of Public Works, Michelle Boudreau, provided a detailed update on grease monitoring information in the Robie Street sewer system.

Discussion was held on abilities to recover costs for monitoring and flushing sewer lines. It was confirmed that the By-law allows for cost recovery through the issuing of fines. Ms. Boudreau advised that most businesses use a third-party contractor for their grease trap cleaning procedures. Staff are in the process of determining the cleaning processes through businesses and third-party contractors and will continue to monitor this issue.

### **Infrastructure Asset Management**

This information provided information on the process of evaluating the condition of municipal assets. A detailed report was provided in the package for this evening’s meeting.

### **Director’s Report**

A report from the Director of Solid Waste was circulated in the package for tonight’s meeting. Phil Redden provided a detailed overview of his report.

## CLOSED SESSION

Moved by Councillor Gregory and seconded by Councillor Patton

“That the meeting go into closed session at 9:11 pm.” Carried unanimously.

Moved by Councillor Gregory and seconded by Councillor Lomond

“That the meeting reconvene in open session at 10:07 pm.” Carried unanimously.

**Personnel Matter**

Moved by Mayor Blair and seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the amended non-union salary scales, as outlined in Closed Session, be adopted.” Carried unanimously.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Councillor Lomond and seconded by Councillor Patton

“That the meeting adjourn at 10:08 pm.” Carried unanimously.

Tracey Veno  
Recording Secretary