

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 March 14, 2024, beginning at 6:00 pm.

In peace and friendship, and in the spirit of truth and reconciliation, Deputy Mayor Stewart 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	<i>(virtual)</i>
Cllr. Eric Boutilier	District 1 <i>(regrets)</i>
Cllr. Laurie Sandeson	District 2
Deputy Mayor Geoff Stewart, Chair	District 3
Cllr. Mike Cooper	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

Staff Present

Dan Troke, Chief Administrative Officer
 Scott Fraser, Director of Corporate Services
 Paul Smith, Director of Community Development
 Dennis James, Municipal Solicitor
 Tracey Veno, Recording Secretary
 Devin Trefry, Research, Policy, and Community Engagement Officer
 Jessica Rushton, Manager, Balefill and Compost Operations
 Mollie MacBurnie-Haas, IT Support Technician
 Robert Matheson, Manager, Reduction and Recovery Operations
 Kaela MacLellan, Project Engineer
 Joanna Burris, Sustainability Planner

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Councillor Gregory, seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That the agenda be approved with the following additions:

- Item 17b, Letter to NS Public Works; and
- Item 20b, Salmon River School Property.” Carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Councillor Patton, seconded by Councillor Johnson

“That the minutes of the meeting held on February 15, 2024, be approved as presented.” Carried unanimously.

Business Arising from Minutes

None

ACTION ITEMS**Colchester Clean Litter Program**

Robert Matheson, Manager of Reduction & Recovery Operations, presented Council with information on the Colchester Clean Program seeking directive on a proposed 2024-26 program. Highlights of the presentation included various Colchester Clean Program initiatives; results from Colchester Clean

2023; options for consideration; approximate annual costs; and staff resources for the administration of the Program. Staff is recommending that Council approve to continue the Colchester Clean Program for the next three years, 2024-26 Spring season.

Points raised during discussion included the possibility of getting local business sponsors and expanding the program to more participants.

Moved by Councillor Patton, seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the Colchester Clean Program be approved for three years for the 2024-2026 Spring seasons.” Carried unanimously.

**Personnel Policy Amendment –
Employee Recognition Policy**

Kelly Gratto-McCarthy, Human Resources Specialist, presented the proposed changes to the Employee Recognition Policy indicating that these changes are to capture inflation over the last number of years and to ensure the recognition program demonstrates the Municipality’s continued appreciation for employee commitment and retention. Changes include slight increases at five-year intervals and the elimination of departing gifts with the exception of retirements.

Some concern was expressed with the timing of the proposed increases given the current economic situation and struggles. Brief discussion was held on how Colchester’s numbers compare to those of other jurisdictions.

Moved by Councillor Sandeson, seconded by Mayor Blair

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the amended Personnel Policy 5.09 Employee Recognition be approved as presented.” Carried unanimously.

**Personnel Policy Amendment –
Reimbursement for Business
and Training Expenses**

Ms. Gratto-McCarthy provided an overview of the proposed changes to the Reimbursement for Business and Training Expenses indicating that these amendments are intended to provide clarity around the types of expenses that qualify for reimbursement. Proposed changes include clarification on requirements for receipts and other related documents; extended travel for personal reasons; costs associated with an accompanying spouse not being covered; and personal entertainment while on business travel not being covered.

Moved by Councillor Patton, seconded by Councillor Gregory

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the amended Personnel Policy 5.05 Reimbursement for Business Travel and Training Expenses be approved as presented.” Carried unanimously.

**Matching Funds for Arena
Efficiency Retrofits**

Joanna Burris, Sustainability Planner, advised that this item is to request Council approval of matching capital funds to support energy efficiency upgrades at the North Shore Recreation Centre and the West Colchester United Arena, pending the arenas’ successful applications under the Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund. Included in her presentation was background information on the efficiency retrofit projects at each arena; benefits of the upgrades such as maintenance of facilities, energy

efficiencies, and promotion and contributions to the health and well-being initiatives; other Municipal capital contributions and annual funding; and a breakdown of costs and funding sources by fiscal year. The estimated payback for each facility is five-years and the Manager of Recreation Services is recommending that the arenas be permitted to retain the savings from the projects for programming and capital expenditures not eligible through the Arena Funding Policy. Matching funding, if approved by the Municipality, would total \$278,700 - \$58,367 in 2024-25 and \$220,333 in 2025-26. The Municipality may be required to cover the portion of the projects funded by Efficiency Nova Scotia and be reimbursed later.

Detailed debate was held with concern raised on arenas retaining the savings from the retrofit projects. Discussion was also held about the Don Henderson Memorial Sportsplex missing opportunity due to application timelines, and the differences in the retrofit projects at each of the arenas.

Moved by Councillor Benoit, seconded by Councillor Gregory

“That Council Committee recommend that Council approves a Municipal contribution of \$135,299 toward the proposed efficiency retrofits at the North Shore Recreation Centre and \$143,401 toward the retrofits at the West Colchester United Arena, for a total of \$278,700, sourced from the Operating Reserves, and pending the arenas successful grant awards from the Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund.” Carried unanimously.

Purple Day Proclamation Request

Moved by Councillor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council Committee proclaims March 26, 2024, as Purple Day in support of Epilepsy Awareness.” Carried unanimously.

Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee Appointment

This item deals with an unsolicited expression of interest received through MLA Ritcey’s office, from Brayden Cream to serve on the Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee (RAAC). CAO Dan Troke advised that this is outside the normal process for considering applications to serve on committees. Options for consideration would be to approve the appointment or follow the normal process and have the Expression of Interest go through the Nominating Committee. There has not been great response to recent advertisements for citizen representation and staff is recommending that Mr. Cream be appointed to the RAAC.

Moved by Councillor Cooper, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That the unsolicited expression of interest for the Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee be referred to the Nomination Committee for review and recommendation.” Carried unanimously.

Appeals Committee By-law

Paul Smith, Director of Community Development, advised that following an appeal under the Commercial Dog Care and Kennel Facility By-law a couple of years ago and the challenges in forming an Appeals Committee to deal with the appeal in a timely manner, Council agreed with a staff recommendation to investigate the possibility of forming a single Appeals Committee to simplify the appointment process and ensure a tribunal was in place for all existing and/or new Committees. The creation of an Appeals Committee By-law would be required along with changes to existing By-law with existing

provisions around appeals committees. The adoption of an Appeals Committee By-law was vetted through legal, and it is their opinion that this would provide an efficient and effective approach.

During debate, it was suggested that the Dangerous and Unsightly Committee be a stand-alone committee and kept separate from the Appeals Committee. Discussion was held on the infrequency of appeals and benefits of creating one committee to hear all appeals. The Municipal Solicitor advised that the Dangerous and Unsightly Committee is the most active committee in dealing with appeals, providing experience and helping to inform other committees when dealing with appeals and interacting with citizens. Responding to when changes would come into effect, the Director of Community Development indicated that to avoid any potential disruptions, this could be implemented for the new term of Council.

Moved by Councillor Cooper, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the status quo be maintained relative to leaving appeal mechanisms within each by-law.” Motion DEFEATED. (*Mayor Blair, Deputy Mayor Stewart, Councillors Sandeson, Johnson, MacKenzie, Patton, Benoit, Lomond, and Parker opposed*).

Moved by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Lomond

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that adoption of an Appeals Committee By-law be considered together with amendments to the following By-laws:

- Adult Entertainment Establishment;
- Commercial Dog Care and Kennel Facility;
- Construction and Demolition Disposal;
- Livestock Appeals;
- Sewer Use;
- Taxi;
- Dangerous or Unsightly Premises; and,
- Wind Turbine Development.” Motion carried (*Councillor Cooper opposed*).

Proposed Amendments – Municipal Fees Policy

The Director of Community Development advised that the suggested amendments to the Municipal Fees Policy include new and/or revised fees associated with changes being considered to the Dog By-law. Other fees were also reviewed with amendments being proposed and new fees implemented to various fees to offset operational costs.

Discussion on lateral installations for sewer connections was held with concern expressed with the proposed amended fee. CAO Troke, along with Kaela MacLellan, Project Engineer, advised that the proposed fee is for cost recovery, with average costs over the past year being \$7,600.

Moved by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Sandeson

“That Council Committee recommends to Council approval of amendments to the Municipal Fees Policy with the exception of sewer lateral installation fee

being in the range of \$5,000 to \$7,000, based on project, as determined by the Director of Public Works.” Carried unanimously.

Annual Account Write-Offs

Scott Fraser, Director of Corporate Services, advised that account write-offs are brought to Council annually for approval. This year, there are four items in total on the list from both general receivables and water utilities, amounting to \$13,722.41.

Moved by Councillor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the 2023-24 property taxes, water, other receivables, and interest, totaling \$13,722.41 be written off.” Carried unanimously.

**Village of Tatamagouche Letter
– Request re Crosswalk**

Moved by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Gregory

“That the letter from the Village of Tatamagouche requesting assistance for the replacement of the main street crosswalk be referred to budget deliberations.” Carried unanimously.

**FCM Conference – Alternate
Attendee**

The CAO advised that Mayor Blair is unable to attend the FCM Annual Conference in June. Councillor Sandeson was previously approved as the alternate attendee, however, is also unable to attend. One of the other two Council members who had expressed interest in attending are now eligible to attend. Following brief discussion, Councillor Johnson indicated that he would withdraw to allow Councillor Patton the opportunity to attend.

RECC Events

Councillor Benoit raised the issue of insufficient parking at the Rath Eastlink Community Centre (RECC) during large events. Cars are parking on curbs, in the median, up and down Abenaki Road, and on the grass, however, the biggest concern is of cars parking in the area designated for life flight at the hospital. Additionally, there is a lack of communication with the hospital when large events are taking place.

Key points of discussion included parking being a chronic problem at the RECC; this being a discussion and decision for the Board of Directors; safety and liability concerns; acquiring a parcel of land for additional parking; building a parking garage; having shuttle busses available for large events; having parking attendants available; and parking enforcement including ticketing and towing vehicles.

The matter concerning parking for large events at the RECC will be brought forward by County representatives to the Board for discussion.

Deer Culling

Moved by Councillor Parker, seconded by Councillor Lomond

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that a plebiscite for Districts 1, 5, 6 and 11, be added to the upcoming election to determine support for deer culling.” Carried unanimously.

Letter to NS Public Works

Councillor Cooper raised the issue of the atrocious condition of the Stewiacke River Park Road and expressed concern with future access to the park if repairs are not carried out. Support for tourism and active living is challenging when access to parks is limited or non-existent. A letter being

sent to the Minister of Public Works is being requested regarding the repair and access to Stewiacke River Park.

Road conditions in general throughout the entire County was discussed and it was suggested that the letter to the Minister of Public Works should be sent not only about the deplorable condition of the Stewiacke River Park Road but rather the condition of roads throughout the County.

Moved by Councillor Cooper, seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That a letter be written to the Minister of NS Public Works concerning the deplorable condition and need for repairs on many roads throughout the County, including the Stewiacke River Park Road.” Carried unanimously.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Functional Space Analysis, Municipal Building

This item provided Council with an update on the functional space analysis and potential renovation of the County’s Administration Building at 1 Church Street. A copy of the Functional Space Analysis & Design Report as provided by Root Architecture Inc. was included in the package for this week’s meeting.

Points of discussion included results indicating need for a new building; potential of existing building for other uses in the community; cost of functional space study; safety concerns with existing building; need for some renovations sooner rather than later; next steps and adding to a future agenda for a fulsome discussion.

Community Trail Funding Program – Winter 2023-24 Applications

The Community Trail Funding Program provides support to eligible, non-profit, community organizations in the planning, construction, maintenance, and promotion of public recreational trails. Four applications were received under the Community Trail Funding Program for the January deadline: the Kenomee Trails Society requested \$47,500, 50% of project cost, for maintenance and capital revitalization of trails and trailhead access at Economy Falls; the Tatamagouche Centre requested \$33,500, 50% of project cost, for capital construction of Landlines Trail Phase1; the Tatamagouche Area Trails Association requested \$26,506, 50% of project cost, for routine maintenance of the 26-km Short Line Trail; and, Tatamagouche Area Trails Association requested \$42,090, 50% of project cost for capital improvements to the Short Line Trail. Staff have approved grants in the requested amounts totaling \$148,596. pending approval of the 2024-25 budget.

Community Park Funding Program – Winter 2023-24 Applications

The Community Park Funding Program provides support to community organizations making capital improvements to public outdoor recreation facilities by providing grants of up to 50% of total project costs. Three applications were received under the Community Park Funding Program for the February 2024 deadline: the Portapique Mass Casualty Memorial Society requested \$12,380, 31% of the estimated project cost, for a memorial area at the corner of Hwy 2 and Portapique Beach Road; the Tatamagouche Centre requested \$40,000, 39% of total project cost, to redevelop the old playground on the property; and, Valley Elementary School requested \$13,554, 50% of estimated project cost, for a new slide for their playground. Staff have approved grants in the requested amounts totaling \$65,934 pending approval of the 2024-25 budget.

Salmon River School Property Staff advised of a possible Special In-Camera Council meeting at 5 pm on Wednesday, March 27th, prior to the regularly scheduled Council meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to receive a presentation on the former Salmon River School property. Council agreed to this date and time for this Special Council meeting, to be held In-camera.

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 spam and phishing emails with some members of Council indicating that they are receiving these types of emails frequently. The Director of Corporate Services indicated that he would put a ticket in to have staff investigate.

RCMP Report Discussion was held on the status of a Police Advisory Board (PAB) meeting and whether the delays in establishing a meeting will affect the timelines for a reverting to a stand-alone PAB. CAO Troke advised that communications with the interim CAO with the Town of Stewiacke regarding a meeting date are ongoing. He will follow up and come back to Council with a date. Timelines for re-establishing a stand-alone board are targeted for September.

CLOSED SESSION

Moved by Councillor Gregory, seconded by Councillor Patton

"That the meeting go into closed session at 8:54 pm." Carried unanimously.

Moved by Councillor Benoit, seconded by Councillor Gregory

"That the meeting reconvene in open session at 9:05 pm." Carried unanimously.

Negotiations – Debert Airport Operator Contract

Moved by Councillor Lomond, seconded by Councillor Benoit

"That Council Committee recommend to Council to enter into a new Airport Operator Agreement with the Truro Flying Club for one year under the same terms and conditions as the previous agreement." Carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Councillor Benoit, seconded by Councillor Gregory

"That the meeting adjourn at 9:06 pm." Carried unanimously.

Tracey Veno
Recording Secretary