

**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 February 13, 2025, beginning at 6:00 pm.

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

**Roll Call**

Mayor Christine Blair	(virtual)
Cllr. Paul Weatherby	District 1
Deputy Mayor Laurie Sandeson, Chair	District 2
Cllr. Sheldon Richardson	District 3
Cllr. Mike Cooper	District 4
Cllr. Tim Johnson	District 5
Cllr. Nigel Leggett	District 6
Cllr. Sherry Martell	District 7
Cllr. Lisa Patton	District 8 (virtual)
Cllr. Marie Benoit	District 9 (virtual)
Cllr. Charlene Fletcher	District 10
Cllr. Allan Kennedy	District 11

**Staff Present**

Dan Troke, Chief Administrative Officer  
 Phil Redden, Director of Solid Waste  
 Scott Fraser, Director of Corporate Services  
 Dennis James, Municipal Solicitor  
 Tracey Veno, Recording Secretary  
 Jenn Mantin, Economic Development Officer  
 David Quinn, Project Engineer  
 Mollie MacBurnie, IT Support Technician  
 Tim Smith, Manager of Information Systems (for item no. 5)  
 Devin Trefry, Research, Policy, and Community Engagement Officer  
 Craig Burgess, Recreation Manager

**Approval of Agenda**

Moved by Councillor Kennedy, seconded by Councillor Fletcher

“That the agenda be approved with the following addition:

- Item 12b, Request for Special Council Meeting.” Carried unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes**

One amendment was noted on page 2198 – Councillor Cooper, Leggett and Kennedy were opposed to the motion on the Flag Flying Policy.

Moved by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Kennedy

“That the minutes of the meeting held on January 16, 2025 be approved as amended.” Carried unanimously.

**Business Arising from Minutes**

None.

**ACTION ITEMS****Community Event Grant Request – North Shore**

Craig Burgess, Recreation Manager, indicated that the North Shore Recreation Centre (NSRC) is requesting funding in the amount of \$5,000 under the Community Event Grant Policy for the Grand Re-opening and Celebration of the

**Recreation Centre Grand Re-opening**

new NSRC arena floor project. This request meets the criteria of the Community Event Grant Policy and staff is recommending support for the request. The event is taking place in March so this request would fall in the 2024/25 fiscal year and there are sufficient funds available to support the request.

Moved by Councillor Martell, seconded by Councillor Weatherby

“That Council Committee recommend to Council that funding in the amount of \$5,000 for the Grand Re-opening Event at the North Shore Recreation Centre be approved.” Carried unanimously.

**Live Streaming of Council Meetings**

As per a previous request of Council, Tim Smith, Manager of Information Systems, advised that this item deals with Live Streaming of Council meetings. There are two options for live streaming Council meetings – streaming to Facebook Live and streaming to YouTube. With the Facebook Live option, commenting cannot be disabled which would require staff to monitor. With live streaming to YouTube, commenting can be disabled so no monitoring would be required. Live streaming Council meetings would require a few technical changes but would save time administratively as anyone wishing to view the meetings would not have to pre-register. Staff is recommending proceeding with streaming via YouTube Live.

Moved by Councillor Patton, seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That Council Committee recommend to Council that live streaming of meetings via YouTube Live be approved.” Carried unanimously.

**Budget Meeting Dates**

Dan Troke, CAO, advised this item is to select dates for budget meetings. Staying consistent with previous years, proposed dates are April 8<sup>th</sup> for Maintenance Budget meeting and April 15<sup>th</sup> for Additions/Deletions with a second date of April 22<sup>nd</sup> if an additional date is required.

Due to availability on Tuesdays, discussion was held changing dates to another day of the week; having an earlier start time to allow more flexibility; importance of these meetings; and as paid elected officials, meetings of Council need to be prioritized.

Moved by Councillor Weatherby, seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that April 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> be set for the Maintenance and Additions & Deletions Budget meetings respectively; and,

That April 22<sup>nd</sup> be approved as a second night for Additions & Deletions if needed; and,

The start time for these meetings be 5:00 pm.” Carried unanimously.

**Low-Income Municipal Tax Assistance Program**

Scott Fraser, Director of Corporate Services, advised that the Low-Income Municipal Tax Assistance Program is brought to Council annually in February to update the income thresholds and rebate amounts. These amounts are adjusted by the CPI rate as used by Property Valuation Services Corporation. This year the rate adjustment is 1.5%. Staff is recommending that the increase be approved as outlined.

Moved by Councillor Benoit, seconded by Councillor Kennedy

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the amendments to the Low-Income Municipal Tax Assistance Program Policy be approved as presented.” Carried unanimously.

**Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre, Ancestral Sites Land Transfer**

Jenn Martin, Economic Development Officer, indicated that this item is for Council to consider the transfer of ancestral sites in Debert Business Park to Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre. A brief overview was provided including requirements around transfer of property under the MGA, lands being unusable for commercial development as they are ancestral sites, requirements to protect the lands if retained, and transfer of ownership aligning with efforts to advance reconciliation and foster strong relations with the Mi'kmaw Community.

Moved by Councillor Benoit, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the transfer of ownership of ancestral sites BiCu-23, BiCu-24, BiCu-25 to Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre be approved.” Carried unanimously.

**Colchester Ground Search and Rescue Loan Guarantee**

The Director of Corporate Services advised that a request has been received for a loan guarantee from the Colchester Ground Search and Rescue Association (CGSAR) for a commercial mortgage for upgrades to their building. The loan guarantee is required by the bank and ensures that if CGSAR defaults on the loan, the Municipality would cover any outstanding amounts. Loan guarantees are permitted under section 295 of the Municipal Government Act to emergency service providers for operating or capital purposes. Included in Mr. Fraser's summary was mortgage amount and interest rates; annual loan repayment; current funding; analysis on ability to pay; and staff's recommendation to approve the request.

Brief discussion was held on the Municipality's debt ratio and potential impacts of the loan guarantee. Mr. Fraser indicated that the current debt ratio is quite healthy and this loan guarantee would not have a negative impact.

Moved by Councillor Benoit, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the loan guarantee and Borrowing Resolution for Colchester Ground Search and Rescue be approved as presented.” Carried unanimously.

**Tatamagouche Water Utility Grant**

Mr. Fraser indicated that this item is to seek approval of a grant from the Municipality to the Tatamagouche Water Utility (TWU). The TWU is currently undergoing a rate study review. Due to its accumulated deficit, the proposed rate application will see significant rate increases over the next three years. The projected accumulated deficit at the end of the 2025 fiscal year is \$230,000. Providing a grant to the TWU will help to lower projected rates for this period. Source of funds for the grant would be from the Special Operating Reserve.

Moved by Councillor Martell, seconded by Mayor Blair

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that a grant be provided to the Tatamagouche Water Utility from the Municipality equal to the accumulated deficit for the fiscal year ending 2025, and that the source of funds be the Special Operating Reserve.” Carried unanimously.

**Property Valuation Services Corporation Board**

*Councillor Weatherby recused himself from discussion on this matter.*

The CAO advised that positions for elected officials to serve on the Board of Directors for the Property Valuation Services Corporation (PVSC) was advertised in the weekly NSFM Communications/Monday Memo. Councillor Weatherby is interested in putting his name forward and is seeking the support of Council. Should Councillor Weatherby be selected to serve on the Board, there would be no cost to the Municipality. The deadline for applications is February 14<sup>th</sup>, however, if successful, Councillor Weatherby will not accept until final approval of Council at the end of the month.

Moved by Mayor Blair, seconded by Councillor Kennedy

“That Council Committee recommends to Council the endorsement of Councillor Weatherby to make application to the PVSC Board and if successful, to serve on the Board as an elected official.” Carried unanimously.

**Request for Special Council Meeting**

Paul Smith, Director of Community Development, indicated that staff is requesting consideration be given to holding a Special Council meeting on March 20<sup>th</sup> for the purpose of conducting two Public Hearings. There are three First Readings scheduled for the February Council meeting. If approved, they would be advanced to Public Hearings/Second Reading at March Council. For time management purposes, staff is recommending that a Special Council meeting be held on March 20<sup>th</sup> to deal with two of the Public Hearings/Second Readings.

Moved by Councillor Weatherby, seconded by Councillor Leggett

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that a Special Council Meeting be held on Thursday, March 20, 2025, for the purpose of conducting two Public Hearings/Second Readings.” Carried unanimously.

**INFORMATION ITEMS**

**2025-26 Capital Budget Update**

Mr. Fraser provided Council with a presentation on the Capital Budget Plan for the 2025/26 fiscal year. Highlights of the update included capital budget basics; a review of major capital planned projects in the upcoming fiscal year (schedule A) and equipment and small capital project plans (schedule B); capital costs summary by category and by department; and key takeaways. The Five-Year Capital Budget will come before Council for review and consideration later this year, likely in August.

**Award of Tender – Great Village Sewer Replacement Contract**

Council’s five-year capital budget included \$187,500 for the replacement of 75m of sanitary sewer along Highway #2 in Great Village for fiscal 2024/25. The project is being funded 50% by the sewer capital and 50% by the Municipal Capital Growth Program. The tender was posted on provincial and municipal websites on January 10<sup>th</sup> with 3 bids being received by the

deadline. By Policy, the tender was awarded to Atlantic Snow and Ice Management as it fell within the approved capital budget and the CAO's authority to award. The total anticipated project commitment is \$125,000.

**Community Trails Funding Program – Winter 2024-25 Applications**

The Community Trail Funding Program provides support to eligible, nonprofit, community organizations in the planning, construction, maintenance, and promotion of public recreational trails. One application was received under the Community Trail Funding Program for the January deadline from the Tatamagouche Area Trails Association (TATA). The request from TATA was for \$27,587, which equates to 50% of the project cost for annual maintenance of the 26 km Short Line Trail. Staff has approved a grant for the requested amount pending confirmation of matching funds.

**Award of Tender – Sewer Pumping Station # 17 Upgrade Contract**

Council's five-year capital budget included \$520,000 for the replacement of Sewer Pumping Station #17. The tender for this project was posted to provincial and municipal websites on January 7, 2025. Two bids were received by the closing date of January 27<sup>th</sup>. Coming within the approved budget, the tender was awarded to L&R Construction. The total anticipated project commitment is \$305,000. Funding for this project is 50% Sewer Capital and 50% Municipal Capital Growth Program.

**Front Entrance Re-Design, 1 Church Street**

This item provided Council with information on the planned upgrades to the front entryway of the Municipal Building, 1 Church Street. Preliminary schematics were included in the Council package for this evening's meeting.

**Managed Urban Deer Hunt Update**

The CAO advised that this item is a follow-up to Council discussion at the January 30<sup>th</sup> meeting to provide an update on the Managed Urban Deer Hunt project.

Moved by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Weatherby

"That a letter be written to the Department of Natural Resources about ability to expedite timelines and enhance capacity for the Municipality's managed deer hunt project." Carried unanimously.

During discussion, it was noted that among other concerns, lyme disease is a key concern with the increased number of deer in the area.

**Economic Development Report**

An overview from the Economic Development Officer of recent Economic Development activities was provided in the Council package.

**Director's Report**

A report from the Director of Solid Waste was circulated in the package for tonight's meeting.

**CLOSED SESSION**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Councillor Martell, the meeting adjourned at 8:09 pm.

Tracey Veno  
Recording Secretary