

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

Staff Present

Dan Troke, Chief Administrative Officer
 Phil Redden, Director of Solid Waste
 Michelle Boudreau, Director of Public Works
 Scott Fraser, Director of Corporate Services
 Paul Smith, Director of Community Development
 Dennis James, Municipal Solicitor
 Tracey Veno, Recording Secretary
 Jenn Mantin, Economic Development Officer
 David Quinn, Project Engineer
 Mollie MacBurnie, IT Support Technician
 Craig Burgess, Recreation Manager
 Caroline Kunysz, Recreation Admin. Support (*term*)

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Councillor Weatherby, seconded by Councillor Johnson

“That the agenda be approved with the following amendments:

- Add Item 11b, Code of Conduct Training: and,
- Remove Closed Session Item 15, Property Matter.” Carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Councillor Leggett, seconded by Councillor Kennedy

“That the minutes of the meetings held on February 4, 13 and March 4 be approved as presented.” Carried unanimously.

Business Arising from Minutes

None.

ACTION ITEMS**Approval to Proceed with Water Rate Applications – Debert and Tatamagouche Water Utilities**

Scott Fraser, Director of Corporate Services, indicated that this item relates to the water rate studies for the Debert and Tatamagouche Water Utilities. The

studies were prepared by G.A. Isenor Consulting Limited in association with Blaine S. Rooney Consulting Limited.

Mr. Isenor and Mr. Rooney were in attendance and presented in detail the process and findings/results of the water rates studies for both Debert and Tatamagouche. Water rates in the Province are regulated by the Public Utilities Act under the guidance of the Utilities and Review Board (UARB). Councils do not have the authority to set rates, however, they must approve the studies and once approved, are forwarded to the UARB to take over the process.

Following the presentations, brief discussion took place on booster pumps, sundry charges, how growth is factored in, and the possibility of back charging once approved by the UARB. A duplication was noted on pages 38 & 39, and 39 & 40 of the Debert and Tatamagouche studies respectively, concerning Charges for Re-establishing Water Service (#7 and #10). Mr. Isenor indicated that this would be corrected.

Referring to the new extension clauses as noted during the presentation of the studies, Dennis James, Municipal Solicitor, inquired about the possibility of reconciling these clauses prior to final approval at the end of the month. Mr. Isenor confirmed that this could be done.

Moved by Councillor Patton, seconded by Councillor Weatherby

“That Council Committee recommend to Council:

That the Municipality of the County of Colchester apply to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board for changes in its rates for water and water service, fire protection to the Municipality and changes to its rules and regulations for customers served by the Tatamagouche Water Utility, as set out in the water rate study prepared by G. A. Isenor Consulting Limited in association with Blaine S. Rooney Consulting Limited; and,

That the Municipality of the County of Colchester apply to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board for changes in its rates for water and water service, fire protection to the Municipality and changes to its rules and regulations for customers served by the Debert Water Utility, as set out in the water rate study prepared by G.A. Isenor Consulting Limited in association with Blaine S. Rooney Consulting Limited.” Carried unanimously.

It was agreed that the above motions would be subject to reconciling the new extension clauses following review by staff and legal.

Fairway Ave. Streetlights Petition Results

Michelle Boudreau, Director of Public Works, presented the recently completed Fairway Avenue Streetlight Petition results. Council opted for a mail-out petition instead of a public meeting as required under the Local Improvement By-law. Petitions were due by February 6th, with non-responses counted as opposition. A successful petition requires over 50% support in both assessed property value and total number of properties. While 55.4% of assessed value was in favour, only 50% of residents supported it, resulting in a failed petition. Staff recommended not proceeding with the streetlight installation per the Local Improvement By-law.

Moved by Councillor Cooper, seconded by Councillor Johnson

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that Policy be waived, and that staff be directed to proceed with the installation of streetlights on Fairway Avenue.” Carried unanimously.

Annual Account Write Offs

Mr. Fraser advised that account write-offs are brought to Council annually for approval and provided a summary of the collection process. This year’s request consists of one mobile home that has been removed from a property and the owners responsible for taxes are deceased. The total write-off request for 2024/25 is \$1,605.87.

Moved by Councillor Benoit, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the 2024/25 property taxes and interest totaling \$1,605.87 be written off.”

A question was raised on the status of the owners and as such, the motion concerning the annual account write-offs was tabled until more information is brought back to Council.

Strategic Tourism Expansion Program (STEP) Plan Adoption

Jenn Mantin, Economic Development Officer, advised that this item deals with the adoption of the Strategic Tourism Expansion Program (STEP), a copy of which was included in the package for this evening’s meeting. Additionally, it deals with the establishment of a Regional Tourism Society to oversee regional marketing levy funds and lead the execution of the STEP initiatives. It is being requested that Council give consideration to appointing a member of Council to this Society through Council’s Nominating Committee process.

Moved by Mayor Blair, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council Committee recommend to Council that the Strategic Tourism Expansion Program Report be adopted and direct staff and legal counsel to proceed with the formation of a Tourism Society as described in this report; and

That the appointment of a Council member to the Tourism Society Executive Committee be referred to the Nominating Committee.” Carried unanimously.

At this point, at 7:30 pm, Councillor Patton left the meeting.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Walk & Roll Audit Program

This item provided information about the Colchester County Walk Audit Initiative. Colchester County’s Active Transportation Strategy, adopted in 2011 and last updated in 2017, is outdated and requires significant updates. An application has been submitted to the Provincial Connect2 Program for funding to hire a consultant for a new strategy. Municipal staff are laying groundwork, including hosting annual Walk Audits—guided community walks assessing infrastructure like sidewalks, lighting, and safety. Staff met with Hike Nova Scotia and will use their Walk Audit Toolkit for these assessments.

The inaugural Walk Audits aim to build community awareness, establish a walkability baseline, and develop community support for Active

Transportation initiatives. Over the next few weeks, staff will engage Council members to assist with planning and outreach in their districts. While Walk Audits will not lead to immediate infrastructure investments, they will help shape the updated Active Transportation Strategic Plan. Walks will be planned over a three-month period from April to June 2025.

Grants to Non-profit Organizations – Summary of Applications for Fiscal 2025/26 Budget

Craig Burgess, Recreation Manager, reminded Council of recent changes to the Grants to Non-Profit Organizations Policy, including the process for reporting applications. A detailed review of the 30 applications received was provided including the name of the organization; amount requested and what the funds will be used for; staff’s recommendations; and rationale for the recommendations. A detailed report and copies of each application were included in the package for this evening’s meeting. Staff recommendations will require approval at the Additions and Deletions budget meeting(s) in April. Should Council require further information about the applications, staff will provide prior to the budget meetings.

Discussion was held on a number of applications; clarification on the process for approval; and whether similar requests were being made by applicants to the Towns of Stewiacke and/or Truro. There was also discussion on having presentations, however, most were in favour of the new streamlined process for these applications.

Moved by Councillor Benoit, seconded by Councillor Kennedy

“That the report from the Recreation Manager on the Grants to Non-Profit applications be received.” Carried unanimously.

Community Events Grant - Summary of Applications for Fiscal 2025/26 Budget

Similar to the previous item, the Recreation Manager provided an overview of the six applications received for Community Event Grants (CEG) including the name of the organization; amount being requested; number of asks in relation to the three-year maximum by Policy; and, staff recommendations. All recommendations will require approval during budget deliberations.

It was noted that applications for CEG can also be considered throughout the year as there is no deadline for these applications.

Moved by Mayor Blair, seconded by Councillor Richardson

“That the report from the Recreation Manager on the Community Events Grant applications be received.” Carried unanimously.

Code of Conduct Training

The CAO provided a brief update on mandatory Code of Conduct training for all members of Council. As per the email received from NSFPM today, once regulations are in place making the training mandatory, all members will have 30 days to complete the training. A formal announcement will be made once the regulations are in place.

Director’s Report

A report from the Director of Public Works was circulated in the package for tonight’s meeting.

CLOSED SESSION

Moved by Councillor Weatherby, seconded by Councillor Johnson

“That the meeting go into closed session at 8:13 pm.” Carried unanimously.

Moved by Councillor Benoit, seconded by Councillor Kennedy

“That the meeting reconvene in open session at 8:30 pm.” Carried unanimously.

Negotiations – Debert Airport Operator Agreement

Moved by Councillor Leggett, seconded by Councillor Kennedy

“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

On a motion by Councillor Richardson, the meeting adjourned at 8:51 pm.

Tracey Veno
Recording Secretary