

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 May 15, 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
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
 Jeanette Himmelman, Systems Analyst
 Kelly MacIsaac, HR Specialist

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Councillor Cooper, seconded by Councillor Johnson

“That the agenda be approved with the addition of item 12b, Library Motion.”
 Carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Councillor Kennedy, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That the minutes of the meetings held on April 8, 10 and 15, 2025, be approved as presented.” Carried unanimously.

Business Arising from Minutes

None.

ACTION ITEMS**Debert Sewer Service Boundary**

Michelle Boudreau, Director of Public Works, advised that sewer boundaries require approval of Council. This item deals with the creation of a sewer service boundary for the community of Debert. Council previously approved all sewer service boundaries in the County with the exception of Debert, which was pending completion of the countywide planning. Properties in the proposed boundary will be required to pay a rate on their tax bill, however, it was noted that most already pay the sewer rate.

Responding to a query regarding who would be required to pay the sewer rate, Ms. Boudreau confirmed that all properties within the proposed boundary are required to pay whether or not they are connected.

Moved by Councillor Benoit, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the Debert Sewer Service Boundary be approved as presented.” Carried unanimously.

Sewer Boundary Extensions, Onslow

The Director of Public Works reported on two sewer extension requests in the Onslow area:

- **Board Landing Road:** Request to service 40 residential and 5 commercial future lots. There is enough capacity, and staff view this request as appropriate. A rezoning would be required for the commercial component.
- **Matlyn Drive:** Request for 26 residential lots. While capacity exists, the extension would require construction of a new line through park space, restricting future park development. Staff believe this conflicts with the updated Municipal Planning Strategy.

Council discussed housing needs, the Municipality being open for business, green space preservation, other options for the Matlyn Drive extension being cost prohibitive, onsite septic systems, stormwater management, potential for alternative green space arrangements, policy around avoiding sprawl, and prior requests of resident in the Matlyn Drive area.

Moved by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council Committee recommend that Council approve both requested service boundary extensions, namely on Board Landing Road and Matlyn Drive.” Motion DEFEATED (*Mayor Blair, Deputy Mayor Sandeson, Councillors Weatherby, Cooper, Benoit and Fletcher opposed*).

Moved by Mayor Blair, seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That Council Committee recommend to Council approval of the requested sewer service boundary extension on Board Landing Road, for proposed residential uses only.” Carried unanimously.

Moved by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council Committee recommend that Council approve the requested sewer service boundary extension on Matlyn Drive.” Motion carried (*Mayor Blair, Deputy Mayor Sandeson, Councillors Weatherby, Cooper, and Fletcher opposed*).

Award of Tender – Tatamagouche Sewer Replacement

The Director of Public Works provided an overview of this item including history and information of existing sewer piping in Tatamagouche; scope of project; approved funding in the 2025/26 and 2026/27 capital budget; increasing efficiencies by combining work and doing in one year; tender issued and submissions received; and 50 cent provincial funding under the Growth and Renewal for Infrastructure Development for the project.

Brief discussion was held on estimates being slightly low and increasing estimates for next phase, and clarification on provincial funding available.

It was noted that at their meeting on April 24, 2025, Council granted authority to May Committee to approve the award of tender for the Tatamagouche Sewer Replacement.

Moved by Councillor Martell, seconded by Mayor Blair

“That Council Committee award the tender for the replacement of 450m of sanitary sewer between Creamery Road and the Tatamagouche Legion, in Tatamagouche, to S.W. Weeks Construction Limited for a total contract amount of \$984,450.00 excluding HST; with an anticipated total project value of \$1,135,000.” Carried unanimously.

Two 1.5T Trucks, Award of Tender

The Director of Public Works advised that this item is to award the purchase of two 1.5T trucks for Wastewater Collection Operations as the tenders came in over budget. A summary of the approved budget and tender submissions was provided. The tenders did not include trade-in, and the used vehicles will be sent to auction. Staff is recommending the tender be awarded to the low bidder, Bruce Leasing.

Concern was raised and clarification provided on policy around local preference.

Moved by Councillor Patton, seconded by Councillor Fletcher

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that staff be authorized to proceed with the purchase of two (2) 1.5T Trucks with Dump Body and Plow from Bruce Leasing, for a total financial commitment of \$253,980, excluding HST, with source of funds being the Public Works Vehicle Reserve.” Motion carried (*Councillor Leggett opposed*).

Community Event Grant Request – Great Village & District Fire Brigade 100th Anniversary

Craig Burgess, Recreation Manager, advised that a request has been received under the Community Event Grants Policy (CEG) from the Great Village and District Fire Brigade for their upcoming 100th anniversary event. The request is for \$5,000 and meets criteria of the CEG Policy. With only \$21,826 of the \$60,000 budget being committed, sufficient funds are available to support the request.

Moved by Councillor Fletcher, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council Committee recommend to Council that \$5,000 be approved for the Great Village and District Fire Brigade 100th Anniversary Event.” Carried unanimously.

New Remote Work Policy (Six Month Trial)

Kelly MacIsaac, HR Specialist, reported that this proposed Remote Work Policy is being suggested as a six (6) month trial. It is a step towards assisting with recruitment and retention; will help with providing a work/life balance for employees; increasing staff morale; and creating consistency among flexible work practices throughout all departments.

Key aspects of the Policy include:

- One (1) workday per week;

- Tuesday to Thursday being anchor days;
- Managers having full discretion to access and authorize flexible work schedule to meet operational needs; and,
- Expectations regarding performance management.

Considerable debate took place with comments made on benefits and productivity of working from home. A number of concerns were also raised such as how work will be measured; challenges of finding balances; creating unfair playing field as working remotely not being an option for all employees; why a policy is required if flexible work schedules already being done; working remotely could mean working from anywhere; need for proper setup of workspaces; additional costs for equipment; and potential unintended consequences if trial period is not successful. A couple of minor amendments were noted under Scheduling: #2 – change wording on manager requirements around approval, and #6 – add the word may before “request a one-off workday if required”. Additionally, it was clarified that the Policy would apply to non-union employees.

Moved by Councillor Patton, seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the new personnel policy 6.25 - Remote Work Policy be approved for a six (6) month trial period, as amended.” Motion carried (*Councillors Cooper and Kennedy opposed*).

New Background Check Policy

The Human Resource Specialist advised that while the Municipality currently practices in place around background checks, there is no formal policy in place. The proposed Policy would establish commitment to legal and ethical obligation around providing a safe and secure experience for vulnerable individuals, as well as ensure completion and maintenance of appropriate background checks for employees. Key points in Policy include:

- Requirements for submitting both vulnerable sector check and child abuse registry check every 3 years for staff working with vulnerable populations;
- Exceptions by waiver for returning seasonal staff;
- Requirements to have checks and/or waiver in place prior to commencement of work;
- Requirements for volunteers; and,
- New hire requirements for criminal record checks.

Moved by Councillor Benoit, seconded by Councillor Kennedy

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the new personnel policy 5.13 - Background Check Personnel Policy be approved as presented.” Carried unanimously.

Marketing Levy By-law Change Request

Jenn Mantin from Economic Development provided a follow-up on requested changes to the Marketing Levy By-law by the Four Seasons Retreat. The key points and staff recommendations are:

- **Expense Deductions:** Not recommended. Allowing deductions (e.g., credit card fees) is uncommon, administratively burdensome, and only one of 150 operators has raised the issue.
- **Reporting Frequency:** Recommendation to switch from quarterly to **monthly** reporting. Quarterly reporting lacks sufficient oversight, and

monthly reporting aligns with other municipalities and supports better program management.

- **Payment Options:** Multiple remittance methods already exist (e.g., EFT, cash, cheque, credit card). Online banking is under review as an additional option.

Discussion was held on deducting expenses being a cost of doing business as well as being complex to administer; timelines for review of online banking; and, pros and cons, administratively and for operators, of reporting monthly. Staff indicated that for reporting, it is recommended that monthly is preferable but quarterly could also be an option for operators.

Moved by Councillor Fletcher, seconded by Councillor Weatherby

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that Colchester not allow operators to deduct credit card processing fees or other related expenses from the marketing levy remittances.” Motion carried (*Councillor Cooper opposed*).

Moved by Mayor Blair, seconded by Councillor Johnson

“That the Municipality proceed with amendments to the Marketing Levy By-law to formally reflect a monthly remittance model, with quarterly reporting being optional.” Carried unanimously.

Library Motion

Referring to a recent presentation received from the Colchester-East Hants Public Library, Councillor Cooper indicated there was a request to have a letter to NSFM regarding concerns about review and update of funding models for libraries.

Moved by Councillor Cooper, seconded by Councillor Martell

“That a letter to NSFM regarding concerns about funding models for libraries be referred to staff.” Carried unanimously.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Director’s Report

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

Clarification was sought on the updating of the social media policy. It was confirmed that this is specifically related to personal use of policy and guidelines around acceptable content being posted.

CLOSED SESSION

Moved by Councillor Weatherby, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That the meeting go into closed session at 7:58 pm.” Carried unanimously.

Moved by Councillor Benoit, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That the meeting reconvene in open session at 8:18 pm.” Carried unanimously.

**Negotiation – Tourism Society
Memorandum of
Understanding**

It was noted that at their meeting on April 24, 2025, Council granted authority to May Committee to approve the Tourism Society Memorandum of Understanding.

Moved by Councillor Martell, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council approve the Memorandum of Understanding as presented and direct the Mayor and CAO to execute the MOU.” Carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Councillor Martell, the meeting adjourned at 8:18 pm.

Tracey Veno
Recording Secretary