

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 September 11, 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.

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| Roll | 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
 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-Haas, IT Support
 Dave Westlake, Protective Services/Emergency Management Coordinator

Approval of Agenda Moved by Councillor Martell, seconded by Councillor Weatherby

“That the agenda be approved as presented.” Carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes Moved by Councillor Patton, seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That the minutes of the meeting held on August 14, 2025, be approved as presented.” Carried unanimously.

Business Arising from Minutes None.

ACTION ITEMS

Fire Dispatch Services Contract Extension The Protective Services/Emergency Management Coordinator reported that approval is being sought for a two (2) year service extension agreement with Valley Communications Incorporated for Fire Dispatch Services. The report included information on the current contract and expiration date, cost implications for the proposed extension and the inclusion of the Stewiacke Fire Department, which is financially covered by the Town.

The extension is required due to a number of unknown variables as part of the ongoing Fire Governance Review and provisions within the new Act to Establish a Department of Emergency Management and Establishment of a Nova Scotia Guard.

Moved by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the Municipality enter a two-year extension with Valley Communications Inc. to provide Fire Dispatch Services for a total price of \$215,453.73 excluding taxes.” Carried unanimously.

**Atlantic Mayors’ Congress –
Fall Meeting**

The CAO shared that the Atlantic Mayors' Congress (AMC) is dedicated to improving municipal governance and creating a unified voice to advocate for municipalities across the Atlantic Region. The AMC holds two meetings each year: a larger Congress in the Spring and a smaller gathering in the Fall, with both taking place at various locations throughout the region. The Executive Director has approached Truro and Colchester about the possibility of co-hosting the Fall 2025 Congress.

Moved by Mayor Blair, seconded by Councillor Weatherby

“That the CAO continue to work with the Town of Truro and the Executive Director of the Atlantic Mayors’ Congress to complete a proposed budget for a jointly hosted Congress between the Municipality of Colchester and the Town of Truro.” Carried unanimously

**Tatamagouche Water Utility
Committee Terms of Reference**

Project Engineer David Quinn reported that this item is to adopt formal Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Tatamagouche Water Utility Committee (TWUC). The report provided a brief history of both the Tatamagouche Water Utility and the Committee, outlined the composition of the existing Committee as per the Council Proceedings and Committees Policy, along with the Committees responsibilities. At their meeting on August 27, 2025, the TWUC reviewed the draft TOR and recommended to Council that the draft be approved as presented.

Moved by Councillor Martell, seconded by Councillor Fletcher

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the proposed Terms of Reference for the Tatamagouche Water Utility Committee be adopted as presented.” Carried unanimously.

**Debert Water Utility Committee
Terms of Reference**

The Project Engineer provided a brief overview of the Debert Water Utility, noting that unlike the Tatamagouche Water Utility, a committee was never established when the Municipality took over the Debert lands and infrastructure from the province in 2008. This item is to seek Council approval on the creation of a Debert Water Utility Committee (DWUC), as well as establish TOR for the Committee. The draft TOR as presented mirror that of the Tatamagouche Water Utility Committee, and if adopted, amendments to the Council Proceedings and Committees Policy would be required.

The Deputy Mayor indicated that Councillor Leggett has expressed an interest in the DWUC and asked if Council would be amenable to amending the TOR to indicate either the Deputy Mayor or alternate Councillor under the

Committee composition. Brief discussion was held on the TOR for the Tatamagouche Committee reflecting the same amendment, as well the process for establishing representatives following the normal process through the Nominating Committee.

Moved by Councillor Benoit, seconded by Councillor Kennedy

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that a Debert Water Utility Committee be established; and,

That the proposed Terms of Reference for the Debert Water Utility Committee be adopted as amended.” Carried unanimously.

**Tatamagouche Water Utility
Three-Year Operating Budget**

The Director of Corporate Services presented an overview of the Tatamagouche Water Utility (TWU) Three-Year Operating Budget noting that three-year budgets are a requirement of the Nova Scotia Energy & Regulatory Board (NSERB). Also noted was the recent rate study completed as well as details on the recent grant of \$218,091 from the Municipality to the TWU to clear the deficit. The report also included a detailed review of the budget including revenues and expenditures; projected accumulated surplus/deficits; capital projects and associated costs; and depreciation information. The draft budget was reviewed by the TWUC at their meeting on August 27, 2025, and a recommendation was made that Council approve the three-year budget as presented.

Brief discussion was held regarding the uncollectable amounts for 2024/25 being high. However, the Director of Corporate Services indicated that this is not out of the ordinary.

Moved by Councillor Martell, seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the three-year Tatamagouche Water Utility operating budget (2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28) be approved as presented.” Carried unanimously.

**Debert Water Utility Three-Year
Operating Budget**

Similar to the previous item, the Director of Corporate Services reported on the Debert Water Utility Three-Year Operating Budget as required by the NSERB. A detailed review of the budget was provided including information on revenues and expenditures, projected accumulated surplus/deficits, capital projects and associated costs, and depreciation information.

Moved by Councillor Benoit, seconded by Councillor Johnson

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the three-year Debert Water Utility operating budget (2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28) be approved as presented.” Carried unanimously.

**RECC Financial Requests –
Events and Capital**

The Economic Development Officer reported that a letter was received from the Chair of the Central Nova Scotia Civic Centre Society (CNSCCS) Board of Directors requesting support for major events, namely the NS Stampede and the World U17 Challenge. The amount requested in total is \$150,000 - \$75,000 for each event. The same request was made to the Town of Truro, however their commitment has not been confirmed yet.

Council approved a budget of \$125,000 for major events under economic development. If the request is approved, the funds could be allocated from this budget. Colchester has established the Marketing Levy to fund the Central Nova Scotia Tourism Development Society (CNSTDS), which is intended to manage major event funding, however, this year is transitional while the Society is being incorporated and event funding policies are finalized. Levy funds could be used for the request, however, as the Society is not yet incorporated, consent would be required from the CNSTDS Board and all four councils. \$700K has been collected through the Levy, but with a combined request of \$300K from Truro and Colchester, it would significantly reduce the reserve. The CNSTDS is working on criteria to assess consistent and sustainable ways to evaluate major event requests. If Council wishes to support the request, due diligence should be exercised including receiving and reviewing budgets, expected revenues and attendance and economic impact data.

The CAO noted that during budget deliberations there was discussion on the process for handling requests outside of the annual operating grant and it was indicated that these types of requests would go to the new CNSTDS for consideration from Levy funds. As such, funds were not allocated in the operating budget for these events.

During debate, a question was raised about the timeline for the Stampede request coming before Council as it was originally submitted in March. The CAO explained that budgets from the Central Nova Scotia Civic Centre Society were only received last week. It was also noted that both the Stampede and the World U17 Challenge have healthy bottom lines.

Other points of discussion included referring to the request to the CNSTDS for review, funding contributions of other levels of government, importance of being seen as a partner, and the need for a detailed review of the event budgets. Referring to the Stampede event, concern was expressed on approval, if granted, would occur after the event takes place.

The Municipal Solicitor advised that the CNSTDS is not fully in place yet and until it is incorporated, there is an issue with spending the funds. Discussion was held on timelines for incorporation could be within the next 2 weeks.

Moved by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That the request for funding for the 2025 Stampede and U17 World Championship events be referred to the Central Nova Scotia Tourism Development Society.” Carried unanimously.

The CAO spoke on the second request which deals with capital improvements. Due to the age and ongoing repairs to the multi-stack unit, replacement of the unit has been discussed over the last few years and the decision to have a new system designed and implemented was made. The decision involved changing the multi-stack unit to a heavier chiller unit. The Engineering Firm MCW has been working on specs and design, with recommendation to proceed with the purchase of the new chiller while other components of the system are finalized. Colchester sets aside funds annually for capital improvements and while normally such expenditures would be

approved through budget deliberations, it was not done this year due to delay in RECC budgets being received. Funds are available in the reserve to cover this request, however, the approval of Council is required to release the funds.

Brief discussion was held on the process to purchase the unit while other components of the system are still being designed, as well as timelines for shutdown for implementation.

Moved by Mayor Blair, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the purchase of the new chiller unit in the amount of \$320,630 be approved, with funds being from the RECC Capital Reserve.” Carried unanimously.

**November Presentation
Meeting Date**

Councillor Cooper indicated that the NSFM Conference has pre-conference sessions on November 4th as well as a Meet & Greet that same evening. Additionally, on November 5th, sessions start first thing in the morning. With the regular Presentation meeting being scheduled for November 4th, he inquired if there was any interest in changing this date to accommodate those attending the Conference.

There was discussion regarding the presentations already scheduled for that evening. Staff noted that they would reach out to the confirmed presenters to assess their flexibility in rescheduling and would provide an update by the end of the month.

INFORMATION ITEMS

**Active Transportation Strategy
– Award of Contract**

This report provided details on the award of contract for the Active Transportation Strategy. It included information on project budget, funding sources, RFP timelines, submissions received, as well as evaluation criteria and rankings. The contract was awarded to Urban Systems, whose proposal was deemed complete and came in under budget at \$124,838.60.

Work on the Strategy is already underway, with Council interviews to be scheduled in the coming weeks. The project is expected to be completed by Spring 2026.

**J Class Roads – 2026
Candidates**

This item informed Council of the deadline for the 2026 submissions under the J Class Paving Program. The report provided background on the Program including funding sources, an overview of past submissions under the current three-year contract, and provincial deadline requirements for 2026.

It also advised Council of the deadline to submit their paving requests to the Director of Public Works. The submissions will be evaluated and ranked by staff, with results being presented at October Committee for decision on which J Class Roads will be submitted to the province for consideration.

**Proposed NSFM By-law
Changes – Fall Conference**

This report provided Council with a briefing on Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) by-law amendments to be considered at the Fall Conference Annual General Meeting. The CAO outlined two proposed changes that have garnered significant discussion:

- 1) The right for elected officials to have staff present at “Member Meetings”; and,
- 2) Amendment to the composition of the NSFM Board to remove appointed representation from the Association of Municipal Administrators (AMANS).

Concern was expressed regarding these proposed changes and brief discussion was held on the importance of having both elected officials and municipal staff present at NSFM meetings and conferences. Council also expressed a desire to receive more information prior to the Fall Conference. The CAO indicated that any further updates will be shared with Council as available.

Economic Development Report A report from the Economic Development Officer on economic development activities was included in the package for this evening’s meeting.

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 Patton, seconded by Councillor Martell

“That the meeting go into closed session at 7:11 pm.” Carried unanimously.

Moved by Councillor Patton, seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That the meeting reconvene in open session at 8:47 pm.” Carried unanimously.

**Personnel – Non-union
Employee Salary Review**

Moved by Councillor Cooper, seconded by Councillor Richardson

“That Council Committee recommends to Council the adoption of the amended non-union salary scales, as presented in closed session.” Carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Councillor Patton, the meeting adjourned at 8:48 pm.

Tracey Veno
Recording Secretary