

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 December 11, 2025, beginning at 6:30 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	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 (<i>regrets</i>)

Staff Present

Dan Troke, Chief Administrative Officer
 Phil Redden, Director of Solid Waste
 Scott Fraser, Director of Corporate Services
 Michelle Boudreau, Director of Public Works
 Paul Smith, Director of Community Development
 Dennis James, Municipal Solicitor
 Anna-Marie Manley, Municipal Solicitor (*virtually*)
 Tracey Veno, Recording Secretary
 Mollie MacBurnie-Haas, IT Support

Employee Service Recognition Employees were presented with awards in recognition of years of service with the Municipality. 2025 recognized included 4 employees with 5 years; 6 employees with 10 years; 2 employees with 15 years; 5 employees with 20 years; 1 employee with 25 years; and 2 employees with 30 years. Congratulations to all recipients.

Approval of Agenda Moved by Councillor Patton, seconded by Councillor Weatherby
 “That the agenda be approved as presented.” Carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes Moved by Councillor Cooper, seconded by Councillor Patton
 “That the minutes of the meeting held on November 3 and 13, 2025, be approved as presented.” Carried unanimously.

Business Arising from Minutes None.

ACTION ITEMS

Addition to Millbrook Reserve Dennis James, Municipal Solicitor, provided an update on the status of an addition to Millbrook Reserve which first came before Council in 2019 and is now returning on a technical matter requiring a formal waiver. In 2019, Council endorsed the addition of certain parcels of land to the Millbrook Reserve, which are owned by a numbered company associated with Millbrook First Nation.

Council sought additional information and discussed the proposal with Chief Gload and other representatives, particularly regarding the purpose of the expansion. The expansion was intended to support economic development and address housing needs. Although the Municipality's role in the reserve addition process is limited to consultation, some factors must be met, including things such as housing and economic development and not be solely to avoid property taxes, with final approval resting with the Minister or Cabinet.

A recent title search identified a historical textual qualification to a possible road reserve, with no actual road affecting municipal interests. Municipal staff have confirmed there is nothing substantive to release; however, a formal release is required to clear title and allow the reserve addition process to proceed, which is expected to be finalized within the year.

Moved by Mayor Blair, seconded by Councillor Weatherby

"That Council Committee recommend to Council that it provide a release to Millbrook First Nation confirming that no road reservation exists on PID No 20206595." Carried unanimously.

New Governance Model for RECC

The purpose of this item is to seek direction regarding the future governance structure for the operating of the Rath Eastlink Community Centre (RECC). The facility is jointly owned by the Municipality of Colchester and the Town of Truro, and operated by Central Nova Scotia Civic Centre Society (Society).

It should be noted that at their meeting on November 27, 2025, Council granted December and January Council Committee authority to approve decision on the RECC Governance Model.

The Society was originally established to manage and operate the RECC as a community recreation and event facility. Amendments to the operating agreement and By-laws were made in 2023 to allow the Society to enter into contracts to provide limited third-party professional service as a means to increase revenues for the Society's operations. Any such contracts review and approval by the Society's Board. Concerns arose regarding financial reporting and non-compliance with approval requirements for long-term contracts, ultimately resulting in a notice from the owners of default in 2025 and formal notice to terminate the operating agreement effective January 31, 2026.

A review of comparable governance models in Nova Scotia was conducted, and staff's recommendation going forward is to retain the Society with significant restructuring to its governance to better align with the owners' original intent and to improve oversight. Proposed changes include amending the By-laws to establish a six-member Board composed solely of elected Councillors (three and three from the Town and the Municipality); creating a Citizen Advisory Committee to provide community input and make recommendations to the Board; and, strengthening the management structure through regular meetings and reporting among the two CAOs and the RECC General Manager. If the Society structure is not acceptable to the Registrar of Joint Stocks, a municipal services corporation would be pursued as an alternative.

The recommendation is to appoint three Municipal Councillors to the Board with direction to call a special meeting to proposed amendments to the Society's By-laws and propose that the Society's Board adopt the updated management structure.

Included as part of the report was a detailed presentation from the Municipal Solicitor. The presentation provided background information and chronology of events, communications, decisions, etc., relating to dealings concerning the relationship with the CNSCCS and the Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition (NSPE). This included information such as the initial proposal regarding the NSPE and financials; the original and amended operating agreements for the RECC; CNSCCS By-laws; copies of the various signed agreements (leases, entertainment, event management, sponsorship); Council meeting minutes; RECC Board meeting and AGM minutes; and various correspondence (emails, letters, notices, etc.).

A comprehensive package detailing the above was distributed prior to the meeting.

Detailed discussion was held with a number of key points noted, including:

- clarification on the options as presented in the Action Item;
- timing of receiving the detailed package not allowing enough time to review;
- the importance of the two involved municipal units being united on this matter;
- concerns regarding communications with the public;
- information being disclosed to the public before being discussed at the Council table;
- current condition of the facility;
- lack of communications between various parties;
- clarification around ownership of contracts;
- more time being needed due to the complexities around the topic;
- inconsistent information relating to contracts being signed with or without appropriate approvals;
- concern regarding Society Board members being disrespected;
- continued support for the Stampede and other events;
- concerns of RECC staff regarding employment during the governance transition;
- the RECC facility and operations of should be of primary concern and the NSPE should be responsibility of the Province;

Clarification was sought on whether decisions of Council this evening were final or if they would come back to Council in January for final approval. The CAO confirmed that at their meeting on November 27th, Council granted authority to December and January Committee to make decision on this matter. Also, responding to the employment concerns of RECC staff, the CAO advised that staffing for day-to-day business at the RECC will continue as per usual. Conversations with the NS Farm Loan Board will determine what happens at the NSPE or at the Raceway and those working there.

Moved by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That Council Committee approves that three Municipal Councillors be appointed to the Society’s current Board at the next Council meeting, and that those three Municipal Councillors in turn be directed to, at their earliest opportunity, (i) call a special meeting to propose amendments to the Society’s By-laws as discussed; and (ii) propose that the Society’s Board adopt the updated management structure as discussed.”

An amending motion was made to have the wording changed from three Municipal Councillors to three Elected Officials. With no seconder for the amending motion, the original motion was voted on and carried (*Councillors Richardson, Leggett, Martell, Patton and Benoit opposed*).

INFORMATION ITEMS

Norrie Land Request

Councillor Weatherby declared a conflict of interested and recused himself from any discussion on this matter.

This report follows up on a request from Eleanor and Roderick Norrie to sell a road reserve they own as a building lot on Dickson Drive, North River. The subdivision was developed in phases during the 1970s and 1980s, when road reserves, drainage lands, and recreation lands were sometimes not properly transferred to the Province or Municipality. Staff review found this road reserve remains important for future road connections, utilities, and pedestrian links between Dickson Drive, Mountain Lee and Mountain View Road.

In addition to the road reserve, two parcels are required for drainage and future sanitary servicing, and a fourth small remnant parcel would complete the transfer of all remaining Norrie lands to the Municipality. Although original recreation land was sold earlier this year without the Municipality's knowledge, efforts are underway to secure replacement recreation land through an adjacent development. The Norrie family has agreed to transfer all four parcels to the Municipality, a mutually beneficial outcome, with Patterson Law preparing the required transfer documents.

Well Drilling/Septic Program

As per previous direction of Council, this Information Item provides a background on municipal well drilling/septic programs in municipalities in Nova Scotia, as well as information on what municipalities are permitted to do under existing legislation.

The CAO advised, in response to a request for clarification, that no action is required at this stage. This is for information purposes only and an item will be brought to Council with options for consideration in the near future.

Director's Report

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

CLOSED SESSION

There were no closed session items for this evening's meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Councillor Patton, the meeting adjourned at 8:32pm.

Tracey Veno
Recording Secretary