

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 January 15, 2026 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

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
 Michelle Boudreau, Director of Public Works
 Paul Smith, Director of Community Development
 Dennis James, Municipal Solicitor
 Grace MacCormick, Municipal Solicitor (*virtually*)
 Tracey Veno, Recording Secretary
 Mollie MacBurnie-Haas, IT Support
 Kelly MacIsaac, HR Specialist (for items 6 and 7)
 Hilary Paquet, Parks and Trails Coordinator (for item 5)
 Pam Macintosh, Manager of Planning Services (for item 5)
 Craig Burgess, Recreation Manager (for item 8)

Deputy Mayor Sandeson presented Mayor Blair with a plaque from NSFM in recognition of 20 years of dedicated service to municipal government.

Approval of Agenda

On the request to add *New Information for RECC Operations* as Item 5(b) on the agenda, clarification was sought regarding the intent of the addition. Councillor Benoit advised that the purpose was to allow for discussion and a vote on a motion to rescind the decision made on December 11, 2025, regarding the RECC governance model. Deputy Mayor Sandeson, Chair of Council Committee, advised that as this matter had previously been discussed and a decision made, Council would be required, in accordance with Policy, to agree to add the item to the agenda.

Moved by Councillor Benoit, seconded by Councillor Martell

“That Action Item New Information for RECC Operations be added and placed as Item 5b on the agenda.” Motion DEFEATED (*Mayor Blair, Deputy Mayor Sandeson, Councillor Weatherby, Cooper, Johnson, Fletcher and Kennedy opposed*).

Moved by Councillor Cooper, seconded by Councillor Kennedy

“That the agenda be approved with the following addition:

- Item 11b, Anticipated Amendment to RECC Operating Agreement.”
Carried unanimously.

It was noted that the above-mentioned addition is an Information Item but, as it is directly related to Action Item 11, it follows that item directly.

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Councillor Weatherby, seconded by Councillor Johnson

“That the minutes of the meetings held on December 2 and 11, 2025, be approved as presented.” Carried unanimously.

Business Arising from Minutes

None.

ACTION ITEMS

Land Purchase for Parkland, Summer Hill Place, Upper Onslow

Pam Macintosh, Manager of Planning Services and Hilary Paquet, Parks and Trails Coordinator, presented a briefing on the potential purchase of Lot 5 Summer Hill Drive from Exit 14A Properties Limited for municipal parkland. Purchasing Summer Hill Lot 5 would allow for a larger, more functional park with improved buffering from nearby homes, enhanced tree planting, and added social, ecological, and environmental benefits. The expanded space would support recreation, enable a connecting pathway, and improve street frontage for greater safety, visibility, and overall aesthetics.

Moved by Councillor Patton, seconded by Councillor Richardson

“That Council Committee recommends to Council to approve the purchase of the Summer Hill Place Lot 5, Upper Onslow at a purchase price of \$49,000, with source of funds being Open Space Fund Reserve; and,

That the Mayor and CAO be authorized to sign the purchase and sale agreement.” Carried unanimously.

Amendments to Personnel Policy 6.25 – Remote Work Policy (Trial to Permanent)

Human Resource Specialist Kelly MacIsaac presented proposed changes to Personnel Policy 6.25 – Remote Work Policy. The Policy was originally approved on a six (6) month trial basis and following the trial period, changes are being recommended. Key changes include reduced anchor days to allow more flexibility; increase remote workdays from one (1) to two (2) per week; and clarification on working remotely for ‘out of the ordinary reasons’.

Key points of discussion included trial policy being suffice and no additional enhancements being required, many government offices transitioning back to in-office, County employees being treated well, interest in receiving information regarding survey feedback, extending the trial period for the Policy, and percentage of employees working remotely. Several concerns were also raised including advertising remote work policy during recruitment before the Policy was given final approval, a resident complaint around staff being unavailable, receiving feedback from only those who are able to utilize the Remote Work Policy, as well as equality being an issue for staff members that cannot work remotely.

Moved by Councillor Patton, seconded by Councillor Richardson

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the Remote Work Policy amendments be approved as presented.” Motion DEFEATED (*Mayor Blair, Deputy Mayor Sandeson, Councillors Weatherby, Richardson, Cooper, Johnson, Leggett, Fletcher and Kennedy opposed*).

Moved by Mayor Blair, seconded by Councillor Kennedy

“That Council Committee recommends to Council continuance of the Remote Work Policy for up to one year with an overview of how it worked being provided to Council upon completion of the one year.” Carried unanimously.

Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy

The Human Resource Specialist provided an overview of the new Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy that is before Council for adoption, as mandated by the Province under the Dismantling Racism and Hate Act, Bill 96. The Strategy, developed with the support of Waking the Unconscious consultants, is a joint regional project with the Towns of Truro and Stewiacke and the Village of Bible Hill. It is a three-year plan that consists of goals in the areas of community relationships, education and organizational change. The presentation highlighted feedback received through community engagement; key goals of the Strategy; progress and how it will be measured; and next steps in the process.

Moved by Councillor Weatherby, seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the new Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy be adopted as presented.” Carried unanimously.

Community Event Grant Request – FIS Wentworth Canada Cup

Craig Burgess, Recreation Manager, reported on the Community Event Grant request from FIS Wentworth Canada Cup, an event being held in Wentworth from February 9-16, 2026. Included in the report was information on the event, anticipated attendees and spectators, and benefits to surrounding communities, and options for consideration. A similar request was made to Cumberland County, who approved support in the amount of \$500. Staff’s recommendation is to support in the amount of \$500, based largely around the event taking place in Cumberland and Cumberland County approved amount.

Brief discussion was held on the size of the event and the benefits it will provide to neighbouring communities.

Moved by Councillor Fletcher, seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that funding in the amount of \$2,500 be approved for the 2026 FIS Wentworth Canada Cup being held in February 2026.” Carried unanimously.

Amendments to Procurement Policy

Councillor Martell declared a conflict of interest and recused herself from discussion on this matter.

Michelle Boudreau, Director of Public Works, provided an overview of proposed amendments to the Municipal Policy for Purchasing and Tendering for Goods, Services and Construction Projects including removal of the 80/20 Trucking Rule which follows suit with the Province, amendments around bonding requirements, and some housekeeping edits. A copy of the Policy with proposed amendments highlighted was included in the package for this evening’s meeting.

Moved by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the proposed amendments to the Municipal Policy for Purchasing and Tendering for Goods, Services and Construction Projects be approved as presented.” Carried unanimously.

**Marketing Levy Reserve
Transfer to the Central Nova
Scotia Tourism Development
Society**

Jenn Mantin, Economic Development Officer, indicated that this item relates to the transfer of marketing levy reserve funds to the Central Nova Scotia Tourism Society (CNSTDS) following the Society’s approval of their 2025-26 operating budget. Highlights of the report included an update on the status of the Society and the new Executive Director, operating budget information, and fund transfer and disbursement schedule. It was noted that at their meeting on November 27, 2025, Council granted authority to January Committee to authorize the transfer of funds.

Moved by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Mayor Blair

“That Council Committee authorized the transfer of marketing levy reserve funds to the Central Nova Scotia Tourism Development Society, with subsequent scheduled transfers as outlined.” Carried unanimously.

**RECC Governance –
Appointment of Councillors to
Board and Members Meeting**

The CAO provided a brief background on the recent decisions of Council relating to the RECC and NSPE, as well as an introduction of the item before Council this evening dealing with the governance model for the RECC. The recommendation as per the December meeting was for a new Board of Directors (BOD) consisting of six members of Council – three from Town of Truro and three from the Municipality of Colchester. The revised item on table proposes that of the three names selected this evening, two would replace existing BOD members, and the third be selected to attend the members meeting to address amendments to existing by-laws. Following the members meeting, that representative would continue as the third BOD for the Municipality of Colchester. The process for selecting members would mirror the election of Deputy Mayor via nominations and vote if more than three members are nominated.

The current Society’s structure as a legal entity, will remain unchanged; however, the by-laws governing the Society will be amended and there will be a new Operating Agreement which will be brought forward to Council in January for consideration. The Solicitor has prepared an information item, to be presented following the governance discussion, outlining the types of changes proposed to the operating agreement based on things learned over the past ten years.

During debate, a number of Council members weighed in on the recommendation being proposed for the RECC governance model. Points raised throughout discussion included:

- Need to listen to all perspectives before formatting conclusions;
- Council not receiving documentation of alleged facts;
- Requirements under the Societies Act regarding membership and possible consequences of contravention of Act;
- Responsibilities/liabilities of Directors under the Act and lack of protection by Council for the Directors;

- Concerns around quorum requirements for Board of Directors meetings;
- Concerns of Board meeting minutes not being released;
- Financial contributions of community/facility built through generosity of donors through Ignite the Spirit - governance should include community representatives;
- Not a time to disregard community feedback;
- Former Board members working through a process as directed;
- Need for the two owners to be aligned, more joint meetings;
- Generous monetary donation for a proposed governance model should be given consideration;
- Council's desire for the RECC to succeed;
- Past Board members willingness to return if needed;
- Need for qualified Board members including representation from business, health sector, tourism, and indigenous community;
- Disservice to taxpayers;
- Events putting our region on the map/premier destination for major events;
- Removing elected officials from the Board eliminates the inherent conflict of interest;
- Advocacy for community led Board;
- Concerns regarding the contracts entered into with the NSPE grounds by RECC staff and this being the trigger for the situation today;
- All Council members being community minded – taking steps to rectify the situation;
- RECC being a very important asset for the community;
- Financial reporting concerns regarding the RECC and the NSPE;
- Condition of RECC facility deteriorating – desire to see it back to how it is supposed to be and what it was intended for;
- Many events promoted and contributed to community but at the cost of the RECC;
- Discussion/confusion around whether the proposed governance model is interim.

Moved by Councillor Fletcher, seconded by Mayor Blair

“That Council Committee appoints, following a vote at Committee, Councillors Weatherby and Kennedy as Board members and Councillor Johnson as a Council representative for the upcoming members meeting of the Society and these appointments continue as the three Board members for Colchester following the anticipated by-law changes.” Motion carried (*Councillors Richardson, Leggett, Martell, Patton and Benoit opposed*).

Anticipated Amendments to RECC Operating Agreement

The Municipal Solicitor provided an overview of anticipated amendments to the RECC operating agreement that will be brought forward at the end of the month. The overview highlighted some of the key amendments including:

- Contract and contract management - requirements around agreements being signed; Board of Directors knowledge and oversight; more than one signatory; legal review to ensuring intent of the contract is adequately captured, clear language protecting the Society and owner from liabilities, termination clauses, etc.
- Procurement – enhancing/tightening language around following public procurement processes and ensure compliance

- Clarifying role of owner involvement in the Society
- Clarification around public meetings
- Complaints process
- Enhanced and collaborative management practices
- Budgeting requirements.

A copy of the detailed Information was distributed via email to Council members and was on table for this evening's meeting.

Brief discussion was held on interpretation of the language in the existing contract/by-law around purchasing policies. The Solicitor indicated that one of the proposed amendments will to make the language clearer.

Schedule of Meetings – Fiscal 2026/27

Moved by Mayor Blair, seconded by Councillor Weatherby

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the Schedule of Meetings for Fiscal Year 2026-27 be approved as presented.” Carried unanimously.

In the electronic voting system, Councillor Weatherby was showing as voting in the negative, however, he advised that it was an error and meant to vote in favour of the motion.

Award RFP Audit Services

Scott Fraser, Director of Corporate Services, provided a brief overview of the Request for Proposals (RFP) for Audit Services including legislated requirements, proposals received and three-year quotes for services, evaluation criteria and overall results, and staff recommendation.

It was noted that at their meeting on November 27, 2025, Council granted authority to January Committee to award this RFP.

Moved by Councillor Cooper, seconded by Councillor Kennedy

“That Council Committee awards the RFP for Audit Services to BDO Canada LLP.” Carried unanimously.

Council Communications

Councillor Martell raised the issue of improvements regarding Council communications addressing the inconsistencies of how and when correspondence is received. A number of concerns were raised including holding correspondence until Council at the end of the month when there might be relevant information when items are discussed at Council Committee; appropriate channels of communication; and timeliness of receiving information prior to being released to public. Having a policy in place may help strengthen and improve Council communications.

Moved by Councillor Martell, seconded by Councillor Leggett

“That staff be directed to prepare a Council Communications Policy with input from Council to set expectations on what types of communications will be distributed to Council, and when, how and to whom.” Motion carried (*Councillor Kennedy opposed*).

A request was made that correspondence be sent on motion or directive of Council be copied to all members either before being sent out or once sent to

the applicable parties. The CAO confirmed no issues with putting a process in place for that.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Debert Business Park – Archaeological Resource Impact Assessment Request for Quotes

This item provided Council with an update on the anticipated archaeological costs to clear lands in the Debert Business Park.

Concern was expressed regarding archaeology costs and staff advised the purpose of this item was for information. Before any further work would be considered, it would be brought back to Council.

Sewer Lateral Installations

This report provided updated information on the status of sewer lateral installations and challenges due to substantial increases in development. It also provided an update on increased costs for installations.

Moved by Councillor Cooper, seconded by Councillor Johnson

“That a review of the Municipal Fees Policy for sewer installations be referred to staff.” Carried unanimously.

Northern Pulp Renewal

This report informed Council that Northern Pulp’s approval to continue to haul wastewater to the Central Colchester Wastewater Treatment Facility, a practice that has been in place since 2020, will be renewed for the 2026 calendar year.

Director’s Report

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

With the approval of speed boards now received, brief discussion took place on the timing of deployment. The Director of Public Works advised that the challenge is not being able to put the posts in the ground due to frost. Staff will deploy as soon as able to do so.

Further discussion was held on ammonia in the Great Village sewer system. The Director advised that ammonia increases pH and can create toxic corrosive environment. Letters have been sent out and staff continue to monitor this regularly.

CLOSED SESSION

Moved by Councillor Weatherby, seconded by Councillor Kennedy

“That the meeting go into closed session at 8:23pm.” Carried unanimously.

Moved by Councillor Richardson, seconded by Councillor Weatherby

“That the meeting reconvene in open session at 9:35pm.” Carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Councillor Kennedy, the meeting adjourned at 9:35pm.

Tracey Veno
Recording Secretary