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 October 15, 2026, beginning at 6:00pm.

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
Reid Shepherd, Director of Community Development
Dennis James, Municipal Solicitor
Tracey Veno, Recording Secretary
Jenn Mantin, Economic Development Officer
Mollie MacBurnie-Haas, IT Support
Craig Burgess, Recreation Manager (for items 5&6)

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Councillor Cooper, seconded by Councillor Patton

"That the agenda be approved with the addition of item 10b – Review of Committee Appointments – Timelines and Terms." Carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Councillor Weatherby, seconded by Councillor Richardson

"That the minutes of the meetings held on September 1 and 10, 2026, be approved as presented." Carried unanimously.

Business Arising from Minutes

None.

ACTION ITEMS

Bass River Victoria Hall, Request for Support

Craig Burgess, Recreation Manager, advised that a request for funding assistance was received from the Bass River Community Victoria Hall to assist with the installation of a heat pump. The upgrade is required prior to the colder months. Additionally, the request for assistance has become a matter of urgency due to the existing system at the Hall leaking fumes when in use, making it unsafe for the facility.

Requests of this nature can be considered under the Non-profit Grant Program. Although typically considered during budget deliberations, Council

has received requests throughout the year, usually for extenuating circumstances, which are considered on a case-by-case basis.

At their meeting on September 24, 2026, Council granted authority to October Council Committee to approve the request for support from the Bass River Victoria Hall.

Councillor Fletcher spoke on the numerous events held at the Victoria Hall throughout the year and the overall benefits it provides to the community.

Moved by Councillor Fletcher, seconded by Councillor Kennedy

"That Council Committee approve funding for the Bass River Community Centre Victoria Hall in the amount of $5,000 to assist with the installation of a heat pump, with source of funds being the Non-profit Grants Budget." Carried unanimously.

2026 Art Selection Committee Representatives

The Recreation Manager advised that, consistent with previous years, two Council representatives are being sought to serve as judges on the Art Selection Committee for the Municipality's annual Art Acquisition Program. The program, now in its 38th year, will run from November 2 to 27, with judging scheduled for November 16.

Moved by Councillor Weatherby, seconded by Councillor Richardson

"That Council Committee recommends to Council that Mayor Blair and Councillor Cooper serve on the Art Selection Committee for the Municipality of Colchester's Art Acquisition Program for 2026." Carried unanimously.

Award of Quotation – Decommissioning of Debert Water Utility Wells

Michelle Boudreau, Director of Public Works, reported on the award of quotation for the Decommissioning of the Debert Water Utility Wells. The report outlined provincial requirements for decommissioning abandoned or unused wells, details of the Request for Quotation (RFQ), budgetary information, submissions received, bid amounts, and timelines for completion. As bids exceeded the approved 5-year Capital Budget for this project, Council approval is required to award the contract.

Moved by Councillor Benoit, seconded by Councillor Patton

"That Council Committee recommends to Council to award the decommissioning of two abandoned wells in the Debert Water Utility, to Brewster Well Drilling, for a total contract amount of $19,200.00 excluding HST, with an anticipated total project value of $20,000." Carried unanimously.

Matlyn Drive Sewage Concerns

The Director of Public Works advised that this report relates to a matter referred to staff about concerns from a resident on Matlyn Drive regarding the adjacent development on Roseway Lane and Summer Hill Place in Onslow affecting their private septic system and the request for a potential extension of public sewer on Matlyn Drive. Staff advised that the subdivision met applicable zoning and servicing requirements and noted that issues with existing septic systems were likely related to the age of the septic system. The report also included costs, which are not included in the current five-year capital budget, to extend municipal sewer to service 12 lots estimated at $675,000. This estimate would exclude additional costs such as requirements for property acquisition or easements, and future maintenance and operations costs. Staff recommend that Council not proceed with the sewer extension

and that the resident be provided with information on the Municipality's recently approved Water Supply and On-Site Sewage Disposal System Upgrade Lending Program.

Moved by Councillor Patton, seconded by Councillor Cooper

"That Council Committee recommends that Council not proceed with the construction of municipal sewer on Meeting House Road and Matlyn Drive." Carried unanimously.

Proposed Amendments – Municipal Fees Policy

Reid Shepherd, Director of Community Development, provided an overview of the proposed amendments to the Municipal Fees Policy. In addition to some minor housekeeping amendments, other proposed changes include fees for zoning confirmation letters, detailed property review, short term rental compliance letters and renewals, building permits for agricultural buildings and removal of frontage culvert permits.

Points of discussion included clarification on zoning confirmation letters, short term rental compliance letters and agriculture building permit fees. Concern was raised regarding the fee for agriculture buildings and not wanting to add any further charges on farms. The Director and CAO confirmed that the fee for agriculture building permits formerly would have fallen under the commercial/industrial fee at $0.12/square foot. The proposed amendments would now have agriculture building permits separated out and at a lesser fee of $0.06/square foot.

Moved by Councillor Kennedy, seconded by Councillor Fletcher

"That Council Committee recommends to Council that the amendments to the Municipal Fees Policy be approved as presented." Carried unanimously.

Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre Tax Exemption Request

Scott Fraser, Director of Corporate Services, reported on a request for a tax exemption from the Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre (MDCC). Council previously granted a tax exemption to the MDCC, however, this request deals with an additional 24.9 parcel of resource land that was donated to them. The assessed value of the land is $13,900, with an annual levy of $9.10. MDCC meets criteria under Section 71 of the MGA for consideration of the exemption.

Detailed discussion was held on full versus partial exemptions, loss of revenue for fire departments with full exemptions, and clarification on exemptions and tax revenues post construction of the Centre. Clarification was also provided on the Municipal Government Act (MGA) providing Councils with discretion to permit full or partial exemptions, while the Municipality's current by-law provides full exemptions. Council may review the by-law to amend, or requests can be determined by motion on a case-by-case basis as with the recent North River development request for exemption. Council also has the discretion to revisit the list of exemptions within the existing by-law for reconsideration. Following discussion and with the consensus of Council, the CAO confirmed that staff would review the by-law and bring information back to Council for further consideration.

Moved by Councillor Benoit, seconded by Councillor Patton

"That Council Committee recommends to Council that a partial tax exemption for the general tax rate for Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre, Assessment

Account #03759105 be approved, effective for the 2027-2028 fiscal year and that area rates not be included as part of the exemption." Carried unanimously.

Review of Committee Appointments – Timelines and Terms

Councillor Leggett raised the issue of Council appointments to various Committees as the two-year appointment terms are up for renewal. It was noted that some committees are more productive than others, and others are just beginning to make progress. Interest was expressed in remaining on their current committee for the balance of the term.

The CAO confirmed that as per Policy, Council appointments on committees were changed from four-year terms to two-year terms. This does not preclude individual Council members from requesting to remain on their current committees. The Nominating Committee makes every effort to accommodate the Council members' preferences when reviewing committee appointments.

Discussion included the pros and cons of two-year appointment terms, as well as the benefits of reviewing policy and exploring options periodically.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Development Review Processes and County-Wide Plan Implementation

This information item provided Council with an update on the progress and internal process improvements to the development review processes. Some of the improvements relate to the implementation of County-wide land use planning as well as general increases in the number and complexity of development and building applications.

Digital Public Engagement Platforms

This report informed Council about a new digital engagement platform that will be used for communications and feedback on projects, initiatives and developments. This platform will be used as a complementary resource to the municipal website, providing an engagement platform for various projects or events that are intended to increase communication and feedback with the public. Included in the report was examples of municipal projects/initiatives the platform could be used for as well as information on other municipal units using similar platforms, estimated annual costs, and funding sources.

Director's Report

A report from the Director of Public Works was circulated in the meeting package.

In-Camera/Closed Session

Moved by Councillor Patton, seconded by Councillor Kennedy

"That the meeting go into closed session at 7:33pm." Carried unanimously.

Moved by Councillor Richardson, seconded by Councillor Kennedy

"That the meeting reconvene in open session at 7:54pm." Carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Councillor Patton, the meeting adjourned at 7:54pm.

Tracey Veno
Recording Secretary