

## SPECIAL COUNCIL

A Special Session of the Municipal Council of the Municipality of the County of Colchester was conducted virtually via Zoom Webinars, on Thursday, May 7, 2020, at 6:00 pm.

### Roll Call

The roll was called with the following Councillors in attendance:

|                              |             |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| Mayor Christine Blair, Chair |             |
| Councillor Eric Boutilier    | District 1  |
| Councillor Bill Masters      | District 2  |
| Deputy Mayor Geoff Stewart   | District 3  |
| Councillor Mike Cooper       | District 4  |
| Councillor Lloyd Gibbs       | District 5  |
| Councillor Karen MacKenzie   | District 6  |
| Councillor Michael Gregory   | District 7  |
| Councillor Ron Cavanaugh     | District 8  |
| Councillor Bob Pash          | District 9  |
| Councillor Tom Taggart       | District 10 |
| Councillor Wade Parker       | District 11 |

### Staff Present

Rob Simonds, Chief Administrative Officer  
 Scott Fraser, Director of Corp. Services/Acting Director of Solid Waste  
 Crawford Macpherson, Director of Community Development  
 Michelle Newell, Director of Public Works  
 Dennis James, Municipal Solicitor  
 Tracey Venno, Recording Secretary  
 Mark Austin, Economic Development Officer  
 Devin Trefry, Research, Policy, and Community Engagement Officer  
 Craig Burgess, Recreation Manager  
 Paul Smith, Manager of Planning Services  
 Dave Westlake, Emergency Management/Protective Services Coordinator  
 Kelly Gratto McCarthy, Human Resources Specialist  
 Tim Smith, Manager of Information Services

Mayor Blair indicated that following this Special Meeting of Council, the Regular Session of Council will reconvene for the completion of the agenda. With Council's agreement, the two agendas can be merged, dealing with all open session items first, then proceeding to closed session. Council agreed.

### Approval of Agenda

Moved by Councillor Gregory  
 Seconded by Councillor Cooper

"That the agenda be approved with one addition, Police Advisory Board, which was omitted in error from the April 30, 2020 agenda."

Motion Carried Unanimously.

### Covid-19 Update

Rob Simonds, CAO indicated that a detailed report was provided as part of the April 30<sup>th</sup> agenda. At this time, there was nothing further to report on this matter.

### COVID Financial Relief Program

Scott Fraser, Director of Corporate Services, provided an overview of the Loan Program available to assist municipalities due to impacts of COVID-19. The Program is not mandatory for municipalities and those interested will have to

submit an application to the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The Loan Program will be funded through the Municipal Finance Corporation, at an interest rate of 1.1% and municipalities will have 36 months to repay the loan. There will be a list of criteria for residents and business owners that must be met to qualify for assistance under this Program. If Council is interested, staff will bring back a model policy for review and consideration and Council will have opportunity to modify the policy to meet our needs. Mr. Fraser advised that he feels this is a good opportunity for those residents and business owners affected by COVID-19, as well as the Municipality, to assist with potential cash flow issues.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Stewart  
Seconded by Councillor Boutilier

“That a model policy for the Loan Program be referred to staff to bring back to Council for consideration.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

### **Community Relief Efforts**

The CAO advised that the Special Council meetings were initially to deal with items related to COVID-19, however, since the tragedy of April 18 & 19, there is a placeholder on the agendas for Community Relief Efforts as well.

Referring to memorials in Debert as discussed by Council on April 30<sup>th</sup>, Crawford Macpherson, Director of Community Development, advised that he has been in contact with a member of one of the families. There are flowers, teddy bears and other items of remembrance currently at the site but sometime in the future, the family would like to see something more permanent such as a heart shaped garden, a plaque, a bench and possibly a picnic table. Staff noted that there may be development in the future in this area, however, other than addressing a couple of safety issues, there are no concerns with the intended location at this time. The family member requested something in writing from the County.

Mr. Macpherson indicated that he has not been contacted by the family of the other victim. Councillor Pash noted that he would reach out to the family to contact Mr. Macpherson.

Discussion was held on representatives from the municipal units where victims of the tragedy were from, coming together to discuss the possibility of a permanent memorial in appropriate location for all of the victims.

Moved by Councillor Taggart  
Seconded by Councillor Gibbs

“That the Mayor be requested to approach Mayors/Wardens and CAOs of Cumberland, East Hants and HRM for the purpose of a joint committee, to memorialize the victims of the April 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> tragedy.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

### **School Board Funding**

Following lengthy discussion during budget deliberations regarding School Board funding, the matter was referred to tonight’s meeting for further discussion. Council expressed their displeasure with the 2.9% increased and

indicated they would like to see some accountability justifying the increase. Responding to a query on staff following up with other municipalities on how they are dealing with this, the CAO advised that the Director of Corporate Services has had discussions with the Department of Municipal Affairs and is following up with the School Board as well.

Moved by Councillor Taggart  
Seconded by Councillor Masters

“That a letter be written to the Minister of Education and the Minister of Finance requesting a rationale for the 2.9% increase in School Board funding as well as an accounting of any savings as a result of COVID-19.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Mayor Blair advised that this concludes the open session items for the Special Council meeting. The next items on the agenda will be those from the April 30<sup>th</sup> Regular Council meeting.

#### **Fundy Discovery Site – Bridge Options**

Paul Smith, Manager of Planning Services, made a presentation on bridge options for the Fundy Discovery Site, noting that two options are being presented for consideration. An overview for each of the options was provided with images and detailed information on costs; design features; structural components; general maintenance; and, lighting and viewing features. Also included was shortfalls for each of the design options. A copy of the full report from COWI Engineering was circulated to Council prior to the April 30<sup>th</sup> Council meeting.

Lengthy debate was held with a number of points being raised including safety considerations; maintenance costs; inspection requirements; stakeholders; funding opportunities; and, viewing platforms.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Stewart  
Seconded Councillor Masters

“That Council approves advancing Option 1 presented by COWI Engineering to the detailed engineering design phase of the project.”

Motion Carried. *(Councillors Boutilier, Gibbs and MacKenzie opposed)*

#### **Crosswalk Request, Onslow**

This item provides Council with a report on the previously requested crosswalk at Highway 2/Onslow Road and Tidal Bore Road. All information relating to the crosswalk request as discussed on February 28, 2020 was provided to NS Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal (TIR) for consideration. On April 14, 2020, a response was received from TIR denying the request. A copy of the correspondence from TIR was included with the Information Item for Council information.

#### **COVID-19 Update**

This item was dealt with earlier in the meeting and there was no further discussion on this matter.

#### **Police Advisory Board**

Councillor Parker advised that the Police Advisory Board (PAB) has not met in over a year due to quorum issues, and as a result, no updates from the RCMP have been received for the same period. Given the importance of receiving the updates usually provided through the PAB, Councillor Parker suggested

the possibility of having the RCMP provide the update to all of Council at one of the Thursday night Special Council meetings. Council agreed and the CAO advised that staff would look into arranging this with the RCMP.

Brief discussion was held on the possibility of meeting in Closed Session. Dennis James, Municipal Solicitor, indicated that this would depend on the nature of the issues being discussed and suggested having a dialogue with the RCMP prior to the presentation. Councillor Parker indicated that the intent for this meeting would be to get updates that would normally be provided to the PAB, such as quarterly statistics and staffing updates.

**Reports from Councillors  
Appointed to Outside  
Boards and Agencies**

Copies of reports from the Mayor and Councillors were circulated in the package or placed on table for this evenings meeting.

**Closed Session**

Moved by Councillor Gibbs  
Seconded by Councillor Gregory

“That the meeting go into closed session at 8:33 pm.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Moved by Councillor Gregory  
Seconded by Councillor Gibbs

“That the meeting reconvene in open session at 9:45 pm”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

**Legal Advice**

Moved by Councillor Masters  
Seconded by Deputy Mayor Stewart

“That Council approve the use of the Coat of Arms by the community group in support of the families affected by the April 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> shootings; and,

That staff and the Municipal Solicitor investigate trademark options for the new Colchester logo and tagline; and,

That staff be directed to create a policy for the use of flag symbols and Coat of Arms for the Municipality.”

Motion Carried. *(Councillor Parker opposed)*

**Adjournment**

Moved by Councillor Gregory  
Seconded by Councillor Masters

“That the meeting adjourn at 9:48 pm.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Tracey Venio  
Recording Secretary

