

**MUNICIPAL COUNCIL**

The Regular Session of the Municipal Council of the Municipality of the County of Colchester was conducted in-person and virtually combined, on Thursday, April 27, 2023, at 6:00 pm.

In peace and in 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 Call**

The roll was called with the following Council members in attendance:

Mayor Christine Blair, Chair	
Councillor Eric Boutilier	District 1
Councillor Laurie Sandeson	District 2
Deputy Mayor Geoff Stewart	District 3
Councillor Mike Cooper	District 4
Councillor Tim Johnson	District 5
Councillor Karen MacKenzie	District 6
Councillor Michael Gregory	District 7
Councillor Lisa Patton	District 8
Councillor Marie Benoit	District 9
Councillor Victoria Lomond	District 10
Councillor Wade Parker	District 11

**Staff Present**

Rob Simonds, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)  
 Dennis James, Municipal Solicitor  
 Michelle Boudreau, Director of Public Works  
 Paul Smith, Director of Community Development  
 Scott Fraser, Director of Corporate Services  
 Phillip Redden, Director of Solid Waste  
 Tracey Venno, Recording Secretary  
 Jenn Martin, Economic Development Officer  
 Devin Trefry, Research, Policy, and Community Engagement Officer  
 Mollie MacBurnie-Haas, IT Support

**Approval of Agenda**

Moved by Councillor Gregory and seconded by Councillor Patton

“That the agenda be approved with the following additions:

- Item 13(b), Rural Broadband Internet Project; and
- Item 20(b), Legal Matter in Closed Session.” Carried unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Cooper and seconded by Councillor Patton

“That the minutes of the meetings held on February 14 and March 30, 2023, be approved as presented.” Carried unanimously.

**Business Arising from Minutes**

None

Standing Committee Reports  
and Recommendations

*Deputy Mayor Stewart, Chair of Council Committee, presented the report from the meeting held on April 13, 2023:*

Personnel Policy Amendments

Moved by Deputy Mayor Stewart and seconded by Councillor Gregory

“That Council approves the amended Personnel Policies 6.16 Inclement Weather Conditions (formerly Storm Days); 6.11 Bereavement Leave; 6.21 Wearing of Work Clothing and Safety Equipment; 6.17 Group Pension Plan; 6.23 Non-Uniforms, Uniforms and Identification; and 6.24 Wellness Program, as presented.” Carried unanimously.

FCM Resolution – RCMP Retro Pay

Moved by Deputy Mayor Stewart and seconded by Councillor Sandeson

“That Council endorses the following resolution:

**Prioritizing Municipal Input in Future RCMP Contract Policing Decisions**

**WHEREAS**, the Government of Canada has made the decision in Budget 2023 to make municipalities responsible for all retroactive costs stemming from the latest RCMP collective bargaining agreement; and

**WHEREAS**, these extraordinary one-time costs, which in some jurisdictions amount to millions of dollars, will cause significant hardship for communities and residents across the country, and were negotiated without meaningful consultation or a seat at the table for the municipalities responsible for paying the bill; and

**WHEREAS**, municipal governments are already paying a growing share of policing costs, but unlike other orders of government, cannot run deficits to spread out the impact of these extraordinary one-time sums, and have limited revenue tools; and

**WHEREAS**, local governments will now be forced to make difficult decisions that will impact residents, such as cutting essential services, reducing policing levels, raising property taxes significantly, and/or cancelling work on local infrastructure, at a time when Canadians' concerns about community safety and the cost of living are already rising; and

**WHEREAS**, going forward, it is critical that municipalities be proactively engaged in any forthcoming processes related to contract policing to prevent this occurring again;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Municipality of Colchester joins the Federation of Canadian Municipalities in calling on the federal government to commit to ensuring that local governments are meaningfully consulted, fully informed, and at the table on issues related to policing costs given the municipal role in keeping our communities safe; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Municipality of Colchester conveys this support in writing to local Members of Parliament.” Carried unanimously.

**Executive Committee – minutes from meeting held on April 13, 2023**

Moved by Councillor Benoit and seconded by Councillor Patton

“That the minutes of the meeting held on April 13, 2023, be received.” Carried unanimously.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**Second Reading, Dangerous or Unsightly Premises By-law**

Paul Smith, Director of Community Development, advised that this item is to consider Second Reading for adoption of the new Dangerous or Unsightly Premises By-law which is designed to supplement provisions in the MGA. A brief background of the By-law was provided and it was noted that this draft By-law was reviewed extensively at March Committee and then again during First Reading at March Council. Contents of the By-law include requirements for property owners to maintain their properties and comply with orders to remediate dangerous or unsightly conditions; permits the Administrator/Building Official to enter onto properties; timelines for first and subsequent offences and factors that may affect these timelines; appeal processes; and, fees and penalties. Mr. Smith advised that since First Reading, the Municipal Solicitor has recommended one minor change under Section 4 of the By-law to include wording “or policy” at the end of this section.

Discussion was held on fees and penalties; staff resource implications; effective date if approved; and shortened timeframes for repeat offences. Mr. Smith advised that the Municipality does not have full-time By-law Enforcement staff currently, but this is something that will need to be looked at in time.

Moved by Councillor Boutilier and seconded by Councillor Gregory

“That Council approves, by way of Second Reading, Chapter 21- Dangerous or Unsightly Premises By-law, as amended.” Carried unanimously.

**Second Reading – Marketing Levy By-law**

Jenn Mantin, Economic Development Officer, advised that the purpose of this item is to consider Second Reading to adopt a new Marketing Levy By-law and provided a brief overview of the proposed By-law. The tentative implementation date was scheduled for September, however, stakeholders have requested this be bumped to October 2<sup>nd</sup>. Ms. Mantin noted that one piece of correspondence was received in response to the advertising of Second Reading, indicating they were not in favour of a marketing levy. This correspondence was circulated on table for this evening’s meeting.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Stewart and seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That Council approves, by way of Second Reading, Chapter 19 – Marketing Levy By-law, as presented.” Carried unanimously.

**Brookfield Sewer Repairs – Authority to Award**

Moved by Deputy Mayor Stewart and seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That Council grants authority to May Council Committee to award the tender for the Brookfield Sewer Repairs.” Carried unanimously.

**Courthouse Roof Tender**

Scott Fraser, Director of Corporate Services, advised that this item is to award a roof replacement for the Municipal Building at 1 Church Street. The roof has had repairs over the last 10 years and has reached its end of life cycle. An RFP was issued to source metal slate shingles, which would be in keeping with the heritage appearance of the building and would provide long lasting security of metal roofing. One submission was received in response to the RFP, from Flagship Construction, at a total estimated cost of \$190,320 excluding HST.

Brief discussion was held on price comparisons for traditional vs. the metal slate shingles; durability of metal shingles; other types of metal roofing; installation procedures; and, appearance and heritage status requirements.

Moved by Councillor Sandeson and seconded by Councillor Gregory

“That Council approves the award of the roof replacement to Flagship Construction at a cost of \$190,320 plus HST, with an internal 10% contingency to be spent only on authority of the Director of Corporate Services.” Carried unanimously.

**2023-24 Budget and Tax Rate Approval**

Scott Fraser, Director of Corporate Services, advised that Council met on April 11 and 17, 2023, for budget deliberations resulting in a balanced budget, with no change to tax rates for fiscal 2023-24.

Detailed debate took place on the County’s approved increased funding for 2023/24 for the RECC and the Town not approving the additional funding request; comments regarding holding RECC pricing down to attract people from Scotia Pool; the need to get both Councils together for a discussion; being equal partners but concern with the Town not contributing their portion on more than one occasion; not providing additional funding would result in program cuts and ultimately affect residents. Further discussion was held on parameters in the operating agreement which would require deficits to be shared 50/50; requirements for the RECC to provide a revised budget if one or both Councils do not approve the budget; and receiving clarification from the Town regarding their stance on approval of the RECC budget.

Moved by Councillor Benoit and seconded by Councillor Patton

“That the 2023-24 Operating Budget be approved with the additions and deletions as set out at the Council Committee meetings held on April 11 and 17, 2023, with the residential tax rate being held at \$0.885, and the commercial tax rate being held at \$2.28; and,

That the following Tax Resolution be approved, as presented:

### **TAX RATE RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS** the Municipal Council of the County of Colchester is required to levy rates which it deems sufficient to raise the sum required to defray the expenditure of the Municipality of the County of Colchester for the current twelve-month fiscal period;

**RESOLVED** that pursuant to **Section 72 of the Municipal Government Act**, the Municipal Council of the Municipality of the County of Colchester estimates that sums amounting to **\$30,729,249** are required for the lawful purpose of the Municipality for the year ending **March 31, 2024**, after crediting the probable revenue from all sources other than rates for the abatement and losses which occur in the collection of the taxes for the said year which may not be collected or collectible;

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that the said Council authorize the levying and collection of a rate of **eighty-eight and one-half cents (\$0.885)** on each \$100.00 of the assessed value of the residential and resource property assessed in the **2023** Assessment Roll;

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that the said Council authorize the levying and collection of a rate of **two dollars twenty-eight cents (\$2.28)** on each \$100.00 on the assessed value of Commercial Property assessed in the **2023** Assessment Roll;

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that pursuant to **Section 78 of the Municipal Government Act** in lieu of all rates and taxes of the Municipality, an owner of forest property to which the said section applies shall pay tax equal to twenty-five (25) cents per acre on holdings of 50,000 or less and forty (40) cents per acre on holdings greater than 50,000 acres and where an area, village or commission rate is levied for fire protection, the owner shall pay an additional tax of one (1) cent per acre;

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that the said Council hereby requires payment of said rates to be made to the Tax Collector or Treasurer of the said Municipality on or before the 31<sup>st</sup> day of August, **2023**;

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that said Council hereby imposes an additional percentage charge of 12% per annum on all rates and taxes remaining unpaid after the 31<sup>st</sup> day of August, 2023.”

### ***Amending Motion***

Moved by Councillor Cooper and seconded by Councillor Boutilier

“That the budget be approved with commercial and residential tax rates remaining unchanged; and,

That the funding presently approved for the RECC in the amount of \$150,000 be held back and put in a Special Operating Reserve.” Carried unanimously.

*The amending motion having carried, the original motion was voted on and carried with Councillor Parker opposed.*

Moved by Councillor Boutilier and seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That a letter be sent to the Town of Truro requesting clarification on the Town’s position on the RECC budget.” Carried unanimously.

**Marshland Drive Lift Station  
Screw Pump Upgrade Tender  
Award**

Michelle Boudreau, Director of Public Works, advised that this item is to award the tender for the supply and installation of a new screw pump at the Marshland Drive Lift Station (MDLS). Included as part of her report was background information and history of the MDLS; tender advertising and submissions; project timelines; and resource/budget implications. The low bidder was Filtrum Inc., and their submission was deemed to be complete.

Brief discussion took place on the Town of Truro’s contribution to the project. Ms. Boudreau indicated that the 30% contribution reflects their usage of the MDLS and she does not expect any issues with this.

Moved by Councillor Gregory and seconded by Councillor Patton

“That the tender for the Marshland Drive Lift Station Screw Pump Upgrade be awarded to Filtrum Inc. for a total contract amount of \$361,600 excluding HST, and that an internal contingency of \$20,000 be approved, to be spent only on authority of the Director of Public Works.” Carried unanimously.

**Supplemental Newsletter**

Devin Trefry, Research, Policy, and Community Engagement Officer, advised that a supplemental newsletter is suggested as a means to get information to the public on a few key issues, namely the Marketing Levy, Rural Internet, and the county-wide Planning Strategy. Costs for the supplemental newsletter could be up to \$10,000, depending on the number of pages. The CAO advised of the importance of getting more information to the public on these topics and there would be insufficient space to do so in the regular newsletter.

Moved by Councillor Boutilier and seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That staff proceed with a supplemental newsletter as discussed.” Carried unanimously.

**Police Advisory Board**

Councillor Lomond advised that as the newest member of the Police Advisory Board (PAB), she has not had opportunity to attend a meeting yet. The issue was raised with the CAO which led to discussions on the recommendations of the Mass Casualty Commission (MCC) Report. The CAO indicated that on Councillor Lomond’s prompt, discussion was held on turning our minds to the number of recommendations of Volume 5 of the MCC Report, specifically around Policing and Revitalizing Police Boards, and municipal responsibilities. The Executive Committee was briefed on this and it was agreed that this would be a good opportunity to go back to a standalone PAB

to better enable the Municipality to focus on the recommendations as outlined in the Report. Should Council wish to return to a standalone PAB, a notification to the Town of Stewiacke should be provided prior to writing a letter to the Minister of Justice. It would also be appropriate to have staff investigate optimum composition of the PAB prior to writing the Minister.

Moved by Councillor Lomond and seconded by Councillor Boutilier

“That a letter be written to the Department of Justice Minister about the Municipality going back to a standalone Police Advisory Board and that staff be directed to investigate the structure of a standalone Police Advisory Board and bring information back to Council prior to writing the letter.” Carried unanimously.

**Rural Broadband Internet Project** The Economic Development Officer provided Council with an update on the Cumberland-Colchester Broadband Project noting Council’s previous directive at the March Council meeting to write letters to Bell Media and the Premier regarding concerns of delays in the project and communications in the communities. Prior to issuing letters, staff reached out to both Cumberland County and Xplore to advise on Council’s directive. Cumberland suggested another approach might be to contact Nova Scotia Power (NSP) jointly rather than writing to the Premier. Xplore provided details on progresses since their last update and were appreciative of the support in writing the Premier or NSP, however were cautious regarding the possibility of this disrupting the recent progress made. Due to the input and updates received, staff felt it was important to update Council for feedback prior to issuing correspondence to either the Premier or NSP. Communications to Bell Media would proceed as previously directed. Ms. Mantin also noted that Xplore has agreed to providing biweekly updates rather than monthly.

Moved by Councillor Gregory and seconded by Councillor Johnson

“That Council directs staff to proceed with the previous directive of Council on March 30, 2023 relative to Rural Broadband Internet.” Carried unanimously.

### Correspondence - ACTION

#### **Marshall Feit, TataFest Organizing Committee**

Letter to Colchester County Council received April 11, 2023, concerning funding for TataFest.

Brief discussion was held on this event already receiving the maximum allowable under the Community Event Grants Policy.

Moved by Councillor Boutilier and seconded by Councillor Sandeson

“That the letter from Marshall Feit, TataFest Organizing Committee, concerning annual support for the TataFest event be received for information.” Carried unanimously.

**Keely Crawford, Nat'l Volunteer,  
Huntington Society of Canada**

Email to the Deputy Mayor regarding lighting the municipal building for HD Awareness Month.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Stewart and seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That Council support the request to light up the municipal building for Huntington’s Disease Awareness Month.” Carried unanimously.

**Commissioner Kevin Kennedy,  
Chairman, Village of Bible Hill**

Letter to Mayor Blair dated April 21, 2023, concerning the Sustainable Services Growth Fund.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Stewart and seconded by Councillor Boutilier

“That the letter from Commissioner Kennedy, Village of Bible Hill, regarding the Sustainable Services Growth Fund be referred to staff.” Carried unanimously.

### Correspondence - INFORMATION

**Development Officer**

A copy of the Development Activity Report received from the Development Officer for the month of March 2023.

**Building Inspector**

A copy of Building Permit Statistics received from the Building Inspector for the month of March 2023.

Moved by Councillor Gregory and seconded by Councillor Johnson

“That the reports from the Development Officer and Building Inspector be received.” Carried unanimously.

**CN**

Email to Mayor Blair dated April 12, 2023, regarding the 2023 Vegetation Program.

Moved by Councillor Parker and seconded by Councillor Gregory

“That the email from CN regarding the 2023 Vegetation Program be received for information purposes.” Carried unanimously.

### INFORMATION ITEMS

**Strategic Priorities Update**

The Research, Policy, and Community Engagement Officer, provided a brief presentation to Council on the Strategic Priorities. Highlights of the presentation included updates on the five strategic priorities: Policing Review, Debert Business Park Development Plan, Debert Airport Strategy, Housing – Debert Prospectus, and J-Class Roads & Road Assessments. Also included were administrative/departmental priority updates.

A copy of the full report is available in the Clerk’s Office as well as on the County website.

**Solid Waste Partners with DAL  
AC**

This item provided Council with information on two compost projects that Solid Waste has partnered with the Dalhousie Agricultural Campus, namely, Quantifying the Impact of Municipal Organic Waste Management Strategies on Carbon Footprints, and Assessment of Microplastics Distribution and Characterization in Compost at the Colchester Balefill Facility.

**Funding For Extra-curricular  
School Projects**

Referring to a recent request for support for a school related project that was denied, Councillor Benoit indicated that Council provides support for playgrounds through the Parks Program and stressed the importance of supporting youth of all ages. Requests for support for all types of extracurricular activities, whether it be for drama events, sports, band, etc. should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Discussion was held regarding mandatory funding to the province for education; and whether these types of funding requests are permitted through legislation.

**Reports from Councillors**

Copies of reports from the Mayor and Councillors were circulated in the package and 'On Table' for this evening's meeting.

Council briefly discussed the upcoming open house for Plan It Colchester is in conflict with the presentation meeting scheduled for May 2<sup>nd</sup>. A number of Council members plan to attend an open house and as such, there will not be a quorum for the presentation meeting.

Moved by Councillor Boutilier and seconded by Councillor Benoit

"That the May presentation meeting be rescheduled from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup>." Carried unanimously.

**CLOSED SESSION**

Moved by Councillor Gregory and seconded by Councillor Patton

"That the meeting go into closed session at 8:46 pm." Carried unanimously.

Moved by Councillor Gregory and seconded by Councillor Patton

"That the meeting reconvene in open session at 10:01 pm." Carried unanimously.

**Legal Matter**

Moved by Councillor Sandeson and seconded by Councillor Parker

"That a Special Joint Council meeting be scheduled for 5 pm on May 11<sup>th</sup> and the regular Council Committee meeting be delayed by one hour to begin at 7 pm; and,

That Council Committee be granted authority at their meeting on May 11<sup>th</sup> to make a decision on the matter regarding the RECC proposal and the Central Nova Civic Centre By-law." Carried unanimously.

It was noted that the purpose of the Special Joint Council meeting is to receive legal advice on a RECC proposal so this meeting would be held in Closed Session.

**Personnel Matter**

Moved by Councillor Boutilier and seconded by Councillor Parker

“That Council approves the compensation for the Interim CAO as discussed in Closed Session.” Carried unanimously.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Councillor MacKenzie and seconded by Councillor Patton

“That the meeting adjourn at 10:03 pm.” Carried unanimously.

Tracey Veno  
Recording Secretary