

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, November 30, 2023, at 6:30 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 (<i>regrets</i>)
Councillor Victoria Lomond	District 10
Councillor Wade Parker	District 11

Staff Present

Dan Troke, Chief Administrative Officer
 Scott Fraser, Director of Corporate Services
 Dennis James, Municipal Solicitor
 Michelle Boudreau, Director of Public Works
 Paul Smith, Director of Community Development
 Phillip Redden, Director of Solid Waste
 Tracey Veno, Recording Secretary
 Jenn Mantin, Economic Development Officer
 Devin Trefry, Research, Policy and Community Engagement Officer
 Jeanette Himmelman, Systems Analyst
 Craig Burgess, Recreation Manager

Service Recognition

Employees were presented with awards in recognition of years of service with the Municipality. 2022 recognized 10 employees with 5 years; 4 employees with 10 years; 6 employees with 15 years; 1 employee with 25 years; and 1 employee with 45 years of service.

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Councillor Lomond and seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That the agenda be approved with the following additions:

- Item #6(4), Nominating Committee Report and Recommendation from meeting of November 28, 2023;
- Item #13b, By-law Enforcement Officer; and,
- Item #13c, Streetlight at Corner of Burris and Lexington.” Carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Councillor Boutilier and seconded by Councillor Johnson

“That the minutes of meeting held on September 28, October 26 and November 16, 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 November 16, 2023:

Fundy Discovery Site Bridge Update and Options

Moved by Deputy Mayor Stewart and seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That Council authorizes the expenditure of approximately \$17,500 for revisions and improvements to the Fundy Discovery Site pedestrian bridge tender package.” Motion carried (*Councillor Lomond opposed*).

Award of Tender – Tandem Truck

Moved by Deputy Mayor Stewart and seconded by Councillor Gregory

“That Council authorizes staff to award the tender for a new tandem dump truck for a maximum value of \$400,430 excluding taxes, with sources of funds being the Public Works Vehicle Reserve.” Carried unanimously.

Project Management for Solar PV – Award of RFP

Moved by Deputy Mayor Stewart and seconded by Councillor Sandeson

“That Council approves that the RFP for Project Management of Solar PV Installations be awarded to Harbourside Engineering Consultants for a total contract amount of \$110,745 excluding HST.” Carried unanimously.

Flood Advisory Committee – minutes of meeting held on November 6, 2023

Moved by Councillor Johnson and seconded by Councillor Patton

“That the minutes of the Flood Advisory Committee meeting held on November 6, 2023, be received.” Carried unanimously.

Debert Business Park Advisory Committee – minutes of meeting held on November 21, 2023

Mayor Blair noted a few errors in the November 21, 2023, Debert Business Park Advisory Committee (DBPAC) meeting minutes. Corrections will be made to the minutes prior to presenting to the DBPAC for approval.

Moved by Councillor Patton and seconded by Councillor Johnson

“That the minutes of the Debert Business Park Advisory Committee meeting held on November 21, 2023, be received.” Carried unanimously.

Nominating Committee – report and recommendation of meeting held on November 28, 2023

Moved by Councillor Boutilier and seconded by Councillor Lomond

“That Council appoints Councillor Sandeson to the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee for the balance of the 2020-2024 term of Council.” Carried unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS

Second Reading - Fireworks By-law

Devin Trefry, Research, Policy and Community Engagement Officer, reported that this item is to consider Second Reading of the Fireworks By-law. A brief overview of the By-law was provided. Council approved First Reading at October Council and all advertising for Second Reading in accordance with the MGA was done. Staff have received no communications, either in favour or against the proposed By-law.

Moved by Councillor Parker and seconded by Councillor Boutilier

“That Council approves, by way of Second Reading, Chapter 15 – Fireworks, By-law.” Carried unanimously.

Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

Phil Redden, Director of Solid Waste, presented the proposed changes to Terms of Reference for the Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee. Key changes include committee member appointments, term of appointments and definition of quorum, all of which are aimed to provide better operational business functionality of the Committee. The Committee has had limited meetings due to ability to achieve quorum.

Moved by Councillor Lomond and seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council approve the revised terms of reference for the Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee.”

Debate was held on challenges in achieving quorum and whether there is ability for members to attend virtually. The Municipal Solicitor noted concern as it related to quorum requirements and he would like opportunity to review the Accessibility Act to ensure the revisions meet requirement as outlined in the Act.

Councillor Lomond moved that the motion be tabled until December.

Funding Application, Municipal Capital Growth Program

Michelle Boudreau, Director of Public Works, advised that this item is to seek a motion of Council to support an application to the Municipal Capital Growth Program. Proposed projects under this application would include

replacement of PS 17 in Lower Truro and sewer pipe renewal in Great Village in 2024/25; and, replacement of PS 9 in Hilden and sewer pipe renewals in Brookfield in 2025/26. Project amounts total \$1,857,000.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Stewart and seconded by Councillor Gregory

“That Council supports an application to the Municipal Capital Growth Program for the completions of various wastewater renewal projects, with a total anticipated project cost of \$1,857,000.” Carried unanimously.

Extended Producer Responsibility

The Director of Solid Waste provided Council with an update on the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program. A decision is being requested on the Municipality’s plan to opt in or out of the program by January 1, 2024. Opting in is expected to provide access to a portion of an estimated \$20-25 million of annual savings available to municipalities in Nova Scotia and will also provide opportunity to see what the program looks like. The Municipality can opt out at a later date if Council so wishes. Staff’s recommendation would be to opt into the program.

Moved by Councillor Boutilier and seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council directs staff to register the Municipality of Colchester for the Extended Producer Responsibility Program.” Carried unanimously.

First Reading – Tatamagouche Land Use By-law Amendment Application (YWCA Halifax)

Councillor Gregory declared a conflict of interest and recused himself from discussion on this matter.

Paul Smith, Director of Community Development, advised that the purpose of this item is to consider First Reading of a land use by-law amendment to add commercial day cares as a permitted use in the Village of Tatamagouche.

Moved by Councillor Lomond and seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council approves, by way of First Reading, the amendments as presented, for purposes of forwarding this document to a Public Hearing reserving consideration of the amendment until Second Reading following the Public Hearing.” Carried unanimously.

Council Virtual Meetings Policy

Councillor Patton indicated that she would like to open discussion on increasing the number of meetings Council members are permitted virtually from two to four to provide greater flexibility in how we meet and having all members involved in meetings.

Lengthy debate was held on increasing the number of virtual allowances for attendance while outside of Colchester County. Concern was raised around being away for extended periods. Existing policy on virtual meetings allows flexibility to attend virtually for reasons such as being ill and unsafe road conditions without affecting the two virtual allowances.

Referring to the recently held Special Council meeting immediately before the regularly scheduled Council Committee meeting, clarification was sought and it was confirmed that to attend both meetings virtually, it would count as two meetings. A suggestion was made on incorporating language in Policy that would have two meetings held on the same evening to be considered as one.

Moved by Councillor Patton and seconded by Councillor Gregory

“That section 9.1(b) of the Council Virtual Meetings Policy be amended to allow virtual attendance up to a maximum of four meetings.” Motion DEFEATED (*Mayor Blair, Deputy Mayor Stewart, Councillors Sandeson, Cooper, Johnson, MacKenzie, Lomond and Parker opposed*).

Moved by Councillor Lomond and seconded by Councillor Boutilier

“That the Council Virtual Meetings Policy be referred to staff for inclusion of language around Special meetings being held in conjunction with a regular meeting being considered as one.” Motion Carried (*Councillor Parker opposed*).

Electronic Voting at Council Meetings

Discussion was held on electronic voting in Council Chambers whereas motions would be on screen and Council members would vote and results would be displayed.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Stewart and seconded by Councillor Boutilier

“That staff investigate options for electronic voting in Council Chambers and bring back information to Council for consideration.” Carried unanimously.

By-law Enforcement

Deputy Mayor Stewart raised the issue of potential need for a By-law Enforcement position with the County growth and as it continues to progress, more demand is being placed on Building Inspection for enforcement.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Stewart and seconded by Councillor Lomond

“That staff investigate the implementation of a By-law Enforcement position for the Municipality.” Carried unanimously.

Streetlight – Corner of Burris and Lexington

Councillor Parker indicated that he has received a number of calls regarding the need for a streetlight at the corner of Burris and Lexington.

Moved by Councillor Parker and seconded by Councillor Gregory

“That staff investigate a streetlight at the corner of Burris Drive and Lexington Ave.” Carried unanimously.

Correspondence - ACTION

Mayor Bill Mills, Town of Truro

Letter to Mayor and Council dated November 14, 2023, requesting the Town and County work collaboratively on investigating funding for an updated regional transit feasibility study.

Moved by Councillor Johnson and seconded by Councillor Boutilier

“That the Municipality investigate funding for an updated regional transit feasibility study with the Town of Truro.”

Amending motion

Moved by Councillor Cooper and seconded by Councillor Parker

“That Millbrook First Nation and the Town of Stewiacke be included in the regional transit feasibility study.” Carried unanimously.

The amending motion having carried, the original motion was voted on and carried unanimously.

Kelly Tucker

Email to Mayor Blair requesting consideration of the area rate formerly applied to the library be implemented for the North Shore Recreation Centre (NSRC) ice pad.

Detailed debate took place on municipal and other contributions to date for the ice pad; other grants, funding opportunities and applications; timelines for replacement; need for public consultation; and how capital projects at rinks are funded. Councillor Gregory advised that many residents were not happy with the area rates implemented for both the library and school enhancements and that community consultation would be required.

Further discussion was held on bringing a report back to Council confirming information on funds available to date and results of funding applications from other sources.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Stewart and seconded by Councillor Gregory

“That the request from Kelly Tucker concerning an area rate for the NSRC ice pad be received for information.” Motion *carried (Mayor Blair and Councillor Parker opposed)*.

Mayor Ben Cleveland, Town of Digby

Email dated November 15, 2023, requesting a letter of support concerning the Digby-St. John Ferry.

Moved by Councillor Gregory and seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That Council provide a letter of support for the Digby-St. John Ferry.” Carried unanimously.

Kevin Kennedy, Commissioner and Chairman, Village of Bible Hill

Letter dated November 16, 2023, requesting Council support for a resolution concerning the Municipal Capital Growth Program.

Moved by Councillor Boutilier and seconded by Councillor Sandeson

“That Council supports the Village of Bible Hill making a funding application under the Municipal Capital Growth Program.” Carried unanimously.

Pam Macintosh, Manager of Planning Services

Memo to Mayor and Council dated November 20, 2023, concerning an application for amendments to the Central Colchester Land Use By-law (CCLUB) by Saywood and Groves Limited for a property located at Valley Crossroads (PID 20031472).

Moved by Councillor Sandeson and seconded by Councillor Lomond

“That the application for amendments to the CCLUB by Saywood and Groves Limited for a property located at Valley Crossroads (PID 20031472) be referred to the Planning Advisory Committee.” Carried unanimously.

Norma Panetta, QUEST Canada

Email to Joanna Burris dated October 18, 2023, requesting a letter of support for their application for the Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund.

Moved by Councillor Johnson and seconded by Councillor Gregory

“That the request from Norma Panetta, QUEST Canada, for a letter of support for their application for the Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund be received for information.” Motion carried *(Councillors Boutilier and Lomond opposed)*.

Mildred MacDougall, President, Willow Church Cemetery Society

Letter to Mayor, Council and staff received November 15, 2023, requesting a letter of support for their application for Heritage Property Designation for the Willow Church Cemetery.

Moved by Councillor Gregory and seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council provide a letter of support for Willow Church Cemetery Society’s application for Heritage Property Designation for the Willow Church Cemetery.” Carried unanimously.

Correspondence - INFORMATION

Development Officer

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

Building Inspector

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

Moved by Councillor Gregory and seconded by Councillor Cooper

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

INFORMATION ITEMS

Strategic Priorities Update

This item provided Council with an update on the progress of various Strategic Priority projects. Council's last update was received in April 2023.

Points of discussion included housing needs and initiatives; affordable housing; the RFP on the Salmon River School property; and feasibility study on the Municipal Building as it relates to current and future needs. Additionally, an error was noted on page 6 in the article on Rural Broadband. The date in the article is November 2024 but should be November 2023.

Not-for-profit Insurance Organizations – Grant Applications

60 applications were received under the Insurance for Not-for-Profit Organizations Grant Program for 2023, coming in slightly under budget at \$32,466.50. The next deadline for applications under this program is October 25, 2024.

Reports from Councillors

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

CLOSED SESSION

Moved by Councillor Patton and seconded by Councillor Gregory

"That the meeting go into closed session at 9:17 pm." Carried unanimously.

Moved by Councillor Patton and seconded by Councillor Lomond

"That the meeting reconvene in open session at 9:27 pm." Carried unanimously.

Colchester Courage

Moved by Councillor Patton and seconded by Councillor Lomond

"That Council approves the 2023 Colchester Courage Award nominations, as discussed in Closed Session." Carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Councillor Patton and seconded by Councillor Gregory

"That the meeting adjourn at 9:28 pm." Carried unanimously.

Tracey Veno
Recording Secretary