

## 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 25, 2024, 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 (virtual)
Councillor Lisa Patton	District 8
Councillor Marie Benoit	District 9
Councillor Victoria Lomond	District 10
Councillor Wade Parker	District 11 (virtual)

### Staff Present

Scott Fraser, Acting CAO & 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 Venno, Recording Secretary  
 Jenn Mantin, Economic Development Officer  
 Devin Trefry, Research, Policy and Community Engagement Officer  
 Jeanette Himmelman, Systems Analyst

### Approval of Agenda

Moved by Councillor Boutilier, seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That the agenda be approved as presented.” Carried unanimously.

### Approval of Minutes

Moved by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That the minutes of the meeting held on March 27, and April 11, 2024, be approved as presented.” Carried unanimously.

### Business Arising from Minutes

None

### Standing Committee Reports and Recommendations

*There were no recommendations from the Council Committee meeting held on April 11, 2024.*

### ACTION ITEMS

#### First Reading – Neighbourhood Nuisance By-law

Devin Trefry, Research, Policy and Community Engagement Officer, provided an overview of the amendments to the Neighbourhood Nuisance By-law. The proposed amendments are intended to address the timing and

proximity of construction activity involving heavy equipment near residence. Under requirements of the MGA, adoption of or amendments to By-laws require two readings. First Reading is to essentially announce Council's intent to consider the amendments and advance to Second Reading, at which time Council will have opportunity to debate the merits of the By-law.

Moved by Councillor MacKenzie, seconded by Councillor Cooper

"That Council approves, by way of First Reading, amendments to the Neighbourhood Nuisance By-law as presented." Carried unanimously.

### **First Reading – Sewer Use By-law Amendments**

Michelle Boudreau, Director of Public Works, advised that as a result of recent changes to the Municipal Fees Policy, amendments are required to the Sewer Use By-law. Prior to the Municipal Fees Policy changes, sewer permit fees were \$150 with \$50 being refundable after final inspection. The fee remains the same, however the refundable portion has been eliminated. The proposed amendments are to reflect this change. By-law amendments require two readings, with the First Reading being essentially to announce Council's intent to consider the amendments and advance to Second Reading. Council will have opportunity to debate the merits of the By-law at Second Reading.

Moved by Councillor Johnson and seconded by Councillor Patton

"That Council approves, by way of First Reading, amendments to the Sewer Use By-law, as presented." Carried unanimously.

### **Budget and Tax Rate Approval**

Scott Fraser, Director of Corporate Services, advised that Council has completed the 2024/25 budget process over three meetings in April. At the conclusion of the meetings, a balanced budget was presented resulting in no change in the residential and commercial tax rates, with a recommendation to bring forth for final approval this evening. Council has the ability to make changes this evening, should they wish to do so.

Considerable debate took place on Scotia Pool (SP) including information about a recent meeting held with SP representatives, Mayor Blair, Councillor Parker, Councillor Boutilier, the General Manager (GM) from the RECC and others, followed by letter from the GM with suggestions moving forward. Assistance was offered with carrying out a review of the facility and financials by the GM. Other discussion points included importance of the facility; future growth in Colchester and the need for more recreational facilities to accommodate; cost to replace a pool being significant; impending closure of the pool without additional funding; and \$75,000 not going as far today due to increased costs.

Discussion was also held the need for viability and sustainability; developing a business plan, feasibility study and capital plans; municipal contributions being 40%; Village needing to contribute; need for respectful debate; why provincial funding is no longer available; the building being provincially owned; investing in one facility; assistance as offered by the GM not being within the existing realm of the contract; and additional funding being provided once noted studies are completed.

Additional discussion took place on having financial statements provided

with applications, although it is not a current requirement under the Community Event Grants Policy. Specific discussion was held regarding receipt of financials for the Brookfield Athletic Association, as well as the Grace Arts Centre. It was also suggested that criteria around financial statements be changed within existing policy.

Moved by Councillor Cooper, seconded by Councillor Sandeson

“That the 2024-25 Operating Budget be approved with the additions and deletions as set out at the Council Committee meetings held on April 16 and 22, 2024, 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 **\$33,671,209** are required for the lawful purpose of the Municipality for the year ending **March 31, 2025**, 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 **2024** 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 **2024** 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, **2024**;

**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, 2024.”

*Amending Motion*

Moved by Councillor Boutilier, seconded by Councillor MacKenzie

“That the Municipality support Scotia Pool in the amount of \$50,000 for 2024/25 in addition to the \$75,000 line item in the budget.” Motion as amended carried (*Councillors Cooper and Lomond opposed*).

*Amendment to Amending Motion*

Moved by Deputy Mayor Stewart, seconded by Councillor Johnson

“That the additional \$50,000 be granted with the caveat that the business plan/ studies be completed within a three-month period and costs for the business plan/studies can be accessed from this additional \$50,000.” Motion carried (*Mayor Blair, Councillors Boutilier, MacKenzie, Lomond and Parker opposed*).

*Second Amending Motion*

Moved by Deputy Mayor Stewart, seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That the additional \$50,000 granted to Scotia Pool come from the \$100,000 contingency in the budget.” Carried unanimously.

*At this point, Councillor Gregory left the meeting and was not available for the remainder of the meeting.*

*Third Amending Motion*

Moved by Councillor Parker, seconded by Councillor MacKenzie

“That the \$10,000 grants to the Grace Arts Centre and the Brookfield Athletics Association be held in abeyance and no funds released until receipt of financial statements.” Motion carried (*Deputy Mayor Stewart, Councillors Cooper, Johnson, Patton and Benoit opposed*).

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

**Correspondence – ACTION**

**Laurent Breault, Executive Director, foundation émergence**

Letter dated March 22, 2024, concerning a proclamation for International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia.

Brief discussion was held regarding the information contained in the letter and accompanying documentation are specific to the Province of Quebec.

Moved by Councillor Cooper, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That the letter dated March 22, 2024, concerning a proclamation for International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia be received for information.” Motion carried (*Councillor Lomond opposed*).

**Jeannie Whidden, Committee  
Chair, People First Nova Scotia**

Letter to Mayor Blair and Council concerning a flag raising event for Disability Pride.

Council noted that as per policy, only three flags are flown at the Municipal Building.

Moved by Councillor Lomond, seconded by Councillor Sandeson

“That a response be sent Jeannie Whidden explaining the County’s Flag Flying Policy, and suggesting that the Municipality could light up the County building in recognition of Disability Pride.” Carried unanimously.

**Donna Lugar, NS Lyme  
Advocacy Group**

Email dated April 1, 2024, concerning Lyme Disease Awareness Month 2024.

Moved by Councillor Boutilier, seconded by Councillor Sandeson

“That Council recognizes and supports Lyme Disease Awareness and proclaims May 2024 as Lyme Disease Awareness Month.” Carried unanimously.

**Pam Macintosh, Manager of  
Planning Services**

Memo dated April 25, 2024, concerning an application for a development agreement, 149-151 Pictou Road, Bible Hill, PID # 20440491.

Moved by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Boutilier

“That the memo dated April 25, 2024, concerning an application for a development agreement, 149-151 Pictou Road, Bible Hill, PID # 20440491, be referred to the Planning Advisory Committee.” Carried unanimously.

**Kevin Kennedy,  
Commissioner/Chair, Village of  
Bible Hill**

Letter dated April 19, 2024, regarding parking of tractor-trailers on residential lots.

Moved by Councillor Parker, seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That the letter from the Commissioner/Chair of the Village of Bible Hill dated April 19, 2024, regarding parking of tractor-trailers on residential lots be referred to staff and the Municipal Solicitor to investigate how this could be regulated through a By-law.” Carried unanimously.

**Correspondence -  
INFORMATION**

**Development Officer**

A copy of the Development Activity Report received from the Development Officer for March 2024.

**Building Inspector**

A copy of Building Permit Statistics received from the Building Inspector for March 2024.

Moved by Councillor Patton, seconded by Councillor MacKenzie

“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 November 2023.

Brief discussion was held regarding concerns of fires and density being addressed through the County-wide planning; minor work required for the completion of Heart’s Haven Memorial Park; targeted dates for rural broadband initiative; staff update on the Debert Airport Strategy coming forward in May; and, tenders for the Fundy Discovery Site bridge.

### **Nova Scotia Guard**

Deputy Mayor Stewart raised the issue to a recently held meeting with municipalities and the province regarding the Nova Scotia Guard. He indicated that the province is implementing a new body to deal with disasters and questions why they were getting into Emergency Management when this falls under municipal structure and responsibility. There are organizations such as Ground Search and Rescue who are willing to get involved with provincial funding available and the Deputy Mayor questioned why the province was getting involved. Additionally, at the meeting held, were elected representatives invited and in attendance to voice municipality concerns and gather information.

Mayor Blair advised that the meeting was called on short notice for Mayors, Wardens and CAOs with 69 in attendance. Minister Lohn provided an overview of the newly announced Nova Scotia Guard, reorganization of Emergency Management, as well as the plan for the department. There were several questions from municipalities such as impact on volunteers; who will be organizing; funding; management of volunteers; communications; fiscal responsibility; and what role municipalities will play. Attendees were advised that the province would be handling consultations over the next couple of months.

### **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

None

## ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Councillor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Lomond

“That the meeting adjourn at 8:17 pm.” Carried unanimously.

Tracey Veno  
Recording Secretary