

**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, January 30, 2025, 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**

Mayor Christine Blair, Chair	
Councillor Paul Weatherby	District 1
Deputy Mayor Laurie Sandeson	District 2
Councillor Sheldon Richardson	District 3
Councillor Mike Cooper	District 4
Councillor Tim Johnson	District 5
Councillor Nigel Leggett	District 6
Councillor Sherry Martell	District 7
Councillor Lisa Patton	District 8
Councillor Marie Benoit	District 9
Councillor Charlene Fletcher	District 10
Councillor Allan Kennedy	District 11

**Staff Present**

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

**Approval of Agenda**

Moved by Councillor Martell, seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That the agenda be approved with the following amendments:

- Add Item 5(2), Nominating Committee Report & Recommendation; and,
- Remove Item 7, Great Village Sewer Replacement Tender – Authority to Award.” Carried unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Kennedy, seconded by Councillor Martell

“That the minutes of the meeting held on November 25, 2024, be approved as presented.” Carried unanimously.

**Business Arising from Minutes**

None.

**Standing Committee Reports and Recommendations**

*Deputy Mayor Sandeson, Chair of Council Committee, presented the reports from the meetings held on December 14, 2024, and January 16, 2025.*

*Report and Recommendations from meeting held on December 14, 2024*

Review of Expense and Hospitality Policies

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That Council re-adopts the Expense Policy for CAO and Members of Council and Hospitality Policy as presented.” Carried unanimously.

#### FCM Sustainable Communities Conference

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Leggett

“That Councillors Richardson and Martell be approved to attend the FCM Sustainable Communities Conference from February 10-13, 2025, in Fredericton.” Carried unanimously.

#### ***Report and Recommendations from meeting held on January 16, 2025***

#### Use of Municipal Vehicles Policy

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Weatherby

“That Council approves the Use of County Vehicles Policy be repealed and the new Personnel Policy Use of Municipal Vehicles be approved as presented.” Carried unanimously.

#### Matching Funds for Community Solar Garden Feasibility & Design Study

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Martell

“That Council approves \$75,000 in the 2025/26 budget for a Community Solar Garden Feasibility & Design Study, as a matching contribution to the Low Carbon Communities grant of the same amount.” Carried unanimously.

#### 2025 FCM Conference, Ottawa ON

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Weatherby

“That Councillors Cooper, Fletcher and Kennedy attend the 2025 FCM Conference and Trade Show, in addition to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and CAO; and,

That Councillor Leggett serve as an alternate in the event that any of those selected are unable to attend.” Carried unanimously.

#### Flag Flying Policy Amendments

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Martell

“That Council approves the amendments to the Flag Flying Policy as presented.” Motion carried (*Councillor Cooper opposed*).

#### Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre - Tax Exemption Request

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That Council approves the request from the Mi’kmawey Debert Cultural Centre for a tax exemption, beginning with the 2025-2026 fiscal year.”  
Carried unanimously.

Colchester Strategic Priorities Document

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council adopts the Colchester Strategic Priorities document for the Council term of 2024-2028 with amendments as requested by Council.”  
Carried unanimously.

2025-26 Schedule of Meetings

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Kennedy

“That Council approves the Schedule Meetings for Fiscal Year 2025-26 as presented.” Carried unanimously.

Community Event Grant Request - U20 Provincial Junior Curling Championships

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council approves funding in the amount of \$1,500 for the 2025 Under 20 Provincial Junior Curling Championships.” Carried unanimously.

Community Event Grant Request - Police Curling Championships

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Weatherby

“That Council approves funding in the amount of \$500 for the 2025 Provincial Police Curling Championships.” Carried unanimously.

Grants to Non-Profit Policy Amendments

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Martell

“That Council approves the amendments to the Grants to Non-Profit Organizations Policy as presented.” Carried unanimously.

Contract Negotiations - SPCA Renewal

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Leggett

“That Council approves a new five-year contract for Animal Control Services with the SPCA as outlined in Closed Session.” Carried unanimously.

Contract Negotiations - Biosolids Disposal (Envirem)

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That staff be authorized to enter into an agreement with Envirem Organics Inc. for the hauling and disposal of biosolids for the 2025 and 2026 calendar years.” Carried unanimously.

***Nominating Committee – Report and Recommendations of meeting held on January 29, 2025***

Moved by Councillor Patton, seconded by Councillor Martell

“That Council appoints Chelsea Weatherbee as a citizen representative to the Debert Business Park Advisory Committee and Jim Baird as a citizen representative to the French River (Tatamagouche) Source Water Protection Advisory Committee.”  
Carried unanimously.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**Appointment of Assistant Development Officer**

The Director of Community Development advised that the Development Officer is a statutory position requiring appointment by Council. Tamara Marchbank was the successful candidate for the recently posted position of Assistant Development Officer and staff is requesting that she be appointed giving signing authority on documents such as development permits and subdivision plans.

Moved by Councillor Martell, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council appoints and gives signing authority to Tamara Marchbank as Assistant Development Officer.” Carried unanimously.

**Central Nova Scotia Civic Centre Society Request for Loan (RECC)**

Scott Fraser, Director of Corporate Services, advised that this is a follow-up to the information item presented at January Committee. The RECC received \$1.29M under the Federal Emergency Wage Subsidy Program during COVID-19, but the CRA later deemed it ineligible and is requiring repayment with interest. An appeal has been made on this decision and tax experts MNP have been secured to support the case. The RECC is requesting a \$1.63M loan, shared equally between the Municipality and the Town, to cover the repayment until a decision on the appeal is made. The RECC recorded the amount due as a liability and expensed it in its 2024 financial statements, which were consolidated into the Municipality's financials. A loan will replace the liability to the CRA and stop the interest from accumulating until a decision on the appeal is made. The Municipality's current cash flow position can accommodate a loan to the RECC without issues. It was noted that from an accounting standards point of view, the loan would have to be recognized as a grant.

Discussion was held on responsibilities of further accumulated interest should the Municipality approve their 50% loan contribution, pending the Town ratifying their 50% contribution. Expectation would be that the Municipality would not bear any further responsibility, however, the Municipal Solicitor indicated that as part owners of the facility, the CRA may not necessarily agree. Further discussion was held on the \$1.69M amount owing to CRA includes interest up to the end of next month.

Moved by Councillor Patton, seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That Council approves a loan in the amount of \$814,923 with interest charged at 1.5% to the RECC for repayment to the Canada Revenue Agency concerning the Federal Government’s Emergency Wage Subsidy Program.”  
Carried unanimously

**Correspondence – ACTION**

**Jill McGillicuddy, Senior Planner**

An application for a rezoning at 149-151 Pictou Road, Bible Hill, PID 20440491.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That the application for a rezoning at 149-151 Pictou Road, Bible Hill, PID 20440491 be referred to the Planning Advisory Committee.” Carried unanimously.

**Jill McGillicuddy, Senior Planner**

An application to amend an existing Development Agreement – property on Ainslie Lane, PID 20031225.

Issues were raised with respect to this development agreement including concerns from a fire perspective regarding the storage units, and that egress points all being located at the back of the building. Mayor Blair indicated that these concerns should be addressed through the Planning Advisory Committee when considering this development agreement.

Moved by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Leggett

“That the application to amend an existing Development Agreement – property on Ainslie Lane, PID 20031225 be referred to the Planning Advisory Committee.” Carried unanimously.

**Shelby Thompson, Community Engagement Facilitator, Truro Housing Outreach**

A letter received January 13, 2025, regarding sponsorship opportunities for Coldest Night of the Year.

Moved by Councillor Benoit, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council approves sponsorship in the amount of \$2,000 for 2025 Coldest Night of the Year.” Carried unanimously.

**Correspondence - INFORMATION**

**Development Officer**

A copy of Development Activity Reports for November and December 2024.

**Building Inspector**

A copy of Building Permit Statistics for November and December 2024.

Moved by Councillor Patton, seconded by Councillor Richardson

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

**The Rev’d Beverly DeVouge**

A thank you letter to Mayor and Council received January 13, 2025, from Rev’d Beverly DeVouge concerning the construction of her new home in Salmon River.

The letter from Rev'd DeVouge was received for information.

Councillor Johnson acknowledged the Development Officer, Planning and Building Inspection staff for all their efforts related to this matter. Additionally, Councillor Patton acknowledged Councillor Johnson who was instrumental in making this happen for Rev'd DeVouge.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee Plan Update**

The Director of Solid Waste advised that the Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee (RAAC) is comprised of citizen representatives and elected officials from the Municipality of Colchester, the Towns of Truro and Stewiacke, and the Villages of Bible Hill and Tatamagouche. Every three years, the Regional Accessibility Plan is regulated for review and updated. The current plan expires March 31, 2025, and the consulting firm, Left Turn Right Turn, will be doing a virtual meeting to provide an update on the Plan. The virtual meeting is scheduled for March 10, 2025, beginning at 6 pm. A link will be forwarded to members of Council for this virtual meeting.

### **Strategic Tourism Expansion Program**

The Economic Development Officer (EDO) provided a brief update on the Strategic Tourism Expansion Program (STEP), and next steps. A detailed presentation from the program consultant is scheduled for the February 4<sup>th</sup> Presentation meeting. A copy of the draft report was included in the package for this evening's meeting to allow time to peruse the report in advance of the meeting.

Brief discussion was held regarding concerns with the fees associated with levy payments. Jenn Mantin, EDO, advised that alternate options are being looked into and Council members receiving calls should feel free to put them in contact with her directly.

### **Reports from Councillors**

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

Referring to the Managed Urban Deer Hunt Project, concern was expressed on the length of time for the data collection period, and whether there was possibility to expedite the process. The CAO suggested that prior to making a motion on this matter, an update be provided to Council at the February Committee meeting.

## **CLOSED SESSION**

None.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Councillor Benoit, the meeting adjourned at 7:01 pm.

Tracey Veno  
Recording Secretary