

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 27, 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
Dep. 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
 Phil Redden, Director of Solid Waste
 Scott Fraser, Director of Corporate Services
 Paul Smith, Director of Community Development
 Dennis James, Municipal Solicitor
 Tracey Veno, Recording Secretary
 Jenn Martin, Economic Development Officer
 Jeanette Himmelman, Systems Analyst
 Craig Burgess, Recreation Manager
 Joanna Burris, Sustainability Planner

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Councillor Kennedy, seconded by Councillor Weatherby

“That the agenda be approved with the following additions:

- Add item #12b, Markey Levy Transfer of Funds, Authority for Committee to Approve; and,
- Add item #18, Legal Matter in closed session.” Carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Councillor Kennedy, seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That the minutes from October 30,2025, 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 report from the meeting held on November 13, 2025.

Community Event Grant Request – Ukrainian Society

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That Council approves funding in the amount of \$950 for the Ukrainian Society’s St. Nicholas Day event.” Carried unanimously.

Crosswalk, Plains Road

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That a decision on the request for a signalized crosswalk on Plains Road be deferred until the Active Transportation Study is complete.” Carried unanimously.

20-Tonne Excavator Purchase

Councillor Martell declared a conflict of interest and recused herself from discussion on this matter.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Weatherby

“That Council directs staff to proceed with the purchase of the 20-tonne Caterpillar excavator, at a price of \$314,612, excl. HST.” Motion carried (*Councillor Cooper, Johnson, Legget, Patton and Benoit opposed*).

Flood Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council approves the proposed changes to the County Flood Advisory Committee Terms of Reference as amended.” Carried unanimously.

Small Flood Damage Reduction Projects Policy Revisions

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council approves the proposed changes to the Small Flood Damage Reduction Projects Policy as presented.” Carried unanimously.

Debert Airport Snow Removal

Councillors Leggett and Martell declared a conflict of interest and recused themselves from discussion on this matter.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Kennedy

“That Council approves the snow removal contract for the Debert Airport for the 2025/26 winter season be awarded to Ian Sinclair Contracting.” Carried unanimously.

Debert Source Water Protection Advisory Committee – minutes of meeting held on November 18, 2025

Moved by Councillor Benoit, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That the minutes of the Debert Source Water Protection Advisory Committee meeting held on November 18, 2025, be received.” Carried unanimously.

Councillor Benoit indicated that some settling of work done by NS Public Works on road shoulders has occurred in several areas as noted in the minutes. Additionally, not all areas have been completed.

Flood Advisory Committee – minutes of meeting held on November 18, 2025

Moved by Councillor Patton, seconded by Deputy Mayor Sandeson

“That the minutes of the Flood Advisory Committee meeting held on November 18, 2025, be received.” Carried unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS

Community Solar Garden – Request for Preliminary Site Approval

The Sustainability Planner provided a detailed presentation on the Community Solar Garden Feasibility Study. Highlights of the presentation including funding received for the study, benefits of the community solar garden, findings of preliminary site assessments of six municipally owned properties, preferred location and rationale for this site, potential economic development impacts, possible partnership with First Nations communities, next steps in the process; and options for consideration.

During discussion, key points included:

- Size of solar garden and estimated electricity generated;
- Concern regarding location of preferred site being prime location for housing development (lot archaeologically cleared);
- High archaeological costs to develop land;
- Any type of ground disturbance requiring archaeological work;
- Concerns regarding suggested payback period;
- Project should have been recommendation of the Debert Business Park Advisory Committee;
- Other sites such as Kemptown may be more appropriate;
- Need for community engagement;
- Benefits of the solar garden to residents including lower power rates;
- Emphasis on reducing our carbon footprint.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That Council approve staff to continue exploring the feasibility of a community solar garden on the selected property on Dakota Road in Debert, PID 20357745.” Motion carried (*Councillors Cooper, Johnson, Patton, and Fletcher opposed*).

Bonding Requirements, Municipal Tenders

Councillor Martell declared a conflict of interest and recused herself from discussion on this matter.

The Director of Public Works provided a detailed report on bonding requirements which was prompted by a recent cancelled tender where the lowest bid was ruled invalid due to lack of bonding and the second lowest exceeded the approved budget. This highlighted a systemic barrier for Indigenous contractors, who are unable to obtain bonding because assets located on reserves cannot be used as collateral under the Indian Act. Although organizations are lobbying for solutions, no support mechanism currently exists.

The Municipality's bonding policies are intended to protect contract performance, payment to subcontractors, and bid integrity. While requirements were eased in 2024 for projects under \$250,000, the decision to further adjust bonding thresholds remains tied to risk—balancing contractor accessibility with financial and performance safeguards. Staff review found other jurisdictions take varied approaches, and recent provincial standards now allow for alternatives such as a 20% Letter of Credit (LOC) and statutory declarations in place of traditional bonds.

Various options were provided, as outlined in the report. Council may consider adopting these alternative financial security options to increase flexibility while managing risk. Staff is recommending amendments to include a bonding option of a 20% LOC, Certified Cheque or Bank Draft for projects over \$250,000 or more, as well as a Statutory Declaration be required with all contract applications for payment after the first payment. Additionally, it may choose to advocate federally for policy changes or programs that help Indigenous contractors obtain bonding so they can participate more fully in public procurement.

During discussion, clarification was provided by the Municipal Solicitor on irrevocable letter of credits as well as the purpose of the statutory declarations.

Moved by Councillor Leggett, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council amend the Municipality's Policy for Purchasing and Tendering for Goods, Services and Construction Projects to include a bonding option of a 20% Irrevocable Letter of Credit, Certified Cheque or Bank Draft for projects valued at \$250,000 or more, in place of the 50% Labour and Materials bond and 50% Performance Bond; and;

That Council amend the Municipality's Policy for Purchasing and Tendering for Goods, Services and Construction Projects to include a requirement that all contractor applications for payment following the first payment be accompanied by a Statutory Declaration. “

amending motion

Moved by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Weatherby

“Add that Council send a letter to Members of Parliament in support of a solution to the bonding challenges faced by Indigenous contractors.” Carried unanimously.

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

**Sidewalk Plow –
Authority for January
Committee to Award**

Moved by Councillor Patton, seconded by Councillor Fletcher

“That Council authorizes January Council Committee to award the tender for the replacement of the sidewalk plow for Public Works should tenders exceed the budget.” Carried unanimously.

**One-Ton Crane Truck -
– Authority for January
Committee to Award**

Moved by Councillor Weatherby, seconded by Deputy Mayor Sandeson

“That Council authorizes January Council Committee to award the tender for the replacement of the one-ton crane truck for Public Works should tenders exceed the budget.” Carried unanimously

Lower Truro Spring

The Director of Public Works provided a briefing on previous discussions and decisions relating to the Lower Truro Spring and Fill Station at the Fundy Discovery Site. Council approved \$150K in the capital budget in 2026/27 for a public fill station. Staff is requesting

that Council authorize the transfer of funds from fiscal 2026/27 to 2025/26 to enable work to begin this fiscal year.

Moved by Councillor Patton, seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That Council approves the transfer of the approved capital budget amount of \$150K for the public fill station at the Fundy Discovery Site from fiscal 2026/27 to 2025/26, with sources of funds remaining as the operating reserve.” Carried unanimously.

**External Auditing
Services – Authority for
Committee to Award**

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Kennedy

“That Council grants authority to December and January Council Committee to award the Request for Proposals for Audit Services.” Carried unanimously.

Hospital Parking

Councillor Benoit raised the issue of hospital parking, noting that she realizes this is a provincial matter. However, inadequate parking has been an ongoing issue that is getting worse. Key issues include safety concerns with a backlog of vehicles waiting for available spots, circling the parking lots repeatedly to find available parking, and use of spaces not intended for parking including roadways; late and/or missed appointments for patients; and, disruption/efficiency of operations of the Health Centre (security having to continually monitor). She is requesting that a letter be sent to the Minister of Health and Health Authority urging for solutions to the parking issues. A couple of possible suggestions were mentioned included acquiring space from the business across the road and converting some of the green space around the facility for parking.

Moved by Councillor Benoit, seconded by Deputy Mayor Sandeson

“That a letter be send to the Minister of Health and Health Authority, copied to local MLAs regarding the parking issues at the Colchester East Hants Health Authority to come up with possible solutions.” Carried unanimously.

**Marketing Levy Reserve
Transfer – Authority for
Committee to Award**

Moved by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Weatherby

“That Council grants authority to December and January Council Committee approve the transfer of marketing levy reserve funds to the Central Nova Scotia Tourism Development Society upon receipt and review of the Society’s operating budget.” Carried unanimously.

**Correspondence -
ACTION**

There was no Action Correspondence for this month.

**Correspondence -
INFORMATION**

Development Officer

A copy of Development Activity Report for October 2025.

Building Inspector

A copy of Building Permit Statistics for October 2025.

Moved by Councillor Kennedy, seconded by Councillor Martell

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

INFORMATION ITEMS

- Insurance for Not-for-Profit Organizations – Grant Applications** 55 applications were received under the Insurance for Not-for-Profit Organizations Grant Program for 2025, coming in slightly under budget at \$31,545.45. The next deadline for applications under this program is October 24, 2026.
- Reports from Council Members** Copies of reports from the Mayor and Councillors were circulated in the package and ‘On Table’ for this evening’s meeting.
- Councillor Benoit noted a couple of omissions from her report: Remembrance Day Service and Banquet at the Legion on November 11th and Community Information Centre with Nova Scotia Health on October 28th.
- Councillor Fletcher and Councillor Leggett indicated that they did not attend the Colchester East Hants Library Board meeting as noted on their reports.
- CLOSED SESSION** Moved by Councillor Benoit, seconded by Councillor Kennedy
- “That the meeting go into closed session at 7:28pm.” Carried unanimously.
- Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Cooper
- “That the meeting reconvene in open session at 8:19pm.” Carried unanimously.
- Property Matter/Negotiations – 4 Hawker Road, Letter of Intent** Moved by Councillor Weatherby, seconded by Councillor Benoit
- “That Council approve the Letter of Intent for the purchase of 4 Hawker Road, as outlined in closed session; and,
- That the Mayor and CAO be authorized to sign the Letter of Intent.” Carried unanimously.
- Property Matter/Negotiations – Lot 3 MacElmon Road, Letter of Intent** Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Benoit
- “That Council approve the Letter of Intent for the purchase of Lot 3 MacElmon Road, as outlined in closed session; and,
- That the Mayor and CAO be authorized to sign the Letter of Intent.” Carried unanimously.
- Legal Matter** Moved by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Kennedy
- “That Council grants authority to December and January Council Committee to approve the new governance model for the RECC as discussed in closed session.” Motion carried (*Councillor Patton opposed*).
- ADJOURNMENT** On a motion by Councillor Martell, the meeting adjourned at 8:21pm.

Tracey Venio
Recording Secretary