

**COUNCIL COMMITTEE**

The Regular Session of the Council Committee of the Municipality of the County of Colchester was conducted virtually, via Zoom Webinars on Thursday, January 14, beginning at 6:00 pm.

**Roll Call**

The roll was called with the following Councillors in attendance:

Mayor Christine Blair	
Councillor Eric Boutilier	District 1
Councillor Laurie Sandeson	District 2
Deputy Mayor Geoff Stewart, Chair	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 Tom Taggart	District 10
Councillor Wade Parker	District 11

**Staff Present**

Rob Simonds, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)  
 Crawford Macpherson, Director of Community Development  
 Scott Fraser, Director of Corp. Services/Acting Director of Solid Waste  
 Michelle Newell, Director of Public Works  
 Dennis James, Municipal Solicitor  
 Tracey Veno, Recording Secretary  
 Devin Trefry, Research, Policy and Community Engagement Officer  
 Dave Westlake, Emergency Management/Protective Services Coordinator  
 Craig Burgess, Recreation Manager  
 Joanna Burris, Sustainability Planner  
 Mollie MacBurnie-Haas, IT Support Technician

**Moment of Silence**

Council observed a moment of silence for Donnie Cameron, the Municipality's Wastewater Treatment Manager, who passed away on December 13, 2020.

**Approval of Agenda**

Moved by Councillor Cooper  
 Seconded by Councillor Johnson

"That the agenda be approved with the following additions:

- Item # 15b, Deer Population in Bible Hill;
- Item # 19, Negotiations in Closed Session."

Motion Carried Unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes**

Referring to the Memorial Park item on page 1958 of the minutes of December 10, 2020, Councillor Benoit clarified the funding raised was not specifically for the Memorial Park, rather for the families of the April tragedy.

Moved by Councillor Benoit  
 Seconded by Councillor Sandeson

“That the minutes of the meeting held on December 10, 2020, be approved with the above noted correction and the minutes of January 5, 2021, be approved as presented.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

**Business Arising from Minutes**

There was no business arising from the meetings held on December 10, 2020 and January 5, 2021.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**Colchester Ground Search and Rescue – Request for Funding Support**

The CAO advised that following the January 5<sup>th</sup> presentation from Colchester Ground Search and Rescue and their request for funding, Council requested that this be referred to tonight’s Council Committee meeting. Directive is being sought on how Council would like to proceed.

Council members expressed support for the organization and indicated they would be interested in receiving additional information. Key points of discussion included the building, location, and opportunities for possible co-location with Fire Department(s); increasing annual line item in the budget versus implementation of an area rate; and accountability requirements for funding received.

Moved by Mayor Blair  
Seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That the funding request from Colchester Ground Search and Rescue be referred to staff to bring back additional information and funding options for Council consideration.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

**Valley-Kemptown and District Fire Brigade Loan Guarantee Request**

Scott Fraser, Director of Corporate Services, advised that periodically requests are received from Fire Departments for loan guarantees. This is a requirement of banking institutions on loans for Fire Brigades. The Valley-Kemptown & District Fire Brigade is requesting a loan guarantee for the replacement of a pumper/tanker with a loan repayment not to exceed five years. Review of financial statements determined that the Valley-Kemptown & District Fire Brigade have planned well financially to meet their capital needs. If problems do arise, the Brigade has the ability to increase their area rate. Staff have no concerns with the loan guarantee request.

Moved by Mayor Blair  
Seconded by Councillor Johnson

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the request for a Loan Guarantee for a replacement fire apparatus unit in the amount of \$750,000 from the Valley-Kemptown and District Fire Brigade, be approved.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

**Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee**

The CAO provided a brief introduction of this item indicating that it is staff driven initiative with an opportunity to identify and build on existing policies

in terms of equity and diversity. The information was shared with and supported by the Executive Committee prior to coming before Council.

Joanna Burris, Sustainability Planner, indicated the subject of an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee came up not because the Municipality was doing anything wrong, rather as an opportunity to do better. The Black Lives Matter movement in 2020 brought awareness to systemic racism in today's context to the forefront and how institutions can either perpetuate oppression and systemic barriers or can actively help to dismantle them. Institutions such as ours have a responsibility to not contribute to systemic racism and other forms of discrimination. Ms. Burris stressed on the values of being proactive rather than reactive and indicated that the work of this Committee would help to make the organization an even better place to work, and in turn will enable us to better serve our diverse communities.

Moved by Councillor Boutilier  
Seconded by Councillor Benoit

"That Council Committee recommends to Council that the formation of an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee made up of Councillors and municipal staff, be approved."

Motion Carried Unanimously.

#### **2021-22 Schedule of Meetings**

The CAO advised that by practice, Council sets their meeting dates for the entire upcoming fiscal year. The schedule of meeting dates for fiscal year 2021-22 included in the package identifies, wherever possible, potential conflicts such as holidays, conferences, and graduations. It was noted that there is flexibility to make changes at a later date, if necessary.

Moved by Councillor Cooper  
Seconded by Councillor Gregory

"That Council Committee recommends to Council that the Schedule of Meetings for Fiscal 2021-22, including budget meeting dates, be approved as presented."

Motion Carried Unanimously.

#### **Grant Presentations Meeting Dates**

Craig Burgess, Recreation Manager, presented dates for Council to receive presentations from organizations requesting funding under the Grants to Non-Profit Organizations Program. Mr. Burgess noted that due to Covid, the presentations would be virtual this year. A workstation in the building can be made available for presenters not able to join virtually from external locations.

Moved by Councillor Taggart  
Seconded Councillor Benoit

"That Council Committee recommends to Council that March 4 and 8, 2021, be set for the 2021-22 Grant Presentations."

Motion Carried Unanimously.

**Recreation Facilities – Funding**

Mr. Burgess provided Council with an update on arena facilities in the County and the challenges that they have faced and continue to face, both operationally and financially, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Recreation staff continue to meet with the external facilities on a regular basis with updates and information, including financials, being provided. Some facilities have taken advantage of programs and subsidies being offered by other levels of government. It is expected that financial support will be required by these facilities at some point before the remainder of the season. Staff are recommending that an Emergency Covid Fund be established with an application process and that any facilities requiring funding complete the application and provide updated financial prior to receiving any support.

Discussion was held on the Safe Restart funding as well as the additional funding the Municipality budgeted for due to Covid-19. Regarding the Safe Restart funding, the CAO and Director of Corporate Services advised that information received on what these funds can be used for was very vague. A meeting is taking place later this month to review this and staff will report back to Council once this meeting has occurred. Council also briefly discussed support for other recreation facilities in the County, not just arenas. Staff were instructed to ensure facilities are exhausting every opportunity for funding from other sources and provide assistance with this as required.

An inquiry was made on whether there have been consultations with the privately owned rink in District 5. Mr. Burgess indicated that representatives have been in attendance at the meetings. Dennis James, Municipal Solicitor, advised that providing funding to private entities is restricted, however, support can be provided by other means such as buying block services.

Moved by Councillor Cooper

Seconded by Mayor Blair

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that an Emergency Covid Fund be established for recreation facilities.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

**Debert Memorial Park**

Mr. Burgess provided Council with a report on a previous directive of Council to explore the possibility of a memorial park in Debert for the two victims in Debert of April’s mass shooting. Included in the report was information on what the victim’s families would like the park to be; a description and location of the proposed site; intended use of surrounding lands; design planning; potential external funding sources; and, ownership of the park and maintenance responsibilities. Staff recommend that should Council wish to support a memorial park, that it retain ownership and provide upfront design support.

A number of points were discussed during debate including:

- Other parks in the Debert area;
- Pros and cons of having a memorial park and playground in the middle of an industrial park;
- Future growth in the industrial park and use of lands;
- Ongoing maintenance responsibilities and costs;
- Community groups willing to provide assistance with the park;
- Liability issues/responsibilities; and,

- Concerns of flooding.

Mr. James advised that if the Municipality retains ownership, responsibilities remain with the Municipality.

Moved by Councillor Benoit  
Seconded by Mayor Blair

“That Council Committee recommends that Council support the creation and design of the memorial park and playground with assistance from staff.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

#### **Portapique Community Build-Up + Project**

*Mayor Blair and Councillor Sandeson declared a conflict of interest and recused themselves from discussion on this matter.*

Devin Trefry, Research, Policy and Community Engagement Officer, provided a summary of the project including establishment of a Committee for the development and design of the project; overall plans; estimated costs; funding contributions/sources to date; and the \$70,000 request of the Municipality. Mr. Trefry advised that the representatives of the Rotary Club have indicated that they would welcome the Municipality’s involvement and expertise in the project going forward. Staff recommend that should Council wish to support the request, that consideration be given to having a contract in place similar to contracts for funding contribution for the Colchester Food Bank and Canadian Mental Health Association.

Discussion was held regarding contributions from other foundations such as the NS Remembers Legacy and the Red Cross; and, potential source of funds for the Municipality’s contribution.

Moved by Councillor Taggart  
Seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that funding in the amount of \$70,000 be approved for the Portapique Community Build-Up + Project, with source of funds being \$40,000 from the Park Grant Funding and the remainder from the Special Operating Reserve; and,

That funding be contingent upon a contract as approved by the Municipal Solicitor.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

#### **Debert Water Tower Demolition – Award of Tender**

Ms. Newell, Director of Public Works, provided a summary of this item indicating that it deals with awarding the tender for the demolition of the Debert Water Tower. Included was a recap of the multi-year project, the tender process, bids received, project costs and staff recommendations. Ms. Newell noted that at their November Council meeting, authority was granted to January Committee to award this tender.

Moved by Councillor Taggart  
Seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council Committee authorizes staff to award the tender for the Debert Water Tower Demolition to Dexter Construction for a total contract amount of \$149,780, excluding HST; and,

That an internal contingency of \$10,000 be approved, to be spent only on authority of the Director of Public Works.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

### **Debert Business Park Land Sales Policy**

Mr. Trefry provided a brief introduction of this Policy, indicating that if approved, it would basically grant authority to Council Committee to approve Debert land sales transactions.

Concern was expressed with not having two opportunities via the normal process to consider and approve such transactions. The CAO indicated that the reason for implementing this Policy is to have the ability to approve transactions in a timely fashion. It would not preclude Council from requesting additional information prior to approval, rather it provides Council with a level of flexibility that is currently not in place. Dennis James, Municipal Solicitor, further clarified that essentially Council Committee could exercise its authority in the same way as Council.

Moved by Councillor Benoit  
Seconded by Councillor Sandeson

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the Debert Business Park Land Sales Policy be approved, as presented.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

### **Gorman Road Street Lights**

Ms. Newell advised that Council previously received a request for streetlights on Gorman Road in North River and presented Council with information relative to this request, including requirements and petition processes under the County’s Local Improvement By-law; cost for 13 streetlights along Gorman Road; and, who would be responsible for the costs. Due to Covid, staff are requesting that the public meeting as part of the petition process be replaced with a mailout to each resident affected, with their estimated annual costs for the streetlight being included in the mailout. The residents would be required to return the petition indicating their decision.

Councillor Patton clarified that the request was only for three streetlights on Gorman Road at three key areas: one at the end of the road at the community mailboxes; one at the end where West North River Road meets Gorman Road; and, one near the centre. This is a rural area and residents do not want streetlights along the entire road. Ms. Newell indicated that should Council wish to proceed, this would substantially reduce the costs to the residents and numbers would be adjusted accordingly.

An inquiry was made regarding lighting in areas of community mailboxes and whether this was a responsibility of Canada Post. Ms. Newell advised that she would look into this and get back to Council.

Moved by Councillor Patton  
 Seconded by Councillor Gregory

“That Council Committee recommends to Council to proceed with a mailout petition for three proposed streetlights on Gorman Road; and,

That Council waives the Open House requirement of the Local Improvement By-law due to Covid-19 and the Public Health orders.”

*Due to another commitment, Councillor MacKenzie left the meeting during discussion on this matter and was not in attendance for the vote.*

Motion Carried Unanimously.

### **Deer Population**

Councillor Parker advised that during election campaigning, he heard from a number of constituents that they would like to see the issue of deer population in Bible Hill addressed. The Town of Truro held a vote on the issue with positive results and will be taking measures to address this in the near future. Councillor Parker would like to see Colchester do the same for Bible Hill. Concern was expressed regarding the timing of a cull and that it be done at a time other than during birth season. This is a complex situation which will also involve the Village of Bible Hill and could require a plebiscite.

Moved by Councillor Parker  
 Seconded by Councillor Johnson

“That staff work with the Village of Bible Hill and investigate a cull to remedy the deer population in Bible Hill.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

### **INFORMATION ITEMS**

#### **Debert Aviation Centre – Progress Report**

Crawford Macpherson, Director of Community Development, provided a brief overview of his progress report on the Debert Aviation Centre. Included in the report was the redevelopment plan, progress to date, budget implications, balance of work to be completed in the current fiscal year and plans for the next budget year. During discussion, the possibility of 2<sup>nd</sup> storey office space was mentioned. Mr. Macpherson advised that additional information would be brought forward at a later date, to gage Council interest on this.

#### **Director’s Report**

A report from the Acting Director of Solid Waste was circulated in the package for tonight’s meeting.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

Moved by Councillor Gregory  
 Seconded by Councillor Patton

“That the meeting go into closed session at 8:44 pm.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Moved by Councillor Gregory  
 Seconded by Councillor Patton

“That the meeting reconvene in open session at 9:22 pm.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

**Personnel**

Moved by Councillor Johnson  
Seconded by Councillor Gregory

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that the two permanent, seasonal recreation maintenance positions - Horticulture Technician and Park Maintenance Worker, become permanent, full-time positions.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

**Negotiations**

Moved by Councillor Taggart  
Seconded by Councillor Parker

“That Council Committee recommends to Council that a letter be written to the Minister of Justice requesting staffing information as discussed in Closed Session.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Councillor Parker requested an update on the status of scheduling a Police Advisory Board meeting. The CAO advised that he would follow up with staff on the status of this and report back accordingly.

Referring to discussions earlier this evening on lighting at community mailboxes, Councillor Cooper advised that he has received communications from the Director of Public Works confirming that Canada Post is not responsible for providing lights at community mailboxes.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Councillor Gregory  
Seconded by Councillor Patton

“That the meeting adjourn at 9:27 pm.”

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Tracey Veno  
Recording Secretary