



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MR# 2018022

DATE: 20 March 2018

RE: Briefs from Amherst's town council's March 19 committee of the whole meeting

AMHERST, Nova Scotia – A new flag protocol policy is being suggested for the Town of Amherst.

Staff, at council's March 19 committee of the whole session, recommended sending a new flag protocol policy to council's March 26 meeting for approval.

The new policy outlines how flags will be flown when displayed at town events or on flag poles owned by the town.

As an example, it says when a Canadian flag is displayed on a speaker's platform, it should be placed on a flag pole to the left from the point of view of the audience. It also notes that when flying with two other flags, the Canadian flag shall be displayed in the centre.

The policy also indicates when flags will be flown at half-mast and for how long. It also includes a list of those for whom the flag will be flown at half-mast. It further notes the flag will be flown at half-mast yearly on April 28 in recognition of the Day of Mourning for Persons Killed or Injured in the Workplace, Nov. 11 for Remembrance Day and Dec. 6 for the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

Staff noted the policy is in line with established flag etiquette as defined by the Government of Canada.

The committee of the whole approved sending the proposed flag protocol to its March 26 meeting for approval.

Invitations issued

The committee of the whole directed staff to issue invitations to representatives from the Nova Scotia Community College's Make Way campaign and the Fibre Arts Festival committee to make presentations to future meetings of Amherst town council.



Rhindress seeks amendment to the town's Office of the Deputy Mayor Policy

Coun. Terry Rhindress moved a motion that directed staff to draft an amendment to the town's Deputy Mayor Policy that would limit the term of the deputy mayor to no more than two consecutive one-year terms.

He would like to see a paragraph added to the policy that read: "Unless there are no other nominees for the office of deputy mayor at the time of the call for nominations, a member may not be nominated to serve a third consecutive one-year term as deputy mayor."

The committee of the whole rejected Coun. Rhindress's suggestion because the majority felt it would be too restrictive to change the policy.

Amendments to inter-municipal emergency services agreement recommended

Town staff recommended the committee of the whole send amendments to the inter-municipal emergency services agreement the town has with other municipalities in Cumberland County to council's March 26 meeting.

Staff noted the agreement to provide mutual aid and emergency management services was established in 2013 when the towns of Springhill and Parrsboro existed.

Those two towns are now part of Cumberland County, resulting in the need an amendment that establishes a new governance model that would see Cumberland County with three voting members, Amherst two and Oxford one.

Another amendment amends the costs sharing formula as it relates to the Regional Emergency Management Organization, which would see Cumberland County increase its share of operational costs due to the fact Springhill and Parrsboro are now part of the county.

The amendments are recommended by the Regional Emergency Management Organization Advisory Committee and would go into effect on June 1 if they are approved by Amherst, Oxford and Cumberland County councils.

The amendments have no financial implications for the Town of Amherst.

The committee of the whole approved sending the amendments to council's March 26 meeting for approval.

Jones wants council's code of conduct for elected officials to be reviewed

A review of town council's code of conduct for elected officials is being sought by Coun. Darrell Jones.



He suggested to the committee of the whole that an amendment to the policy, which already calls on councillors to “uphold the law at all times,” would call on members to: (a) uphold the letter and spirit of the code of conduct set out in this police and discharge their duties in a manner that will inspire public confidence in the abilities and integrity of council and (b) refrain from engaging in professional or personal conduct that could discredit or compromise the integrity of council.

The committee of the whole decided not to take any action on Counc. Jones’ suggestion at this time as the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities will be leading a forum on this topic in April.

Deer warning sign on Lord Amherst Drive not warranted

Police Chief Ian Naylor, the town’s traffic authority, informed council that he would not recommend the installation of a deer warning sign on Lord Amherst Drive.

Naylor said his decision was reached after he consulted with the provincial Transportation and Natural Resources departments and examining the motor vehicle collisions on Lord Amherst Drive that showed deer were not involved in any collision on the road.

Work continues on update of North Tyndal Wellfield protection plan

Staff informed the committee of the whole that a draft update of the North Tyndal Wellfield source water protection plan has been presented to the North Tyndal Wellfield Advisory committee, which is recommending the draft be sent to Amherst and Cumberland County councils for approval.

However, before that is done, the plan is to hold a public information session in order to obtain the public’s input into the document. No date has been set for the information session, but it is anticipated the updated plan will be presented to the two councils in April.

Town approaches Tesla

Staff informed the committee of the whole that they have followed council’s instruction and contacted Tesla regarding the installation of a Tesla rapid charging station in Amherst.

A reply from Tesla indicated the company has received the town’s inquiry and if it meets Tesla’s hosting requirements, the company will be in touch with more information.

Acadian monument update

Staff reported during the committee of the whole that they have contacted the Acadian Federation of Nova Scotia, as directed by council, seeking further input and information with respect to the installation of an Acadian monument in the town.



The federation, however, indicated the town should contact Parks Canada because the town's initiative, which they support, does not fall within their mandate. Staff indicated they have contacted Parks Canada and are hoping the federal agency will be able to offer guidance.

Department reports

Corporate Services staff reported the 2018-19 budget process is ongoing. They also reported insurance services were awarded to Archway Insurance following a request for proposals, and efforts are underway to collect overdue water-sewer bills.

The Operations Department reported the town faced only two snow events during February that required plowing of streets and sidewalks. During that month, they used 182 tonnes of salt, spent 72 hours sanding sidewalks and spent 148 hours patching potholes, using 20 tonnes of recycled hotmix asphalt.

The Amherst Police Department reported that Deputy-chief Dwayne Pike received training to become a certified terrorism awareness facility and Pike helped deliver a three-day counter terrorism workshop in Halifax.

The department also reported that 10 officers received training on understanding the effects trauma has on survivors of sexual assault and proper investigative techniques. In addition, the department made a presentation on frauds and scams to residents of Centennial Villa.

The Recreation Department reported this year's winter carnival events were well attended, as were ringette and baseball training sessions. It also reported a community development grant enabled the town to purchase 24 skating helmets that were added to the department's lending program.

The Fire Department reported that in the month of February firefighters responded to six events within town boundaries, including two motor vehicle accidents and one structure fire, and three events in Cumberland County's District 2, including one motor vehicle accident.

The Amherst Fire Fighters Association reported the 17th annual burn treatment curling "funspiel" was a success, attracting 24 teams and raising funds for the Nova Scotia Burn Treatment Society. The funds will be presented to the society in April.

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