



## MEDIA RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MR# 2019020**

**DATE: 27 March 2019**

**RE: Capital budget short list approved**

**AMHERST, Nova Scotia** – Council approved a short list of capital projects valued at just over \$1.1 million and passed a motion to include the projects in the 2019-20 capital budget.

Town staff had recommended approving the projects now instead of waiting until the budget process was completed in order to ensure the town receives the best possible price and decrease the carryover of projects to the next fiscal year.

The projects include purchasing a new backhoe for the water department at a cost of \$150,000, crosswalk lights for West Victoria St. (\$10,000), and railway crossing improvements on Anson-Industrial Park (\$54,785).

The projects also include expanding the size of the sidewalk on Robert Angus Drive between Church Street and the Dairy Queen (\$275,000) as part of the Active Transportation Plan and upgrades to Laplanche lift station (\$125,000).

In addition, the projects include a new pumper for the fire department (\$535,000) and an upgrade to the police radio system (\$125,000).

### **Accessibility ramp for historic downtown courthouse approved**

Amherst town council approved a provincial Justice Department request to build an accessibility ramp to the exterior of the Victoria Street courthouse when it met on March 25.

Council's approval was needed because the courthouse is a designated municipal heritage property.

The approval was recommended by the town's Public Advisory Committee because the proposed ramp, to be built on the north side of the building, will provide barrier-free access to



the courthouse and ensures its continued use.

The Justice Department also plans on installing an elevator in the building.

### **Solid waste management uniform charge increased**

The solid waste management uniform charge was set by council at \$185 for the 2019-20 fiscal year, an increase of \$10 over the previous year.

The hike is attributed to inflation and an increase in the amount of solid waste collected during the past year, which resulted in the town paying increased tipping fees.

### **Modifications to expense policy**

Council approved modifications to the town's expense policy, including the elimination of a \$30 claim for incidentals and language that makes it clear the policy applies to members of the town's committees and commissions.

In addition, the modifications improved the language on the use of credit cards in order to clearly indicate how the cards can be used and adjusted language to reflect changes in the way council remuneration is taxed by the federal government.

The modifications, which comply with provincial legislation and regulations, will not have any direct or immediate budget implications, but will result in the strengthening of internal controls on expenses.

### **Appointments to the Amherst Board of Police Commissioners**

The appointment of Steve Wells and Roy Pettigrew to the Amherst Board of Police Commissioners was approved by council. Both men will serve one-year terms, which will end on March 31, 2020. Council also reappointed Sandy Fairbanks to a two-year term, which ends on March 31, 2021.

### **Appointment to the Planning Advisory Committee**

Council approved the reappointment of Gordon Goodwin to the Planning Advisory. Goodwin will serve a three-year term, which ends on March 31, 2022.

### **Uncollectible water accounts written off**

Council authorized staff to write off uncollectable water accounts totalling \$862.33. In recommending the writeoffs, staff noted all reasonable collection efforts were exhausted.



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