



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MR# 2019073

DATE: 24 October 2019

RE: Committee of the Whole recommends revised Budget Management Policy be approved by Amherst town council

AMHERST, Nova Scotia – A revised Budget Management Policy will go before Amherst town council for approval on Oct. 28, 2019, following a unanimous decision made by the town's committee of the whole during a meeting on Oct. 21.

The revisions, which were recommended by staff, will allow for earlier approval by council of the capital and operating budgets and provide an estimated timeline for approvals.

Staff indicated that earlier approval of the budgets may result in savings for the town and the earlier procurement of projects.

Community Support Grants Policy changes recommended

The committee approved a staff recommendation to send revisions to the town's Community Support Grants Policy to the Oct. 28, 2019, council session for approval.

The revisions were requested by council during last year's budget meetings and the June committee of the whole session.

The revisions include the following changes: A list of excluded items or organizations, eligible organizations, the inclusion of the Nova Scotia Community College grant and a grant for Maggie's Place in the special consideration grants section of the policy, a list for limitations for grants, new categories of grants with limits, clarity and timeline adjustments for the grant process and requirements for grant applications based on dollar value.

In addition, the revised policy gives the CAO the authority to approve applications of \$500 or less throughout the year and provides for a staggered payment process that will ensure reports



from the applicants are received.

The revised policy also includes a recommendation to have just one 'A Fresh Start event each year and an adjustment that ensures successful applicants are only eligible to receive funding every two years.

Staff, in presenting the revised policy, indicated the changes are meant to ensure funding from Community Support Grants is shared among a variety of organization and that council is encouraging the creation of new programs that are self-sustaining.

Committee provided with information

The committee was informed the mid-term review of the Cumberland Business Connector funding agreement is underway as per the conditions of the agreement.

The committee was also provided an update on the future implications for the Town of Amherst as a result of the provincial Accessibility Act. The town, in all likelihood, will have to be compliant with the act by March 31, 2021.

A staff report indicated it would cost the town just over \$1.6 million to install a rubberized, outdoor, walking track at one of the town's parks. At this point there is no plans to install such a track.

December council date changed

The committee approved a staff recommendation to hold the regular December council session – which normally would have been held on Dec. 23 – on Dec. 16, immediately following the Dec. committee of the whole meeting, due to the Christmas holidays.

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