



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MR# 2026008

DATE: April 28, 2026

RE: Amherst Town Council Highlights – April 27, 2026

AMHERST, Nova Scotia – Amherst Town Council held its regular April meeting on Monday night to address items including:

Community Support Grants

Council approved the following grants, totalling more than \$150,000: \$15,000 to Amherst Little League; \$5,000 to Lillian Allbon Animal Shelter; \$5,000 the 50+ Club; \$7,000 to Esther Fest (Great Amherst Cultural Society); \$2,500 to Fibre Arts Festival; \$1,000 to Relay for Life; \$1,500 to Amherst Minor Basketball Association; \$5,000 to All Saints Parish Truth and Reconciliation (contingent on the group receiving other funding); \$3,770 to Fundy Winds Marsh; \$10,000 to After the School Bell Program; \$15,000 to Amherst Food Assistance Network; \$2,000 to Amherst Pre-School Association; \$6,000 to Cumberland African Nova Scotian Association; \$10,000 to Cumberland County Transition House Association; \$5,000 to Society of St. Vincent de Paul; \$4,000 to Autism Nova Scotia; \$15,000 to NSCC; \$750 to Cumberland Hospice and Palliative Care Society; \$5,000 to the Cumberland County Minor Baseball Association; \$10,000 to the Bordertown Biker Bash; \$1,500 to the Bridge Adult Service Centre; and, \$20,000 to the Amherst Downtown Business Association (contingent on signing of a Memorandum of Understanding).

Capital Budget Carry Overs

There were a number of capital projects in the 2025/26 capital budget which were not completed within the past fiscal year. In order to continue these projects, Council amended the current capital budget to “carry over” these projects into the current fiscal year. These projects total \$5,064,800.

2025/26 Capital Budget Amendment – Laplanche Pumping Station

The remote monitoring system for the Laplanche River Pumping Station failed on March 11, 2026, which necessitated emergency replacement. Council approved an amendment to the 2025/26 general capital budget to include \$18,000 covering the replacement of the display and programmable logic controller for the Laplanche River pumping station SCADA system, to be funded from the Operating Reserve – Sewer Reserve.

2026/27 Capital Budget Amendment – Town Hall Generator Replacement

After mechanical and operational issues with the 12-year-old Town Hall backup generator over the past year, a recommendation was made to have it replaced. Council approved an amendment to the 2026/27 general capital budget to include \$50,000 from the Capital Reserve – Unrestricted, for the costs of replacing this emergency backup generator.

2026/27 Capital Budget Amendment – Victoria Street Paving

The Town received approval through the Province of Nova Scotia's cost-shared program for Municipal Trunks and Routes Paving, to cold mill and pave Victoria Street from Station Street to





Acadia Street, with the Province covering 50% of eligible costs. Council approved an amendment to the 2026/27 general capital budget in the amount of \$270,000 for this project – to be funded with \$135,000 from the Municipal Trunks and Routes Paving Program, \$100,000 from the Canada Community Building Fund (formerly the Gas Tax), and \$35,000 from the Capital Reserve Unrestricted.

Asphalt Patching Tender

The recently approved operating budget for 2026/27 includes \$535,000 for contracted asphalt patching services. A tender for the asphalt patching program was issued, and two bids were received (excluding applicable taxes): \$611,611.00 from Miller Group; and \$519,600.00 from Dexter Construction. Council awarded the Asphalt Patching Tender to the lowest compliant bidder – Dexter Construction – at their unit price (based on estimated quantities) plus HST.

Cumberland Regional Emergency Management Organization Emergency Plan

Following a review conducted by the Cumberland Regional Emergency Management Organization, it was determined that an updated emergency management plan was required to effectively support all municipal units that are parties to the Inter-Municipal Emergency Services Agreement (Amherst, Oxford and Cumberland).

This new Emergency Management Plan – now approved by Council – will modernize and update the existing operational framework to ensure it aligns with current risks, responsibilities, and operational requirements.

Bylaw to Amend the Deed Transfer Tax

Council gave second reading of the Bylaw to Amend the Deed Transfer Tax Bylaw, B-2 to increase the rate from 1.25% to 1.5% effective July 1, 2026. The adoption of this 0.25% increase will generate approximately \$85,000 annually. Most other municipal units in Nova Scotia – including Oxford, Cumberland, Colchester and Truro – charge a deed transfer tax of 1.5%.

Property Assessed Clean Energy Program

The Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program finances owner-occupied, home energy retrofits and renewable energy adoption through the property tax bill at a fixed interest rate for up to ten years. The PACE program is administered for the Town by the Clean Foundation. Due to lack of uptake in the program and a March 31, 2026 service agreement expiry with the Clean Foundation, Council gave first reading to a Bylaw to Repeal the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Program Bylaw B-8, and further directed staff to advise the Clean Foundation that the Town of Amherst is no longer participating in the program.

LA Animal Shelter Memorandum of Understanding and Bylaw to Amend the Companion Animal Bylaw

Updates approved by Council to the 15-year-old LA Animal Shelter MOU include changing annual compensation from \$10,000 to \$25,000, and deletion of any reference to the sale or issuance of dog licenses or permits.

Per changes to the above-mentioned MOU, the Town of Amherst Companion Animal Bylaw was also be amended to delete references including the sale or issuance of dog licenses or



permits. Other changes include updates related to additional control and restraint over animals, and changes regarding the disposal of animal feces, to include the option of using public receptacles. The optional licensing and registration of cats was also removed.

Soccer/Track and Field Complex Fundraising Committee Terms of Reference

In order to achieve Council's strategic priority of constructing a Soccer/Track and Field complex with an anticipated total cost of \$8,100,000, \$1,000,000 must be raised through local fundraising. To achieve this, a Soccer/Track and Field Complex Fundraising Committee Terms of Reference was approved by Council. An additional \$4,000,000 will be pursued through government grants and foundation donations, with the Town committing \$3,100,000.

J.D. Irving Land Trade

Council approved funding of \$32,000 in replanting costs and approximately \$3,000 in legal fees to complete the trade of seven parcels of Town owned lands in the Beecham Road area for a portion of JD Irving land in the North Tyndal Wellfield – acquired with funding through the Federal Government's Canada Nature Fund. Environment and Climate Change Canada deemed the replanting costs ineligible. As the Nature Fund program ended on April 1, the Town is responsible for the replanting and legal costs.

Non-Union Salary Review

The Town conducts a full market analysis of non-union salaries every three years to ensure that compensation remains competitive, equitable, and fiscally responsible, while supporting recruitment and retention objectives. The recently completed review benchmarked Amherst's non-union positions against comparable municipalities and relevant labour market data. As a result of this review, Council approved the recommended revisions to non-union salary ranges which better align with current market conditions.

CAO Annual Performance Review

As per the current contract with the Town CAO, this year a review of comparator salaries was undertaken and Council approved an amendment to the CAO's employment contract to ensure competitive market alignment.

[Find the full April 27, 2026 agenda package here.](#)

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Direct enquiries to:

Sean Payne
Marketing & Communications Officer
902-694-6265
spayne@amherst.ca

