



**Town of Amherst  
Committee of the Whole**

Date: **Monday, April 20, 2020**  
Time: **1:00 pm**  
Location: **Council Chambers, Town Hall**

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<b>1. Call to Order</b>	
<b>1.1 Approval of Agenda</b>	
<b>2. Council Direction Requests</b>	
<b>2.1 Capital Paving</b>	1 - 3
<b>3. Monthly Reports</b>	
<b>3.1 Corporate Services</b>	4 - 6
<b>3.2 Operations</b>	7 - 8
<b>3.3 Police Services</b>	9 - 11
<b>3.4 Community Well Being</b>	12 - 13
<b>3.5 Fire Services</b>	14 - 14
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<b>4. Adjournment</b>	

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**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

**CDR# 2020031**

**Date: April 20, 2020**

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**TO:** Mayor Kogon and Members of Council

**SUBMITTED BY:** Jason MacDonald, Deputy CAO

**DATE:** April 20, 2020

**SUBJECT:** **2020 Capital Paving Tender**

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**ORIGIN:** 2020/21 Capital Budget

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY:** 31700-001 Procurement Policy

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the award of the 2020 Capital Paving Tender (RFT-20-1) to the lowest compliant bidder, Costin Paving and Contracting, at their unit prices based on our estimated quantities in the total amount of \$ \$579,280 plus HST be forwarded to the April 20, 2020 Special Council meeting for approval.

**BACKGROUND:** A tender for the 2020 capital paving program was issued with a closing date of February 27. The following two bids were received (non refundable taxes extra):

- Cumberland Paving \$ 595,770
- **Costin Paving and Contracting \$ 579,280**

**DISCUSSION:** The 2020 capital paving program was approved by Council in the Capital Budget on January 27 2020. Award of the tender now will allow for completion of the work prior to September 1, 2020.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:** The approved 2020-21 capital paving budget was \$688,000 including non- recoverable taxes. The cost of the proposed work including non-refundable taxes is \$604,108 with funding approved in the 2020-21 Capital Budget. As the tender is a unit price contract based on estimated quantities the final cost will be determined by the actual quantities of material used.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** The Town issued a tender as per our Procurement Policy. A media release will be issued pending Council approval. Hand delivered written notices will be delivered to all affected residents and businesses prior to the start of projects.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS:** There are no direct environmental implications to the award of this contract. The repaving of streets with asphalt will generate greenhouse gas emissions, however there is little alternative if our street infrastructure is to be maintained.



The material that will be removed through the pulverization process will be recycled for either road bed material or used in future work such as trails.

**SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPLICATIONS:** There are no social justice implications to the award of this contract.

**ALTERNATIVES:** As both bidders were compliant with the tendering process Council has no alternative to awarding the contract to the low bidder, unless the project were to be cancelled altogether.

**ATTACHMENTS:** Capital Paving memo

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Report prepared by: Jason MacDonald, Deputy CAO  
Report and Financial approved by:

# MEMORANDUM

**To:** Mayor Kogon and Members of Amherst Town Council  
**From:** Jason MacDonald, Deputy CAO  
**Date:** March 30, 2020  
**Subject:** **Capital Paving Tender**

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At the March 16, 2020 Committee of the Whole meeting the following motion was passed:

**That the award of the 2020 Capital Paving Tender (RFT-20-1) to the lowest compliant bidder, Costin Paving and Contracting, at their unit prices based on our estimated quantities in the total amount of \$ \$579,280 plus HST, be forwarded to the March 23, 2020 meeting of Amherst Town Council.**

**Further to the motion, due to the recent significant drop in fuel prices, Council directed the Deputy CAO to contact Costin Paving and Contracting to discuss their unit prices to reflect this drop before award of the tender at their regular meeting on March 23.**

Staff have contacted the low bidder and they have indicated that they are not in a position to drop their bid price due to the recent drop in fuel prices. Their response is below:

Hi Jason,

Thanks for the phone call today.

As a response to the questions proposed by council please consider the following:

- We understand the delay in holding a council meeting to discuss award. Assuming council will approve of Costin Paving's low bid, we would continue to honour that price past the typical time frame.
- The price of fuel at the pumps has decreased significantly, however the price of liquid asphalt is not directly tied to that price for multiple reasons. One of these reasons being the amount of complex processes required to produce the refined bitumen.
- Another thing to consider is that General Liquids (Our division of Municipal Group that produces said products) has secured the majority of their annual supply by now and is in holding tanks awaiting the demand of our typical supply chain.
- As we are all aware, the Covid-19 outbreak and associated control measures have made it very difficult for anyone to predict the volume of construction work available for private companies to complete this calendar year. The lower amount of liquid asphalt produced by the industry could have a negative effect on the price, seeing the fixed costs associated with production would still need to be accounted for in lower production rates.

Please let me know if this email covers all the points made by council and if there are any other questions that may arise.

Sincerely,

Matthew Vance  
Operations Manager  
Costin Paving

# Monthly Report

## Corporate Services

April 2020

**CORPORATE SERVICES** – Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, there were many adjustments required by staff around work arrangements. All staff moved to working from home arrangements before the end of March. Work continues with the regular financial services requirements as well as dealing with COVID 19 related issues. Although there are some challenges with IT and connectivity occasionally, staff continue to provide support services and to work on policy revisions, increasing efficiency projects (moving to electronic payments for example) and related projects whenever possible.

**FINANCIAL** – Finance staff worked hard in the month of March to achieve a balanced draft operating budget for the general rate and community support area rate. The sewer and solid waste budgets were approved by Council in February.

With the Town's year end being March 31, staff have begun some of the initial year end tasks.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, finance staff in the Corporate Services department have been working from home since March 20. Staff can perform almost all of the tasks that they did in the office at home. Staff have been busy doing various financial calculations on the impact of the pandemic. Staff occasionally attend Town Hall for supplies, printing or to process cheques but are continuing social distancing practices should anyone else be there. Staff attempt to stagger visits whenever possible.

Monthly reporting for the Cumberland Business Connector continues.

**2020 ASSESSMENT APPEALS** – As of April 1, 2020, there were 76 accounts who have appealed their assessment, 15 of these are complete and 6 have withdrawn.

	# of Accounts Appealing	Total Assessment Value Being Appealed	Appeal Completed as of Apr 1/20	Pending as of Apr 1/20	Withdrawn as of Apr 1/20	Outstanding Appeals as of Apr 1/20	Appeals Successful as of Apr 1/20	Loss of Assessment Value	Amount of Revenue Reduction	Nova Scotia Assessment Appeal Tribunal Status
Residential/Resource	51	11,270,600	9	0	2	40	6	\$ 168,500	\$ 2,789	0
Commercial	25	27,012,600	6	0	4	15	6	\$ 142,500	\$ 6,348	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>\$38,283,200</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>\$ 311,000</b>	<b>\$ 9,137</b>	<b>0</b>

**2020 SPRING TAX SALE** – There will not be a spring tax sale.

**2020/21 INTERIM PROPERTY TAX BILLS** – The interim property tax bills are calculated as 50% of the total property tax bill for 2019/20. It is anticipated that the interim property tax bills will be sent out by the end of April.

**WATER / SEWER BILLING** – The fourth quarter water / sewer reads began in early April. It is anticipated that the bills will be sent out later in April.

**CUSTOMER SERVICE TRACKING – E11** – There was a total of 64 opened cases in March and 70 cases closed. The categories with the most opened/closed cases opened in March related to potholes / damaged asphalt and compost bin replacement/repairs.

**HUMAN RESOURCES** – Payroll has been successfully processed remotely since the week of March 16. Staff are investigating possible process improvements during the pandemic, which includes exploring electronic access to paystubs.

All summer student competitions have been cancelled and the Active Living Coordinator (term) position has been put on hold during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**PROCUREMENT** – This staff began working from home on March 17 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and is able to perform all functions from home. Staff continued with preparing procurement documents for the last of the capital procurement projects for 2019-2020. The remaining 2019-2020 capital are in progress. The first four capital procurements for 2020-21 were approved early in January, with the remaining capital budget having been approved at the end of January. Procurement is reviewing scopes and working with the departments to have procurements released.

	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
<b>Capital</b>													
Anticipated Procurement from Capital Budget: 26													
Scopes for capital received in the month	4	5	7	4	1	2	3	1	2	2	2	5	0
<b>All procurement:</b>													
Total new scopes of work received in month	8	12	12	16	9	5	4	7	6	8	6	8	11
Released to the public in the month	4	10	15	17	9	7	3	9	6	7	4	5	10
Closed during the month	8	9	12	14	10	7	8	10	7	7	3	5	10
Awarded by par/council during the month	6	6	7	21	4	5	10	15	9	6	1	6	9
Open at the end of month (released month a, closed month b)	5	2	5	4	4	6	1	2	4	5	4	5	1

**INFORMATION SERVICES (IS)** – Enabled Skype for Business and VPN on many Town devices so that employees could work from home during COVID-19. Due to all the installations and issues with people working from home, there were a large number of cases this month.

Server upgrades are complete. Watchguard video for APD have been purchased and installation is underway.

The TownSuite hosting and mobile app (resulting in increased efficiencies for the fire and building inspectors) will be active in the coming months.

Prepared for the implementation of Access E11 Webforms for customer requests to enable this to move to the website for public input.

#### IS Cases/Incidents Stats

	Mar 2019	Apr 2019	May 2019	Jun 2019	Jul 2019	Aug 2019	Sep 2019	Oct 2019	Nov 2019	Dec 2019	Jan 2020	Feb 2020	Mar 2020
Opened	21	54	46	50	26	33	28	71	27	46	38	36	116
Closed	12	48	47	51	30	27	32	65	37	51	34	36	118

# Monthly Report

## Operations

### April-2020

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The asphalt recycler/hot patcher was used 5 days in March patching potholes with approximately 13 tonnes of recycled asphalt placed. A total of 37 tonnes of recycled asphalt has been used since January. The streets crew have also been using EZ Street cold mix asphalt to repair potholes.

The utility crew performed daily checks of walkways and entrances to Town owned buildings, removing snow and ice as needed, maintained the temporary sign standards, and repaired or replaced broken compost bins.

A traffic accident in mid-March at the intersection of South Albion Street and Industrial Park Drive resulted in one of the traffic signal poles being damaged. The Town of New Glasgow loaned us a replacement light base in order to expedite the repair and Public Works staff completed the work in house.

There was 1 snow event during the month - March 1 (20 cm) which required plowing of streets, sidewalks, and parking lots. The salt truck was out 6 days in March. Sidewalk sanders were out 3 days in March applying salt to remove ice from sidewalks.

There was 1 broken water main in March - at the intersection of Albion and West Pleasant Streets in which a 6" cast iron main cracked.

The sewer crew have been doing their bi-weekly sampling at the Treatment Plant and the regular cleaning of the Terrace Lift Station. The sewer crew have also been keeping catch basins and culverts clear of snow and ice to prevent flooding.

The mechanic has been working on the street sweeper and it will be ready to hit the road by mid-April. The mechanic is also servicing the mowing equipment for the Recreation Department.

Upcoming / ongoing projects for March:

- Patching of potholes with recycled hot mix asphalt
- Solid waste collection from on street receptacles
- Sweeping of sidewalks with trackless
- Quarterly meter reading begins April 1
- Repair of lawn damage from the winter
- Replacement of broken sign posts

#### **Parks**

All parks remained closed as well as washrooms during the Covid-19 pandemic. Staff put caution tape around all playground equipment and other structures in all parks.

**Amherst Stadium**

During the first weekend of March we hosted the Pee Wee AA Regional Play Downs under the no fee ice program. CCMHA used 23.5 hours equaling \$2326.50 worth of ice time. There were 6 teams who took part in the tournament.

On Friday, March 13 we closed the doors to the Amherst stadium due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus. The ice came out on Wednesday, March 18 and staff have been cleaning and doing maintenance to date.

**Outdoor Skating Rink**

Due to warmer weather during the early part of March the outdoor skating surface was closed for the season on Friday, March 13. While weather sometimes makes it difficult to maintain the outdoor skating surface we had a great season providing another opportunity to be active.

# Monthly Report

## Police Department

April 2020

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### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/TRAINING

**Intoximeter ICR II Training – March 2-6:** Constables Jade Pratt, Jeff Walsh, Jeff Goodwin and Mark McNair all completed training on the intoximeter during a 5-day training session hosted at the Amherst Police Department. As part of the Impaired Driving funding made available by the Department of Justice, we arranged to have instructors from the Atlantic Police Academy train our members as well as members from other departments. By hosting the course, we were able to train more of our members on this essential tool.

### PERSONNEL

**Resignation of Cst Germain:** Cst Nicole Germain submitted her letter of resignation with the Amherst Police Department. Nicole was hired part-time in December of 2018 and had been with us for just over a year. She has accepted a full-time position with the Truro Police Service and was scheduled to start in early April. We wish her the best on this new chapter in her career.

### OPERATIONAL

**Covid-19 Adjustments:** As result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Amherst Police Department made numerous adjustments to ensure that essential services were not interrupted and to mitigate staff illness. Many of the steps taken included:

- Specialty sections and assignments have been folded into the platoon/uniform section; this allows the department to 'rotate' members off;
- Specialty sections/assignments and the service they provide has been temporarily suspended. This includes:
  - Crime Prevention Officer
  - School Resource Officer
  - Street Crime
  - Major Crime<sup>1</sup>
- This bolstering of the uniform section allows APD to focus on essential services such as emergency response, investigation of criminal code and other statutes, conducting proactive patrols and assisting our partners in essential community safety initiatives;
- Uniform response to calls has been adapted to ensure we can protect our members and staff. Calls for service are screened by dispatch who ask screening questions concerning travel and illness at the occurrence location. If members need to attend, they can prepare appropriately with EHS and/or use of PPE;
- When possible, members will use email and telephone to respond to calls and complaints including collecting statements via email and taking accident reports over the phone;
- Front counter service has been temporarily suspended, which includes:
  - payment of Fines
  - local criminal record checks
  - fingerprinting
- Front counter is still accepting some deliveries and *emergency* report-ins. The public is encouraged to call APD, not attend;
- The Francis Smith Community Room has been closed to public access or use;

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<sup>1</sup> Files normally assigned to Major Crime are still assigned to Sgt Graham and he will work on them as needed. Should a major incident occur during this pandemic, resources will be used from the enhanced shifts to provide an appropriate response.

- Members and staff have been advised that they are not to attend the Police Station unless they are working or are required to be there;
- Extensions in regard to the Taxi Bylaw (licensing and inspections) have been put into place;
- Police will not be enforcing the licensing requirements under the Companion Animal Bylaw until further notice;
- Monthly focused enforcement (under the Motor Act) has been temporarily suspended until further notice;
- Files for court and prisoner remands have had processes adjusted to slow the spread of Covid-19. This includes swearing of charges and signing of documents through fax machines, but also some limited court appearances or hearings via video or teleconference. Trial and court dates have been adjourned and adjusted for later in the spring/summer

**Health Protection Act and Related Orders:** Following a complaint of a loud party on March 31st, Amherst Police issued a summary offense ticket in relation to failing to abide by an order made under the Health Protection Act. The order, issued by the Nova Scotia Chief Medical Officer prohibits social gatherings of more than 5 people. The Section carries a fine of \$1000.

**Operational Equipment:** The Amherst Police Department made several purchases of operational equipment with the assistance of funding made available by the Federal and Provincial Government for Drug Impaired Driving Investigations. Purchases made include:

- 5 new DAVTech Alco-Sensor Roadside Screening Devices
- 5 Guardian Angel Personal Protective Lights
- New set of digital scales
- SoToxa Oral Fluid Mobile Test System - Drug Oral Screening Device

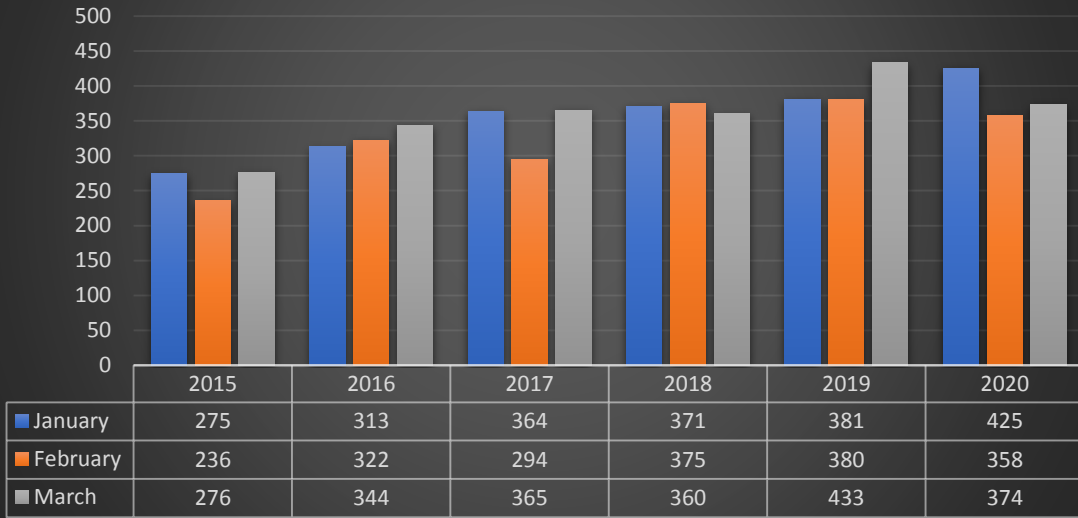
This equipment will ensure that our members have the most up-to-date instruments required to complete Drug/Impaired Driving investigations and provide an aspect of safety while on the road doing so.



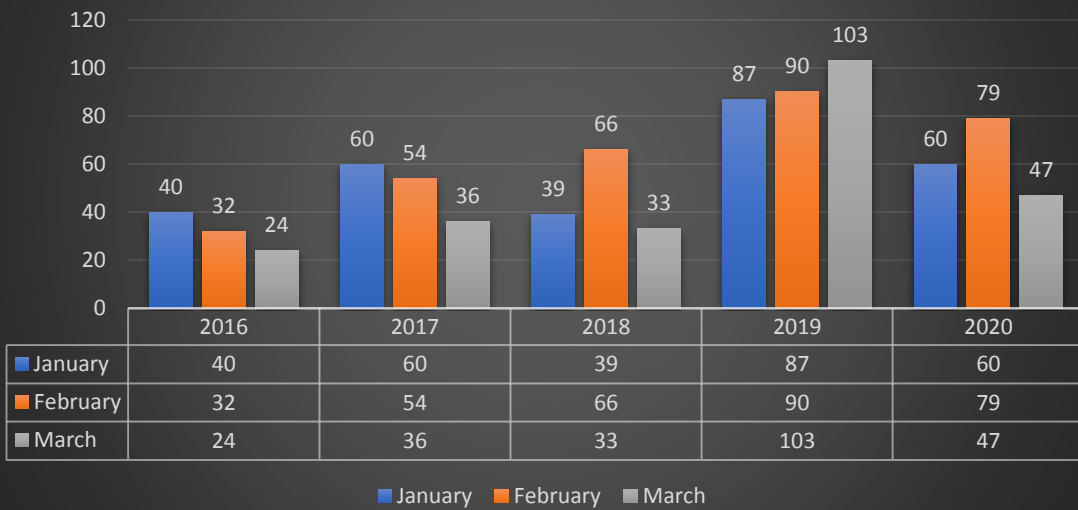
**OPERATIONAL STATS – February 2020**

Occurrences:	374	Criminal Code Charges:	47
Impaired by Alcohol:	0	CDSA:	2
Impaired by Drug:	0	CBCA:	0
Traffic Tickets:	20	Traffic Written Warnings:	21
Vehicle Checks:	102	LCA:	0
Foot Patrol Hours:	48h 23m	Bike Patrol Hours:	0
Health Protection Act	1		

## Occurrences - 2015-2020 Jan - Feb - Mar



## Criminal Charges 2016 - 2020



# Monthly Report

## Community Well Being

### April 2020

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#### **Community Well Being**

A review, compilation and tracking of all Community Support Grants was completed. Follow-up calls and emails to organizations and committees that had not submitted all required documents was done. Information is being reviewed and compiled for review by Council.

The call-out for membership on the Town's Accessibility Committee was released.

The Community Well-being Manager also attended a consultation session in Stellarton on Education and Built Environment Standards Development.

Community Well-Being Manager began the composition and sending of Health and Well-Being messages to All Staff and Council as a result of the CVOID 19 pandemic and many staff working from home and social isolating.

#### **Community Engagement**

1. Prior to working from home and social distancing, the following events/committee meetings were attended:
  - a. Attended a Cumberland Region Tourism Marketing (CRTM) meeting
  - b. Attended a Pride committee planning meeting to discuss details for upcoming Pride parade, Flag raising and activities to be held
  - c. Attended a Learn to Lead workshop on fundraising
  - d. Attended 2 Tamarack webinars on Poverty Reduction
  - e. Facilitated a Living Well session for seniors
  - f. Attended a webinar on how to help businesses during COVID-19
  - g. Attended Deputy Mayor Christie's greetings to Basketball Nova Scotia
  - h. Meeting with Steve Butler to discuss promotion of VON Bowling Fundraiser
2. The Community Well-being Manager was on the Scoring Committee for Cumberland Regional Tourism Marketing initiative. 18 RFPs were received and scored CRTM website and marketing strategy.
3. The Community Well-being Manager began research on how other Municipalities show community recognition ie. Volunteers, Athletics, Entrepreneurs.
4. Completed and submitted application for Festival & Community Event Grant.
5. Working on strategic priorities planning and an initial outline for a strategic plan for the Advisory Committee on Poverty reduction.

#### **Culture, Events and Marketing**

1. Collaborated with Community partners on upcoming March Break activities, gathered information and events for the week to publish and promote. Distributed flyers to all schools

2. Planning for the Volunteer Appreciation Ceremony. Collection of Volunteer nominations - prepared mail outs and invitation.
3. Culture, Events and Marketing Coordinators completed Social Media Level 1 Training (40 hours).
4. French Toast Fest social media including webpage updates and Facebook Event. Worked with Birkinshaw's to host a Taster Event, Simply for Life for a cooking class, Hidden Mountain Maple Farms to provide Maple Syrup and set up of Sugar Shack pop up shop and Taffy on the Snow Tasting Demonstration at Dayle's, Trider's Craft Beer to set up sampling of Maple Beer at Dayle's.
5. Team Finland Women's Hockey -promotional materials including web banner, Facebook banner and colouring pages which were distributed to the schools
6. Created Community Windows graphic for Facebook Campaign which was widely received. 15,980 people reached with 1079 engagements and 205 shares.
7. Created and submitted Social Media Analytics Tracking Spreadsheet to monitor social media platforms usage and engagement, includes TOA Facebook Page, Amherst Recreation Dept Facebook Page, YouTube Channel, Instagram and Twitter accounts along with our Amherst.ca webpage analytics.
8. Note many of the events planned in March were cancelled although work was completed on them.
9. Staff continue to look for ways to engage the community with social distancing and to plan for future events once the State of Emergency is lifted.

### **Active Living**

1. The active living coordinator completed the Girls at Bat program Child Protection training online. Each coach/volunteer must complete this training before taking part in the program. The free Equipment kit has been received. The program start has been delayed due to COVID-19 and will be rescheduled at a later date.
2. The Living Well Program for older adults March sessions topics included eating healthy with dietitian Jillian Reid and Gardening with Chelsea Baird, Horticulturist. The final two sessions were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The chair yoga was enjoyed and the exercise walking circuit was popular as participants could go at their own pace. The program was very well received with 14-20 participants engaging each week.
3. The ParticipACTION Community Better Challenge has been cancelled for 2020, therefore grants will not be provided this for community events. Our grant application will be saved in their system and can be resubmitted in 2021.
4. The Learn 2 Lead spring sessions have been cancelled. The committee is looking at online workshop options including wellness and health topics to be offered in April and May.

# Monthly Report

## Fire Department

April-2020

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### RESPONSE #'s (March)

#### Town of Amherst – 9 events

- 1 Electrical fire
- 5 Smell of smoke / Air quality check
- 1 Monitored alarm activations
- 1 Motor Vehicle Accident
- 1 Open burn / Wildland

#### Contract area (District 2) – 2 events

- 2 Structure fire

### OPERATIONAL UPDATE

The department continues to adjust to the pandemic environment and adapt our operational objectives to meet the changing needs, during this pandemic. This includes adjusting the services we provide to ensure that we respect the physical distancing requirements and provisions of the provincial state of emergency order. One of the main challenges that we are currently facing is the ability to have face to face conversations, training and social events.

#### Weekly Training & Meetings

The last in-person weekly training session or meeting at the fire station took place on March 12<sup>th</sup>. Since that time, all in person training sessions and meetings have been placed on hold. Recently, we deployed the use of audio and video conferencing to establish a means to communicate as a group, while ensuring that physical distancing is achieved. We have established a weekly conference call with the officer's group; with subsequent weekly company calls with their members. The intent is to maintain a social and operational contact with all of our members.

#### Professional Development

The Nova Scotia Fire Fighters School has started to provide training in a virtual setting. Over the last few weeks, members of the department have been enrolled in distance learning with the fire school. This training is being delivered through the Zoom and Google hangout platform. Members have been enrolled in Hazardous Materials Awareness training, Hazardous Materials Operations training and Incident Scene Safety Officer training.

# Monthly Report

## Planning and Strategic Initiatives

### April-2020

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Land use planning consultation and Development Permit services continue remotely. Planning staff have been working with Operations to process permit applications electronically, and to enable applications to be submitted via email through the Town website. The website should have this capability in the coming week.

Contingency plans are being developed with the Clerk's office to conduct virtual PAC meetings, public participation sessions, and public hearings. Staff are following other jurisdictions currently undergoing virtual public hearings to learn best practice should a development agreement or planning document amendment be required.

A decision from the NSUARB on NSPI's application for the Smart Grid Implementation Project is expected this month.

Given the current state of emergency, staff are working with the Stadium solar PV system contractor to revise the installation schedule, although even if delayed for months, the October 2020 deadline to commission the system remains very achievable.

Planning staff continue to provide planning and development services for the Town of Oxford.

# Monthly Report

## Economic Development

### April 2020

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The Tourism Nova Scotia 30 second highlight video has been finalized. The 2-minute list style video is being edited.

The Amherst Business Directory is 95% complete and is ongoing. Once businesses reopen the remaining 5% will be completed.

Eight business retention and expansion visits have been completed up to date in the retail sector. More visits will be scheduled once businesses reopen. The BDO completed the Business Retention & Expansion International Fundamentals online course.

The Gritty to Pretty program ended on March 31. Seven projects were completed by local businesses investing in beautification and streetscaping of their properties. Projects included new signage, façade improvements, new windows and doors, painting and repointing brick. A total of \$20,000 was granted for the project.

The vacant commercial spaces inventory has been completed and uploaded to Share Point. The BDO will update the list weekly. Amherst.ca has been updated with current information.

The Economic Dashboard has been updated to include 2019 data. It is 85% complete.

The BDO has kept a close relationship with the business community providing weekly COVID-19 updates and relaying information from the Cumberland Business Connector and the Chamber of Commerce.

A site visit with the Capital Asset Coordinator/Property Manager was completed on the Community Credit Union Business Innovation Center on March 10. Building signs were replaced and updated with current tenants' information.