



Town of Amherst
Committee of the Whole

Date: **Friday, May 22, 2020**
Time: **11:00 am**
Location: **Council Chambers, Town Hall**

	Pages
1. Call to Order	
2. Council Direction Requests	
2.1 Community Support Area Rate	1 - 17
2.2 Tax Exemption Policy Amendment	18 - 26
3. Adjournment	

Amherst

NOVA SCOTIA

2020-21 Budget Community Support Area Rate

 @TownofAmherstNS

 @Amherst_ns



COMMUNITY SUPPORT AREA RATE

Town of Amherst Community Support Area Rate				
	2019/20 Approved	2020/21 Proposed	Change	
\$0.01 on Tax Rate =	\$ 52,556	\$ 53,429	\$ 873	
Community Support Area Rate:				
Grants to Organizations				
Grants to Organizations	\$ 67,508	\$ 55,000	\$ (12,508)	
A' Fresh Start	35,000	35,000	-	
Poverty (Dependent on Proceeds)	50,000	30,569	(19,431)	
Youth Free Ice Time	60,000	60,000	-	
	\$ 212,508	\$ 180,569		
Funding from Deed Transfer Tax for Poverty Fund Grants	(50,000)	(30,569)	19,431	
Funding from Operating Reserve for Youth Free Ice Time Grants	(60,000)	(60,000)	-	
Funding from Federal Gov't - Canadian Heritage re: Canada Day	-	(3,200)	(3,200)	
YMCA				
Grant to YMCA (increases by CPI annually)	100,000	103,835	3,835	
Tax Exemption Policy	86,402	92,440	6,038	
Tax Reduction Policy	29,700	42,000	12,300	
Community Events				
'A' Festival	15,000			
2 0 1 9 /	Holiday Events - Light Up/Parade/New Years Eve (incl fireworks)	15,000		
1 9 /	Canada Day	15,000		
2 0	Winter Carnival	5,000		
2 0	Other Events (Victoria Square music events, Tree for Boston, etc)	3,500		
		53,500		
2 0 2 0 /	Esther Fest		15,000	
2 0 /	Holiday Events - Light Up/Parade/New Years Eve (incl fireworks), Tree for Boston		15,000	
2 1	Allowance for Events (incl Canada Day)		15,000	
2 1	Winter Carnival		5,000	
2 1	Other Events (Victoria Square music events, etc)		3,500	
			53,500	-
Total Community Support Budget	\$ 372,110	\$ 378,575	\$ 6,465	
Community Support Area Rate =	\$ 0.071	\$ 0.071	\$ 0.000	



COMMUNITY SUPPORT AREA RATE

Grants to Organizations: \$180,569

Grants to Organizations	\$55,000 (decrease of \$12,508)
'A' Fresh Start	\$35,000
Poverty	\$30,569 (decrease of \$19,431)
Youth Free Ice Time	\$60,000



COMMUNITY SUPPORT AREA RATE

Funding:

\$93,769

Deed Transfer Tax for Poverty Fund Grants	\$30,569 (\$19,431 decrease)
Operating Reserve for Youth Free Ice Time Grants	\$60,000
Fed. Gov't - Canadian Heritage Canada Day	\$ 3,200 (new)



COMMUNITY SUPPORT AREA RATE

YMCA: \$103,835

CPI Increase \$ 3,835



COMMUNITY SUPPORT AREA RATE

Tax Policies:

\$134,440

Tax Exemption Policy

\$92,440 (increase of \$ 6,038)

Tax Reduction Policy

\$42,000 (increase of \$12,300)



COMMUNITY SUPPORT AREA RATE

Community Events:

\$53,500

Esther Fest

\$15,000

Holiday Events

\$15,000

Allowance for Events (incl Canada Day)

\$15,000

Winter Carnival

\$5,000

Other Events

\$3,500



COMMUNITY SUPPORT AREA RATE

Esther Fest

Inspired by “The Great Amherst Mystery”, Esther Fest will bring Amherst and visitors together to explore one of the world’s most notorious unsolved cases of poltergeist activity on record

Esther Fest will happen in October to tie in with community events hosted during this time, such as the Zombie Walk, The Creepy Carnival, Haunted Maze and more

Esther Fest will replace A Fest with the goal to bring an original, historical festival in Amherst, increasing the number of residents and visitors. The stay-destination event will allow residents and visitors to be intrigued and engaged in our own history

The Festival will provide an opportunity to increase tourism, and have a major role in economic growth and prosperity



COMMUNITY SUPPORT AREA RATE

Holiday Events

Christmas Light Up

Santa Claus Parade

New Years Eve Celebration, including fireworks

Tree for Boston



COMMUNITY SUPPORT AREA RATE

Allowance for Events (incl Canada Day)



- This year, Canada will be celebrated virtually. The Community Well Being Team has developed a project plan to engage residents in celebrating Canada Day virtually. We are anticipating that we will receive some funding from the Federal Government for this purpose.
- The remainder of the funding will allow the Team to plan for additional events as adjustments to the COVID 19 restrictions allow.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT AREA RATE

7th Annual Winter Carnival

Activities include:

- Indoor Walking Challenge kick off
- Athletic Achievers ceremony
- Couples evening Valentine's skate
- Annual Chili Challenge
- Free bowling
- Flag Day ceremony
- Outdoor family skate
- Horse & wagon rides



COMMUNITY SUPPORT AREA RATE

Other Events

Victoria Square

Music Events

Community Events



COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Total Community Support Budget: \$378,575

Grants to Organizations	\$180,569
Grants to YMCA	\$103,835
Community Events	\$ 53,500
Tax Exemption Policy	\$ 92,440
Tax Reduction Policy	<u>\$ 42,000</u>
	<u>\$472,344</u>

Funding: \$ 93,769



COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Questions?

Amherst
NOVA SCOTIA



Town of Amherst					
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<u>Community Events</u>					
	'A' Festival	15,000			
2	Holiday Events - Light Up/Parade/New Years Eve (incl				
0	fireworks)	15,000			
1	Canada Day	15,000			
9	Winter Carnival	5,000			
/					
2	Other Events (Victoria Square music events, Tree for				
0	Boston, etc)	3,500			
		53,500			
	Esther Fest		15,000		
2	Holiday Events - Light Up/Parade/New Years Eve (incl				
0	fireworks), Tree for Boston		15,000		
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/					
2	Other Events (Victoria Square music events, etc)		3,500		
1					
			53,500	-	
Total Community Support Budget		\$ 372,110	\$ 378,575	\$ 6,465	
Community Support Area Rate =		\$ 0.071	\$ 0.071	\$ 0.000	

DISCUSSION PAPER

TO: Mayor and Council
FROM: Shelley Rector CPA, CMA - CFO
DATE: May 22, 2020
SUBJECT: Community Support Area Rate

Issue

As Council has agreed to forward the Town of Amherst General Rate to the next Council Meeting for approval, the remaining item left to approve is the Community Support Area Rate. This memo will outline the plan for the Community Support Area Rate and the steps to get to final approval.

Background

The Community Support Area rate provides funding for services that, in the opinion of Council, provide support to the community. This rate includes:

1. Grants to Organizations
2. Grant to the YMCA
3. Tax Exemption and Tax Reduction Policies
4. Larger Community Events like Canada Day, Winter Carnival, Parade, New Years
5. Other Events like Victoria Square music

Our focus today is to review the overall budget amounts and the determination of the amounts of grants and to whom will be completed at a later meeting. Just prior to this meeting we have sent an email with the list of grant applications, their status and recommendations for approvals at this time.

Supporting information has been provided to Council including a Summary sheet of the Community Support Area Rate and what it funds.

Discussion

As Council is aware, the Province is currently still operating in a state of emergency and the timeline on when things will return to a state where events will happen is uncertain. During discussions about the General Rate, we discussed keeping the overall Tax Rate the same this year and thus staff are asking that Council consider keeping the Community Area Rate the same as the prior year's rate. The following are the items we believe Council should consider:

1. Grants to Organizations:
 - a. Although the list of grant applications will not fully utilize the \$55,000 available for grants to organizations, Council often leaves an amount for those rare occasions where a need arises throughout the year that people were unaware of at the time of the annual call for applications.
 - b. Passing the rate with the funds at \$55,000 (which is a decrease from last year but is the average amount spent each year over the last 4 years) would allow Council to be

responsive if the restrictions are lifted later in the year and the Community wished to provide opportunities for gatherings that adhere to the Provincial Guidelines.

2. "A" Fresh Start
 - a. Although the spring event did not occur this year, it is unclear whether restrictions will be lifted sufficiently to allow for a Fall event.
 - b. It is recommended that the budget for "A" Fresh Start remain at the same level as last year to allow for funding of unique events and activities for the community in the event that restrictions around COVID 19 are lifted.

If the amounts allotted for both grants to organizations and "A Fresh Start" are not fully utilized, staff is recommending any excess be used to fund the "Youth Free Ice Time". Currently this program is funded through a transfer from Operating Reserve rather than be paid for from the Community Support Area Rate. This is discussed further below.

3. Poverty – remains at the same level of funding as last year. \$20,000 of this goes to NSCC. There is currently funding in the Town's operating reserve for Poverty (approximately \$38k at the end of 19/20) and any excess this fiscal year could be added to this reserve as the Advisory Committee on the Reduction of Poverty works through development of a strategic plan.
4. Youth Free Ice Time – the cost for this program is \$60,000. As this program runs during the winter months it is more likely this program will occur, although there is some risk it will not. This program is currently being funded through a transfer from operating reserve. However, it should be funded by the Community Support Area Rate for the rate to truly reflect the funding for services provided to the community.

As discussed above, if there are excess funds in any of the above mentioned funds at the end of the current fiscal year, there would be no transfer from operating reserve and the "Youth Free Ice Time" would then be properly funded by the Community Support Area Rate.

5. YMCA – the grant to the YMCA was set based on \$100,000. Each year there was to be an increase for CPI. No CPI increase was included in the budget for 2019-2020, so the increase in budget of \$3,835 is for both 2019-20 and 2020-21.
6. Tax Exemption Policy – staff received an additional application this year for the Cumberland County Transition House at 44 Park St which is an increase of \$3,228.91. There are also increases due to a change in assessed values. Please see attached spreadsheet.
7. Tax Reduction Policy – the budget has been increased by \$12,300 based on the amount of actual funding provided in the 2019-20 year. We have seen a significant increase in applications and needed to adjust the budget accordingly.
8. Community Events – remain at the budget amount of \$53,500. Further information will be presented to Council during a future meeting regarding any changes to the actual events. The budget amount remains the same.

Conclusion

Our goal is to have Council pass the Community Support Area Rate and then have a follow-up meeting to determine the amounts that should be allocated to those organizations that applied for funding.

TO: Mayor Kogon and Members of Council

SUBMITTED BY: Shelley Rector, CPA, CMA - Chief Financial Officer

DATE: May 22, 2020

SUBJECT: Tax Exemption Policy

ORIGIN:

Annual Operating Budget, 2020-21 fiscal year

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY: MGA sections 47(1) states “The council shall make decisions in the exercise of its powers and duties by resolution, by policy or by by-law” and 71(1) “The council may, by policy, exempt from taxation, to the extent and under the conditions set out in the policy.”

RECOMMENDATION: That Council refer the approval of the attached revisions to the Tax Exemption Policy to a future Council meeting.

BACKGROUND: The Tax Exemption Policy either 100% exempts certain charitable organizations from paying property taxes (i.e. registered charitable Canadian organizations, on Schedule “A”) or allows other organizations that are assessed as taxable commercial to be reduced to the tax that would otherwise be payable if the property were assessed residential (Schedule “B”). Financial information must be included with the application. Tax exemption is then granted based on the financial need of the organization.

DISCUSSION: We have received a new request this year for the property at 44 Park Street by Cumberland County Transition House in the amount of \$3,228.91. This information is on Schedule A of the Policy. In addition, the amount of the assessment for some of the properties increased resulting in an increase to the amount of the grant of \$2,809.00.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: The cost to the Town for 2020-2021 as a result of the Tax Exemption Policy will be \$92,440, an increase of \$6,038 if Council approve the exemption of property taxes for 44 Park Street.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Social media will be utilized to communicate the information, as well as the Town’s budget document.

SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPLICATIONS: These tax exemptions provide support to organizations who are providing services to allow increased social justice in our community.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS: There are no environmental implications



ALTERNATIVES: Do not approve the new application at this time.

ATTACHMENTS: Proposed Tax Exemption Policy

Report prepared by: Shelley Rector, Chief Financial Officer

Report and Financial approved by:

DEPARTMENT: CORPORATE SERVICES

TITLE: **Tax Exemption Policy**

Minutes reference date: June 25, 2018

PURPOSE:

1. The purpose of this policy is to provide relief of current taxes for property of qualifying registered Canadian charitable organizations and/or non-profit organizations as defined within this policy and as specifically identified on the appendices attached.

AUTHORITY:

2. This policy is authorized under Part IV, Sections 69A and 71, *Municipal Government Act*, as amended from time to time.

DEFINITIONS:

3. For the purpose of this policy:

Qualifying non-profit organization means

- a registered Canadian charity [Canadian Revenue Agency] if the property being exempted is used directly and solely for a charitable purpose;
- a non-profit community, charitable, fraternal, educational, recreational, religious, cultural or sporting organization.

POLICY STATEMENT:

4. Tax Exemption – Charitable and Non-profit Community Organizations
 - a. Council may, at its discretion, provide a tax exemption to qualifying non-profit organizations demonstrating services to the residents of the Town of Amherst.
 - b. In order to be considered for a tax exemption, all organizations or institutions must apply in writing to the Town of Amherst by January 31 of each year by completing Appendix C. Included with the application will be the annual financial statements for the most recent fiscal year. Exemptions granted will be based on the financial need of the organization or institution.

- c. The property of the organizations named in Appendices A and B to this policy shall be exempt or taxed in accordance with the particular appendix.
- d. The partial or total exemption provided in paragraph 4. c. shall apply only to that portion of the property specified in the appendix.
- e. When a property, or part thereof, listed on an appendix to this policy ceases to be occupied by the association or for the purposes set out in the appendix, or if not in good standing, then the partial or total exemption from taxation shall cease and the owner of the property shall immediately be liable for the real property tax on such property or part thereof for the portion of the year then expired.

APPENDIX A

Properties of a named registered Canadian charitable organization and that is used directly and solely for a charitable purpose be exempt from taxation under Section 71(1) (a) of the Municipal Government Act and from area rates in accordance with Section 71(5) of the Municipal Government Act, to the extent set out in the last two columns of this appendix. Properties in Appendix A can be Residential or Commercial assessed. The exemption for these properties is 100% of the commercial or residential taxes.

PROPERTY	OWNER	ASSESSMENT ACCOUNT NUMBER	CHARITABLE NUMBER		
Land and Building 25 Park St.	Bright Beginnings Child Care Centre	00064017	106708126		
Land and Building 1 Rupert St.	Amherst & District Residential Services Society	00635928	854331394		
Land and Building 16 Station St.	Bridge Adult Services Society	03030563	852586551		
Land and Building 1 Ratchford St.	Trinity-St. Stephen's United Church	04405301	130164007		
Land and Building 82 Willow St.	Amherst and District Residential Services Society	05127858	854331394		
Land and Building 44 Park Street	Cumberland County Transition House	03533654	106995624		

APPENDIX B

Properties of non-profit community, charitable, fraternal, educational, recreational, religious, cultural or sporting organizations that are assessed as taxable commercial property be reduced to the tax that would otherwise be payable if the property were residential, inclusive of area rates under Section 71(2) of the Municipal Government Act, to the extent set out in the last two columns of this appendix. Properties in Appendix B can only be assessed Commercial. The exemption for these properties is the difference between the amount of commercial taxes and residential taxes.

PROPERTY	OWNER	ASSESSMENT ACCOUNT NUMBER		
Land and Building 20 Lawrence St	Amherst Masonic Society	00064149		
Land and Building 3 Robie St.	Cumberland Columbia Club	01030914		
Parking Lot 4 – 6 Robie St.	Cumberland Columbia Club	01030906		
Parking Lot 5 Robie St.	Cumberland Columbia Club	01076573		
Parking Lot 7 Robie St.	Cumberland Columbia Club	03256952		
Land and Building 5 Electric St.	Amherst Lions Club	05127807		
Land and Building 45 Prince Arthur St.	Amherst Curling Club	00064009		
Board Room and Counselling Rooms 41 Russell Street (Commercial portion only)	Cumberland County Transition House Association	07419112		
Land and Building 80 Church Street (Commercial portion only)	Tantramar Community Radio Society	00005045		
Playground 36 Hickman St	Amherst Lions Club	04641027		

APPENDIX C - APPLICATION

1. ORGANIZATION OR INSTIUTION INFORMATION

Name of Organization/Institution: _____

Civic Address: _____

AAN: _____

Full Mailing Address: _____

Contact Person: _____

Email Address: _____

Telephone: _____

2. Are you a registered Canadian Charitable Organization? YES ____ NO ____

If so, what is your Charitable number: _____

3. Are you a non-profit community, charitable, fraternal, educational, recreational, religious, cultural, or sporting organization? YES ____ NO ____

4. Attached are our most recent financial statements: YES ____ NO ____

Please drop off at Town Hall, located at 98 Victoria Street East, or mail to P.O. BOX 516 Amherst, NS B4H 4A1. Direct all enquiries to the Revenue Office, 902-667-6514.