



Town of Amherst
Committee of the Whole
Agenda

Date: **Monday, January 20, 2025**
Time: **4:00 pm**
Location: **Council Chambers, Town Hall**

Pages

1. Call to Order	
1.1 Territorial Acknowledgement	
“I would like to acknowledge that our gathering today is taking place in (MEEG-MA-GEE), the traditional, unceded and ancestral territory of the Mi’kmaw people. I would also like to acknowledge that Nova Scotia has another unique people. These are the Indigenous Blacks of Nova Scotia whose legacy and contributions date back over 400 years predating confederation of this land. We are all treaty people.”	
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- 6.2 Acceptance of Closed Session Minutes
 - 6.2.1 December 16, 2024
 - 6.2.2 January 8, 2025
- 6.3 MGA 22(2)(e) - contract negotiations
- 6.4 MGA 22(2)(e) - contract negotiations
- 6.5 MGA 22(2)(c) - personnel matters
- 6.6 MGA 22(2)(b) - setting a minimum price to be accepted by the municipality at a tax sale
- 6.7 MGA 22(2)(c) - personnel matters
- 6.8 MGA 22(2)(c) - personnel matters
- 6.9 MGA 22(2)(e) - contract negotiations

7. Adjournment



Town of Amherst
Committee of the Whole
Monday, January 20, 2025

Consent Agenda

MOTION:

That Council approve the following items as part of the consent agenda:

- 1.4 Acceptance of Minutes**
- 5.1 Business Development Monthly Report**
- 5.2 Community Living Monthly Report**
- 5.3 Corporate Communications and IT Monthly Report**
- 5.4 Cumberland Business Connector Monthly Report**
- 5.5 Financial Services Monthly Report**
- 5.6 Fire Services Monthly Report**
- 5.7 Human Resources Monthly Report**
- 5.8 Operations Monthly Report**
- 5.9 Planning and Strategic Initiatives Monthly Report**
- 5.10 Police Services Monthly Report**
- 5.11 Solid Waste Education and Enforcement Monthly Report**

**Amherst Town Council
Committee of the Whole
Minutes**

Date: December 16, 2024
Time: 3:00 pm
Location: Council Chambers, Town Hall

Members Present Mayor Rob Small
Deputy Mayor Hal Davidson
Councillor Charlie Chambers
Councillor Nic Furlong
Councillor Terry McManaman
Councillor Dwayne Ripley
Councillor Kathy Wells

Staff Present Jason MacDonald, Chief Administrative Officer
Aaron Bourgeois, Director, Operations
Andrew Fisher, Director, Planning & Strategic Initiatives
Dwayne Pike, Chief, Police Services
Greg Jones, Director, Fire Services
Krista Crossman, Director, Human Resources
Sarah Wilson, Director, Finance
Sharon Bristol, Director, Community Living
Sean Payne, Corporate Communications Officer
Jeff Bacon, Business Development Officer
Natalie LeBlanc, Municipal Clerk
Cindy Brown, Administrative Assistant

1. Call to Order

Mayor Small called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

1.1 Territorial Acknowledgement

Mayor Small gave the Territorial Acknowledgement.

1.2 Approval of Agenda

Moved By Councillor Furlong

Seconded By Councillor Wells

That the agenda be approved as circulated.

MOTION CARRIED

1.3 Approval of the Consent Agenda

Moved By Deputy Mayor Davidson

Seconded By Councillor McManaman

To approve the consent agenda with the removal of 4.8 Operations Monthly Report.

MOTION CARRIED

1.4 Acceptance of Minutes - November 18, 2024

Mayor Small called for any errors or omissions in the minutes. There being none, the minutes of the November 18, 2024 meeting of the Committee of the Whole were accepted as included in the agenda package.

2. Council Direction Requests

2.1 Community Support Grants

Councillor Ripley declared a conflict of interest due to his involvement with the Amherst Community Christmas Dinner and sat in the galley for the discussion and vote on this item.

Moved By Councillor Chambers

Seconded By Councillor Wells

That Council forward to the regular meeting, approval of funding in the amount of \$8,100.00 under the Community Support Grants Policy, Social Equity fund as follows:

Amherst Community Christmas Dinner - \$5,000.00 Social Equity

Dolly Parton Imagination Library - \$3,100.00 Social Equity

MOTION CARRIED

2.2 Anson Aircraft Monument

Moved By Deputy Mayor Davidson

Seconded By Councillor Chambers

That staff consult with Terry Gould and the Air Force Association of Canada regarding a project to honor the significance of the Anson aircrafts and provide cost estimates for the 2025/26 budget.

MOTION CARRIED

2.3 Request to Present

Moved By Councillor Ripley

Seconded By Councillor Chambers

That we formally invite David Mitchell to our town to give a presentation on social media and communication.

Against (2): Deputy Mayor Davidson, and Councillor McManaman

MOTION CARRIED

3. Information Items

3.1 Snow and Ice Management Policy

The Director of Operations Aaron Bourgeois presented an overview of the Town of Amherst Snow Removal Standards, included in the agenda package. Information item only.

3.2 Fire Underwriters Survey Municipal Scorecard

Fire Chief Greg Jones presented his memo regarding the Fire Underwriters Survey Municipal Scorecard, included in the agenda package. Information item only.

3.3 Food Summit Report

Moved By Deputy Mayor Davidson

Seconded By Councillor McManaman

That the Food Summit Report be approved as part of the consent agenda.

MOTION CARRIED

3.4 CAO Task Report

Moved By Deputy Mayor Davidson

Seconded By Councillor McManaman

**That the CAO Task Report be approved as part of the consent agenda.
Information item only included as part of the agenda package.**

MOTION CARRIED

4. Monthly Reports

Deputy Mayor Davidson indicated that he pulled item 4.8 from the consent agenda to formally recognize the exceptional job done by staff while hosting the U18 Major Games. Councillors McManaman and Chambers echoed his sentiments.

Moved By Deputy Mayor Davidson

Seconded By Councillor McManaman

To approve the following monthly reports as part of the consent agenda

4.1 Business Development

4.2 Cumberland Business Connector

4.3 Community Living

4.4 Corporate Communications

4.5 Financial Services

4.6 Fire Services

4.7 Human Resources

4.9 Planning & Strategic Initiatives

4.10 Police Services

4.11 Solid Waste Education and Enforcement

MOTION CARRIED

5. Closed Session

Moved By Councillor Furlong

Seconded By Councillor Wells

That the Committee move to a Closed Session.

MOTION CARRIED

6. Adjournment

There being no further business, Mayor Small adjourned the meeting.

Natalie LeBlanc
Municipal Clerk

Robert Small
Mayor

**Amherst Town Council
Committee of the Whole
Minutes**

Date: January 8, 2025
Time: 12:00 pm
Location: Council Chambers, Town Hall

Members Present Mayor Rob Small
Deputy Mayor Hal Davidson
Councillor Charlie Chambers
Councillor Nic Furlong
Councillor Terry McManaman
Councillor Dwayne Ripley
Councillor Kathy Wells

Staff Present Jason MacDonald, Chief Administrative Officer
Aaron Bourgeois, Director, Operations
Andrew Fisher, Director, Planning & Strategic Initiatives
Dwayne Pike, Chief, Police Services
Greg Jones, Director, Fire Services
Kim Jones, Director, Corporate Communications
Krista Crossman, Director, Human Resources
Sarah Wilson, Director, Finance
Sharon Bristol, Director, Community Living
Natalie LeBlanc, Municipal Clerk

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1. **Call to Order**
Mayor Small called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.
 - 1.1 **Territorial Acknowledgement**
Mayor Small gave the Territorial Acknowledgement.
 2. **Closed Session**
Moved By Councillor Wells
Seconded By Councillor McManaman
That the Committee move to a Closed Session.

MOTION CARRIED

3. **Adjournment**
There being no further business, Mayor Small adjourned the meeting.

Natalie LeBlanc
Municipal Clerk

Robert Small
Mayor



COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CDR# 2025006

Date: January 20, 2025

TO: Mayor Small and Members of Amherst Town Council

SUBMITTED BY: Sarah Wilson, Director of Finance

DATE: January 20, 2025

SUBJECT: Policy Review – Expense Reimbursement Policy

ORIGIN: Policy Review and Municipal Election.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY: Town of Amherst Expense Reimbursement Policy # 3000-07, Municipal Government Act 23(4) and Financial Reporting and Accounting Manual 3(3)(b).

RECOMMENDATION: That Council forward to the January 27, 2025 regular meeting, the proposed amendments to the Expense Reimbursement Policy # 3000-07 for approval.

BACKGROUND: This policy was originally adopted and approved in November 2018. Prior to this policy the Town had a Travel Policy for many years but with amended legislation in the MGA and regulations in FRAM clarifying and tightening the rules, the Expense Reimbursement Policy was approved.

The purpose of the Expense Reimbursement Policy is to safeguard the appropriate use of municipal funds through the establishment of uniform standards and procedures respecting reimbursement of expenses incurred by Council members, the CAO and Town of Amherst employees, Committee members and Commissioners in relation to Town of Amherst business.

Immediately following a regular election held under the *Municipal Elections Act*, Council shall review this policy by January 31st and following motion by Council, either re-adopt the policy or amend the policy and adopt the policy as amended as per the Municipal Government Act and the Financial Reporting and Accounting Manual (FRAM) for the Province of Nova Scotia.

DISCUSSION: This policy has been reviewed and the following changes are being recommended:

- Minor grammar corrections in sections 5(4), 18, 36 and 38.
- Addition under Reporting Requirements 36(2) to include that the Town shall file an annual summary report of expenses for the preceding fiscal year for each reportable individual. This has always been done as this reporting requirement is included in the Financial Information Return (FIR) that is completed annually but it was not stated in this policy.
- Removal of section 36 (3 previously 2) that expenses will be posted on the website monthly. The reporting requirements are quarterly but the Town posts the expenses monthly. The monthly reporting has been moved to the staff internal procedure instead of the policy.



- In section 37 update the date from October 31 to September 30 as all year end financial information must be submitted to the Province before September 30.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: There are no financial implications relating to the changes suggested.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: No community engagement required.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS: No environmental implications.

SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPLICATIONS: Ensures accountability and transparency for the use of tax payers' dollars and the administration of the Town of Amherst.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Do not accept the recommended changes and keep policy as is.
2. Make additional changes to the policy.

ATTACHMENTS: Expense Reimbursement Policy, # 3000-07 with changes noted in red.

Report prepared by: Sarah Wilson, Director of Finance Report and Financial approved by:

TITLE: Expense Reimbursement Policy
SECTION: Financial Management **Corporate Services**
POLICY NO: 03000-07

APPROVAL DATE: _____ **CAO Signature:** _____

PURPOSE

1. This policy safeguards the appropriate use of municipal funds through the establishment of uniform standards and procedures respecting reimbursement of expenses incurred by Council members, the Chief Administrative Officer (“CAO”), and Town of Amherst employees, Committee members and Commissioners in relation to Town of Amherst business.

APPLICATION

SIGNING AUTHORITY:

2. The following are the Signing Authorities for the positions referred to, and shall be responsible for administering this policy with respect to the individuals in those positions:

Position	Signing Authority
Mayor	CAO / Designate
Members of Council & CAO	Mayor / Designate
Town Employees	Director or CAO / Designate
Committee member or Commissioner	CAO / Designate

3. A Signing Authority may designate a second signing authority in their absence. The designation of a secondary signing authority shall be in writing and shall state the name and position of the designate.
4. A Signing Authority is prohibited from authorizing expenses incurred on their own behalf.

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

5. Everyone who incurs an expense in relation to Town business is responsible for:
 - (1) Familiarizing themselves and complying with the provisions of this policy;
 - (2) By April 1 of each year signing an acknowledgment document certifying that they have reviewed this policy and sought all clarifications necessary for a complete understanding of its provisions and their responsibilities pursuant to it. Failure to sign this acknowledgement document annually will disqualify the individual from claiming expenses for reimbursement under this policy until the document has been signed for that year.
 - (3) Completing and submitting expense claims with necessary supporting documentation;
 - (4) Exercising reasonable diligence and **are** incurring expenses prudently and responsibly; and
 - (5) With respect to travel, cancelling reservations as required, safeguarding travel advances and funds provided, and considering alternatives to travel such as teleconferencing and videoconferencing.

TITLE: Expense Reimbursement Policy
SECTION: Financial Management **Corporate Services**
POLICY NO: 03000-07

PERMITTED EXPENSES

6. Subject to and in accordance with this policy, the following expenses incurred by a member of Council, the CAO or a Town employee, Committee member or Commissioner are eligible for reimbursement:
- (1) Pre-approved travel including transportation, accommodation, meal costs and training or continuing education costs.

AUTHORIZED TRAVEL

7. Council members shall be reimbursed for the reasonable expenses incurred in attending:
- (1) Conferences and professional development authorized by Policy 10350-26 Council Conference Attendance and Professional Development;
 - (2) Meetings or conferences at which the Council member's attendance is authorized or requested by Council;
 - (3) A meeting of any Board, Commission, Committee or other organization to which the Council member has been appointed by Council, except that no reimbursement shall be provided by the Town if the Council member is entitled to reimbursement of expenses directly from the applicable organization;
 - (4) If the Mayor or Deputy Mayor are invited to attend a function, meeting or conference on behalf of the Town, and if reimbursable expenses are less than \$500, pre-approval by Council will not be required.
 - (5) If a Council member attends a function, meeting or conference on behalf of the Town, and if reimbursable expenses are less than \$500, pre-approval of Council will not be required if:
 - a) At the request of the Mayor or Deputy Mayor to attend on their behalf;
 - b) At the request of the Mayor or Deputy Mayor to attend as a Council member who has a special interest in, or connection with the subject of the meeting or conference or because of special knowledge and experience of the Council member relative to the subject of the meeting or conference; and
 - (6) A training or continuing education event in accordance with the provisions of this policy concerning training and education.
8. The CAO shall be reimbursed for the reasonable expenses pursuant to the CAO's employment contract.
9. An employee of the Town of Amherst, Committee member or Commissioner shall be reimbursed for the reasonable expenses, if pre-approved, incurred:
- (a) In the carrying out of the duties and responsibilities associated with their employment and duly authorized by the Director and/or CAO on the Prior Approval Form;
 - (b) For meetings, conferences, or professional development events at which the attendance of the employee, Committee member or Commissioner is authorized or is requested by the CAO;

TITLE: Expense Reimbursement Policy
SECTION: Financial Management **Corporate Services**
POLICY NO: 03000-07

- (c) For attendance at a meeting of any Board, Commission, Committee or other organization to which the employee has been appointed, except that no reimbursement shall be provided by the Town of Amherst if the employee, Committee member or Commissioner is entitled to reimbursement of expenses directly from the applicable organization; and
- (d) At a training or continuing education event in accordance with the provisions of this policy concerning training or education.

TRAVEL OUTSIDE OF THE MARITIMES

Travel Outside of the Maritimes means travel outside of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

- 10. All requests for travel outside of the Maritimes shall be made in writing and shall contain the following information:
 - (a) The purpose and duration of the trip;
 - (b) The location(s) to be visited;
 - (c) The dates and times of arrival and departure;
 - (d) Any pre-paid transportation, meals, or accommodation; and
 - (e) Any other anticipated expenses.
- 11. All requests for travel outside of the Maritimes by Council members shall be reviewed by the CAO, Mayor or Designate who shall consider the necessity of travel based on the information provided.
- 12. All travel outside of the Maritimes by the CAO, other than that pursuant to the employment contract, shall be reviewed by the Mayor or Designate who shall follow the same guidelines established for Council members.
- 13. If a request for travel outside of the Maritimes is approved, and the Claimant (not Town of Amherst) pays all or some of the expenses for the travel, the Claimant will be eligible for reimbursement of those expenses after submitting an expense claim in accordance with this policy.
- 14. All requests for travel outside of the Maritimes by Town of Amherst employees, Committee members or Commissioners shall be reviewed by the CAO, who shall follow the same guidelines established for Council members.

LIMITS ON REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

- 15. Notwithstanding any other provision of the policy, the following limits shall apply to the reimbursement of expenses:

TITLE: Expense Reimbursement Policy
SECTION: Financial Management **Corporate Services**
POLICY NO: 03000-07

- (1) Subject to payment of per diem, a claimant shall only be reimbursed for costs that they have incurred;
- (2) The expenses of a Council member for political activity associated with election or re-election is not reimbursable by the Town of Amherst;
- (3) Airplane travel shall be booked by Town of Amherst staff or shall only be reimbursed at the lowest rate which would have been available if Town of Amherst staff had booked the airfare. Reasonable costs for airport improvement or similar fees and luggage shall be reimbursed at actual costs.
- (4) Accommodation costs shall be reimbursed at actual costs. Government rates should be obtained whenever possible. Hotel upgrades shall be at the personal expense of the Claimant unless there are ergonomic necessities attributable to physical requirements included, but not limited to, wheel chair accessibility;
- (5) Reimbursement for meals shall not exceed the per diem meal amounts set out in this policy, except in the case of travel outside of the Maritimes, in which event the applicable Signing Authority may authorize reimbursement of meals expenses at a comparable standard. Reimbursement for meals shall not be claimed in respect of meals that are included as part of registration fees for conferences or seminars;
- (6) The cost of any alcoholic beverages shall not be reimbursed;
- (7) Fees, deposits, interest and surcharges incurred on a personal credit card shall not be reimbursed;
- (8) When personal and Town of Amherst travel is combined, only documented expenses directly related to the Town of Amherst portion are reimbursable. Extended travel time and related expenses are at the traveler's own expense;
- (9) Reimbursement shall not be provided for loss of personal effects; for medical and hospital treatment; for purchase of luggage, clothing and other personal equipment; or for personal services such as shoe shines, valet services, dry-cleaning, laundry, haircuts and other personal services;
- (10) There shall be no reimbursement of travel and related expense for individuals other than a Council member, the CAO, or an employee, Committee member or Commissioner of the Town of Amherst;
- (11) There shall be no reimbursement for travel by a Council member within the Town of Amherst because such travel is deemed to be included in the monthly vehicle allowance.
- (12) If a personal vehicle is used in lieu of airplane travel, reimbursement will be based on the lesser of the lowest airfare rate which would have been available had the flight been booked by Town of Amherst staff or the kilometrage reimbursement.
- (13) Hotel services including room service and video rentals shall not be charged to the room.

TRAVEL ADVANCES

16. Advances are not routinely approved. The following limits shall apply to the use of advances:

- (1) All advances must be approved by the CAO;

TITLE: Expense Reimbursement Policy
SECTION: Financial Management **Corporate Services**
POLICY NO: 03000-07

- (2) Advances will only be issued where an overnight stay is required;
- (3) Advances will not be made for less than \$200;
- (4) The CAO must not approve an advance unless the CAO is satisfied that there is a reasonable need for the advance;
- (5) Upon completion of the travel for which an advance has been made, the recipient must complete an expense claim in relation to the travel costs that reconciles the amount of the advance with the actual reimbursable expenses incurred. The recipient must repay any part of the advance owing to the Town of Amherst within 10 days of completing the travel.

USE OF TOWN OF AMHERST CREDIT CARDS

- 17. Town of Amherst credit cards, in respect of travel expenses, shall only be used for parking, accommodations, airfare, vehicle rentals and event registration fees. Town of Amherst credit cards shall not be used for tolls or per diem meal allowances.

PER DIEM MEAL ALLOWANCES

- 18. For each day or part day **or** when overnight accommodation forms part of an authorized expense, the Claimant shall be paid a meal allowance for each meal for which the Claimant is required to pay, in the amounts authorized as per diem meal allowances in the amount of \$15 for breakfast, \$20 for lunch, and \$30 for supper. This allowance includes gratuities and taxes.
- 19. Claimants whose religious beliefs or medical requirements prohibit them from consuming certain foods should be aware the appropriate meals can normally be obtained from caterers, provided that adequate notice of a special requirement is given. Should special dietary requirements negate the ability to participate in a meal that is provided free of cost, and as a result the Claimant must pay for a meal, they shall be paid a meal allowance for that meal.

KILOMETRAGE

- 20. The kilometrage allowance reimbursed for Claimants using personal vehicles for authorized travel shall be at the rate stipulated from time to time by the Province of Nova Scotia as the maximum kilometrage rate for its employees.
- 21. Where several Council members, the CAO, and/or employees, Committee members or Commissioners of the Town of Amherst, or any combination thereof, attend the same meeting, conference, or function, each shall make reasonable efforts to share a vehicle.

VEHICLE RENTALS

- 22. The cost of rental of a vehicle shall be a reimbursable expense in instances where:

TITLE: Expense Reimbursement Policy
SECTION: Financial Management **Corporate Services**
POLICY NO: 03000-07

- (1) Reasonable ground transportation services such as public transit, taxis or hotel shuttles are unavailable; or
- (2) Two or more Council members, the CAO, and/or employees, Committee members or Commissioners of the Town of Amherst or any combination thereof, are traveling together, and it is more economical than the combined cost of other reasonable ground transportation.

23. Compact, economical vehicles must be used unless three or more persons are travelling together, the bulk or weight of goods being transported necessitates a larger vehicle or a compact, economical vehicle is unavailable.

24. For the protection of the Claimant and the Town of Amherst, Claimants must ensure that adequate insurance (collision, comprehensive and third-party liability insurance) is in place for all drivers by either renting the vehicle using a personal credit card with an insurance option, or by purchasing a policy from the rental agency. The applicable deductible must be the lowest available given the coverage described above.

EXPENSE CLAIMS

25. Expense claims must be submitted on the form provided by the Town of Amherst and shall be signed by the Claimant.

26. The business reason for each expense must be submitted with all expense claims and a detailed itemized receipt is required for all expense claims except:

- (1) Claims for per diem meal allowances;
- (2) Tolls and parking under \$10 only; and
- (3) Claims for personal vehicle kilometrage for authorized travel.

27. If no receipt is available, a written attestation signed by the Claimant must be submitted to explain why the receipt is unavailable, and a description itemizing and confirming the expenses must be provided. Debit or credit card transaction records are not acceptable as receipts.

28. Expenses incurred by one individual on behalf of another must be attributed to the individual for whom those expenses were incurred.

29. No expense claim shall be paid unless the claim is first approved for payment by the Signing Authority who has authority to approve the claim. Before approving an expense claim, a Signing Authority must ensure that:

- (1) The claim is consistent with policy;
- (2) The expenses claimed were necessarily incurred in the performance of municipal business;
- (3) Appropriate receipts are provided to support the claim, and the claim documentation is appropriately filed; and

TITLE: Expense Reimbursement Policy
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(4) The expenses claimed have appropriate justification.

30. In considering an expense claim for payment, a Signing Authority may request additional explanations, documentation or justification from the Claimant, and may refuse to approve any claim or expense that the Signing Authority decides is unreasonable or not in compliance with this policy.

31. The use of petty cash to pay an expense claim is prohibited.

TIMEFRAME

32. A claim for reimbursement of an expense shall be submitted for approval within thirty (30) days of the expense being incurred.

33. Expenses must be submitted and charged to the year in which they occurred. Expenses cannot be carried forward to future years.

FRAUD, MISUSE OR MISAPPROPRIATION OF MUNICIPAL FUNDS

34. Fraudulent irregularity, misuse or misappropriation of Town of Amherst funds may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

35. Suspicious activity and potential misuse of funds must be reported immediately to the CAO. If such activity relates to the CAO it must be reported immediately to the Mayor.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

36. Pursuant to section 65D of the *Municipal Government Act*, the CAO shall ensure that the **Town of Amherst Municipality** does the following:

(1) within 90 days of the end of each fiscal quarter, prepares and posts an expense report on the Town of Amherst website for the Mayor, CAO (including an employee of the Town of Amherst delegated any of the responsibilities or powers of the CAO pursuant to subsection 29(b) of the *Municipal Government Act*) and each member of Council on their expenses regarding the following:

- a. Travel and travel related expenses, including transportation, accommodation and incidentals;
- b. Meals; and
- c. Training and education.

(2) **by September 30th of each year, prepares and files with the Minister of Municipal Affairs an annual summary report that summarizes the expenses for the preceding fiscal year for each reportable individual that is compliant with the requirements of the Department of**

TITLE: Expense Reimbursement Policy
SECTION: Financial Management **Corporate Services**
POLICY NO: 03000-07

Municipal Affairs and the requirements set out in the Financial Reporting and Accounting Manual.

- ~~(3) On a monthly basis, posts the expense reports of each reportable individual on the Town of Amherst website on their expenses regarding the following:~~
- ~~a. Travel and travel related expenses, including transportation, accommodation and incidentals;~~
 - ~~b. Meals; and~~
 - ~~c. Training and education.~~

REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

37. The Town of Amherst Audit Committee shall review the expense annual summary report, relevant to section 36, by ~~September 30th~~ ~~October 31st~~ of each year.
38. By ~~the~~ January 31st immediately following a regular election held under the *Municipal Elections Act*, Council shall review this policy and, following motion by Council, either re-adopt the policy or amend the policy and adopt the policy as amended.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Title/Role	Responsibilities
Director of Finance	Ensure policy is reviewed by January 31 st following an election year and that annual summary is filed with the Province by September 30 th each year.
Accounts Payable	Ensure all Expense Reimbursements submitted are per policy.
Council, CAO, Employees, Committee Members	Ensure policy is followed when claiming expense reimbursements.

For Administrative Use Only:

VERSION LOG

Amendment Description	Policy Owner	Approved By	Approval Date
Policy Review updates. Amend Out of Province Travel to Travel Outside of Maritimes, updated meal per diems. Other updates for clarity.	Director of Finance	Council	May 23, 2023

TITLE: Expense Reimbursement Policy
SECTION: Financial Management **Corporate Services**
POLICY NO: 03000-07

<p>Policy review following municipal election. Minor grammar and reporting requirement revisions.</p>	<p>Director of Finance</p>	<p>Council</p>	
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Minutes reference date: March 25, 2019 November 26, 2018 February 24, 2020 May 23, 2023



COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CDR# 2025007

Date: January 20, 2025

TO: Mayor Small and Members of Amherst Town Council

SUBMITTED BY: Sarah Wilson, Director of Finance

DATE: January 20, 2025

SUBJECT: Policy Review – Hospitality Policy

ORIGIN: Policy Review and Municipal Election.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY: Town of Amherst Hospitality Policy # 3000-08, Municipal Government Act 23(5) and Financial Reporting and Accounting Manual 3(3)(c).

RECOMMENDATION: That Council forward to the January 27, 2025 regular meeting, the proposed amendments to the Hospitality Policy # 3000-08 for approval.

BACKGROUND: This policy was originally adopted and approved in November 2018 when a Hospitality Policy became a requirement of the Municipal Government Act (section 23(5)).

The purpose of the Hospitality Policy is to provide direction and guidance with respect to the appropriate expensing of necessary hospitality expenses and to ensure taxpayers' dollars are used prudently and responsibly with a focus on accountability and transparency.

Immediately following a regular election held under the *Municipal Elections Act*, Council shall review this policy by January 31st and following motion by Council, either re-adopt the policy or amend the policy and adopt the policy as amended as per the Municipal Government Act and the Financial Reporting and Accounting Manual (FRAM) for the Province of Nova Scotia.

DISCUSSION: This policy has been reviewed and the following changes are being recommended:

- Minor grammar corrections in sections 8 and 15.
- Removal of section 28(3) that expense reports will be posted on the website monthly. The reporting requirements are quarterly for the Town as a whole and not exclusive to reportable individuals as described in section 28(1).
- Addition of new section Review Requirements to include that the Audit Committee will review the hospitality annual summary report by September 30th of each year. Also, that Council shall review the policy by January 31st following a regular election and either re-adopt, amend or adopt the policy as amended.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: There are no financial implications relating to the changes suggested.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: No community engagement required.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS: No environmental implications.

SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPLICATIONS: Ensures accountability and transparency for the use of tax payers' dollars and the administration of the Town of Amherst.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Do not accept the recommended changes and keep policy as is.
2. Make additional changes to the policy.

ATTACHMENTS: Hospitality Policy, # 3000-08 with changes noted in red.

Report prepared by: Sarah Wilson, Director of Finance Report and Financial approved by:

TITLE: Hospitality Policy
SECTION: Financial Management **Corporate Services**
POLICY NO: 03000-08

APPROVAL DATE: _____

CAO Signature: _____

POLICY STATEMENT:

1. The Town of Amherst recognizes that hospitality-related activities are, at times, necessary and legitimate expenses supporting the effective conduct of government business for reasons of diplomacy, protocol, business development or promotional advocacy.
2. The offering of hospitality will be done in such a manner so as to reflect the prudent stewardship of public funds. This policy safeguards the appropriate use of public funds through the establishment of uniform standards and procedures respecting Council members, the Chief Administrative Officer (“CAO”) and Town of Amherst employee hospitality claims.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

3. To provide direction and guidance with respect to the appropriate expensing of necessary hospitality expenses that support the Town of Amherst’s objectives.
4. To ensure hospitality is offered in an accountable, economical and consistent manner in the facilitation of government business and/or for reasons of diplomacy, protocol, business development or promotional advocacy.
5. To ensure taxpayers’ dollars are used prudently and responsibly with a focus on accountability and transparency.

HOSPITALITY AND HOSPITALITY EVENTS

6. A hospitality event is a reception, ceremony, conference, or other event that involves hosting individuals from outside the Town of Amherst. Hospitality may be offered under the following circumstances in accordance with this policy:
 - (1) hosting foreign dignitaries;
 - (2) engaging in official public matters with representatives from other governments, business, industry or labour leaders, or other community leaders;
 - (3) sponsoring or hosting conferences;
 - (4) hosting ceremonies / recognition events; and
 - (5) other official functions, as approved by the CAO, their designate or Town of Amherst Council.

TITLE: Hospitality Policy
SECTION: Financial Management **Corporate Services**
POLICY NO: 03000-08

SIGNING AUTHORITY

7. The following are the Signing Authority for the positions referred to, and shall be responsible for administering this policy with respect to the individuals in those positions:

Position	Signing Authority
Mayor	CAO/Designate
Members of Council & CAO	Mayor/ Designate
Town Employees	CAO/Designate

- 8. A Signing Authority may designate a second signing authority. The designation of a secondary signing authority shall be in writing and shall state the name and position of the designate.
- 9. A Signing Authority is prohibited from authorizing payment of hospitality expenses incurred on their own behalf.

PRIOR AUTHORIZATION

- 10. Subject to this policy, all hospitality events require prior authorization.
- 11. A request for prior authorization for hospitality events requires the following information:
 - (a) rationale/purpose of the event;
 - (b) estimated numbers of attendees and their respective affiliations;
 - (c) if alcohol is to be provided at the event, the reasons that the provision of alcohol is appropriate and warranted in the circumstances; and
 - (d) estimated itemized costs including gratuities and supplementary expenses.
- 12. Requests for hospitality events shall be reviewed by the appropriate Signing Authority as set out in paragraph 7 of this policy, who shall consider the value and benefit of the proposed event in relation to its cost in deciding whether to approve the hospitality event.
- 13. In instances where a hospitality event has been held without prior approval, claims for reimbursement must provide the details outlined above and also include a document outlining the reasons prior approval was not possible.

SERVING OF ALCOHOL

- 14. While the standard for hospitality is the provision of non-alcoholic beverages, the provision of alcohol in the context of hospitality for reasons of diplomacy, protocol, business development or promotional advocacy is deemed an acceptable expense in limited circumstances. Any request for approval to serve alcohol at a hospitality event must have prior approval by the appropriate Signing Authority, as set out in paragraph 7 of this policy.

TITLE: Hospitality Policy
SECTION: Financial Management **Corporate Services**
POLICY NO: 03000-08

15. The Town of Amherst and its employees and members of Council are expected to act **responsibility responsibly** in the use of public funds and in the care and well-being of themselves, other employees and their respective guests with respect to the serving of alcohol.
16. The Town of Amherst will demonstrate good judgement in the reasonableness of the quantity and expense of alcoholic beverages offered to guests.
17. If alcohol is provided at a hospitality event, food must be served.

GIFTS

18. For reasons of diplomacy, protocol, business development or promotional advocacy, the giving of token gifts to individuals outside of government (value not to exceed \$40.00) is sometimes appropriate. Any giving of gifts requires prior approval by the appropriate Signing Authority as set out in paragraph 7 of this policy.

CLAIMS FOR REIMBURSEMENT OF HOSPITALITY EXPENSES

19. By April 1 of each year any individual claiming reimbursement pursuant to this policy must sign an acknowledgment document certifying that they have reviewed this policy and sought all clarifications necessary for a complete understanding of its provisions and their responsibilities pursuant to it. Failure to sign this acknowledgement document annually will disqualify the individual from claiming expenses for reimbursement under this policy until the document has been signed for that year.
20. Claims for reimbursement of hospitality expenses must be submitted on the form provided from time to time by the Town of Amherst and shall be signed by the Claimant.
21. Hospitality expense claims must include the following:
 - (1) a copy of the signed prior authorization for the hospitality event for which the expense was incurred;
 - (2) the names and positions of the guests at the hospitality event;
 - (3) the business objective for the expense; and
 - (4) a detailed itemized receipt for the expense.
22. In instances where prior approval of the hospitality event was not possible, the hospitality expense claim must also provide the information required in paragraph 11 of this policy and an explanation of why prior approval was not possible.
23. If no receipt is available for a hospitality expense, a written attestation signed by the Claimant must be submitted to explain why the receipt is unavailable, and a description itemizing and confirming the expense must be provided. Debit or credit card transaction records are not acceptable as receipts.

TITLE: Hospitality Policy
SECTION: Financial Management **Corporate Services**
POLICY NO: 03000-08

24. Hospitality expenses incurred by one individual on behalf of another must be attributed to the individual for whom those expenses were incurred.
25. No hospitality expense claim shall be paid unless the claim is first approved for payment by the Signing Authority who has authority to approve the claim. Before approving an expense claim, a Signing Authority must ensure that:
- (1) the claim is consistent with this policy;
 - (2) the expenses claimed were necessarily incurred in the performance of municipal business;
 - (3) appropriate receipts are provided to support the claim, and that the claim documentation is appropriately filed; and
 - (4) the expenses claimed have appropriate justification.
26. In considering a hospitality expense claim for payment, a Signing Authority may request additional explanations, documentation or justification from the claimant, and may refuse to approve any claim or expense that did not have prior authorization and that the Signing Authority decides is unreasonable or not in compliance with this policy.
27. The use of petty cash to pay a hospitality expense claim is prohibited.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

28. Pursuant to s. 65D of the *Municipal Government Act*, the CAO shall ensure that the Town of Amherst does the following:
- (1) within ninety (90) days of the end of each fiscal quarter, prepares and posts a hospitality expense report on the Town of Amherst website that describes all of the hospitality expenses incurred by the Town of Amherst, including purchases of alcohol during the quarter.
 - (2) by September 30th of each year, prepares and files with the Minister of Municipal Affairs an annual summary report that summarizes the hospitality expense reports for the preceding fiscal year that is compliant with the requirements of the Department of Municipal Affairs and the requirements set out in the Financial Reporting and Accounting Manual.
 - ~~(3) On a monthly basis, posts the expense reports of each reportable individual on the Town of Amherst website on their expenses related to hospitality.~~

TITLE: Hospitality Policy
SECTION: Financial Management **Corporate Services**
POLICY NO: 03000-08

REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

- 29. The Town of Amherst Audit Committee shall review the hospitality annual summary report, relevant to section 28, by September 30th of each year.
- 30. By January 31st immediately following a regular election held under the *Municipal Elections Act*, Council shall review this policy and, following motion by Council, either re-adopt the policy or amend the policy and adopt the policy as amended.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Title/Role	Responsibilities
Director of Finance	Ensure policy is reviewed by January 31 st following an election year and that annual summary is filed with the Province by September 30 th each year.
Accounts Payable	Ensure all Hospitality expenses are captured and posted on Town website within 90 days of the end of each fiscal quarter.
Council, CAO, Employees, Committee Members	Ensure policy is followed when hospitality-related activities occur.

For Administrative Use Only:

VERSION LOG

Amendment Description	Policy Owner	Approved By	Approval Date
Policy review following municipal election. Minor grammar correction. Addition of Review Requirements section.	Director of Finance	Council	

Minutes reference date: November 26, 2018 February 24, 2020



COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CDR# 2025005

Date: January 20, 2025

TO: Mayor Small and Members of Amherst Town Council

SUBMITTED BY: Sarah Wilson, Director of Finance

DATE: January 20, 2025

SUBJECT: Audit Committee Terms of Reference Policy Review

ORIGIN: Policy Review and Municipal Election.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY: Town of Amherst Audit Committee Terms of Reference Policy # 3000-05, Financial Reporting and Accounting Manual 5(3)(a)(iii).

RECOMMENDATION: That Council forward to the January 27, 2025 regular meeting of Council, the Audit Committee Terms of Reference Policy to be re-adopted as recommended by the Audit Committee.

BACKGROUND: This policy was originally adopted and approved in March 2016. The purpose of the Audit Committee Terms of Reference Policy is to assist Council in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities relating to finance and audit matters delegated to management by Council.

Immediately following a regular election held under the *Municipal Elections Act*, Council shall review this policy by January 31st and following motion by Council, either re-adopt the policy or amend the policy and adopt the policy as amended as per the Financial Reporting and Accounting Manual (FRAM) for the Province of Nova Scotia.

DISCUSSION: This policy has been reviewed with the Audit Committee and no changes are recommended at this time. As the majority of the members are new on the Audit Committee, this policy will be reviewed again once a fiscal cycle has been completed.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: There are no financial implications.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: No community engagement required.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS: No environmental implications.

SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPLICATIONS: Ensures accountability and transparency for the use of tax payers' dollars and the administration of the Town of Amherst.

ALTERNATIVES: Do not accept the policy as is and suggest changes.

ATTACHMENTS: Audit Committee Terms of Reference Policy, # 3000-05.

Report prepared by: Sarah Wilson, Director of Finance Report and Financial approved by:



DEPARTMENT: Council and Corporate Services

TITLE: Audit Committee Terms of Reference

Minutes reference date: 29 March 2016 27 February 2017

Purpose

1. The Audit Committee (the “Committee”) assists Town Council (“Council”) in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities relating to finance and audit matters delegated to management by Council.
2. In particular, the Committee assists Council by reviewing:
 - a. Key financial information that will be provided to the province or made public;
 - b. Compliance with strategic financial plans, operating and capital budgets;
 - c. External and/or internal audit activities;
 - d. The system of internal controls, risk management and financial information technology;
 - e. Cash and investment management activities;
 - f. Insurance coverage of significant risks and uncertainties;
 - g. Financial Condition Indicators.

Composition, Operations and Accountability

3. The Committee shall be comprised of all members of Council plus two citizen appointments. The Committee shall be appointed by Council.
4. The initial citizen appointments (effective November 1, 2016) will be for one-year terms, as a transitional measure, and subsequent citizen appointments will be for two-year terms. Citizen appointees shall possess knowledge and understanding of financial and investment matters.
5. The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) of the Town or his or her appointee shall be the secretary of the Committee
6. The Chief Administrative Officer, Treasurer and Accountant shall be non-voting members of the Committee.
7. The Chair shall be a member of Council and shall be elected annually by the Committee.
8. The Committee shall meet at least four times each year. The Committee Chair will make periodic reports to Council on matters relating to the Committee’s duties and responsibilities.
9. The Committee shall meet with the external auditors as it deems appropriate to consider any matter that the Committee or auditors determine should be brought to the attention of Council.
10. Through the CAO the Committee may request members of the Town’s senior management to attend meetings of the Committee as deemed necessary.
11. The Committee provides open avenues of communication among management, employees, external auditors and Council.

Duties and Responsibilities

12. The Committee has the following responsibilities and will perform the following duties.

Financial Information

- a. The Committee will review the following financial information that will be provided to the Province or made public:
 - i. Annual audited financial statements;
 - ii. Management discussion and analysis that accompanies the audited financial statements
- b. Ensure that meaningful financial information regarding current financial results and up to date forecasts is received on a timely basis, and that it provides information required for decision making.
- c. Review quarterly internal financial reports.
- d. Review:
 - i. the appropriateness of accounting policies and financial reporting practices and any proposed changes thereto;
 - ii. any new or pending developments in accounting and reporting standards; and
 - iii. significant estimates contained in the financial statements and other financial information.
- e. The Committee will:
 - i. assess the performance of the external auditor;
 - ii. review and recommend that Council approve the engagement or reappointment of the external auditor as required;
 - iii. oversee the activities of the external auditor by:
 1. reviewing, assessing and receiving assurances as to the independence of the external auditor;
 2. reviewing the provision of non-audit services performed by the external auditor;
 3. reviewing the external audit plan including the engagement letter, materiality limits, staffing, timetable and proposed fees;
 4. if necessary, requesting to meet with the external auditor without management present;
 5. reviewing matters with respect to the conduct and reporting of the external audit with particular reference to any difficulties encountered or restrictions imposed by management; and
 6. receiving and reviewing the external auditor's:
 - a. audit report;
 - b. findings with respect to the appropriateness of accounting policies, management estimates and significant accounting and/or reporting issues;
 - c. management letter including managements responses thereto and the evaluation of the internal control system; and
 - d. other matters of relevance identified in the audit.

- f. The Committee will periodically evaluate the need for the establishment of an internal audit function and make appropriate recommendations to the Council.

Internal Control, Risk Management and Financial Information Systems

- g. The Committee will review:
- i. the system of internal control;
 - ii. financial policies;
 - iii. the strategic and financial risk assessment process to ensure that key strategic and financial risks are identified, assessed and risk mitigation strategies are implemented;
 - iv. financial information technology to ensure that it effectively supports or provides for current and future planning, financial activities;
 - v. the security of financial information, financial information technology and financial information disaster recovery plans; and
 - vi. compliance with financial statutory and regulatory obligations.

Investment Management Activity

- h. The Committee shall be responsible for the management of the Town's investment portfolio in accordance with paragraph 5 (c) of the Investment Policy, #03600-01.

Banking Services

- i. The Committee will periodically assess banking services and oversee the procurement of these services in accordance with Council policy.

Insurance Coverage of Significant Risks and Uncertainties

- j. The Committee will review the adequacy of insurance program and coverage for significant risks and uncertainties.

Terms of Reference for the Committee

13. The Committee will review its terms of reference annually.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of Amherst Town Council
FROM: Mayor Rob Small
DATE: January 20, 2025
SUBJECT: **Council Remuneration Review**

Background

Periodically Town of Amherst staff perform a salary and benefits review for the purpose of determining any changes that are needed to keep wages and benefits in step with current market conditions, cost of living increases and remaining competitive in the workplace.

Usually, comparisons are made with other municipalities in Nova Scotia as part of the review process with recommendations being made to Council on whether any changes should occur within the salary scales.

Under section 23(1)(d) of the Municipal Government Act, Council may make policies providing for and fixing the annual remuneration of Council. It is important to perform a review of Council's remuneration through a comparison of similar municipalities and provide recommendations for any changes that reflect the current conditions.

It has been a few years (2019) since Council made any adjustments in the remuneration and benefits for members of Council and we are due to perform this review.

Recommendation

Using the September 10, 2024 Council Remuneration review by the West Hants Regional Municipality report as a template for comparison, direct Town of Amherst staff to determine the anticipated remuneration and benefits as of April 1, 2025 for members of Council in the five (5) towns similar to Amherst (Truro, New Glasgow, Bridgewater, Kentville & Yarmouth) and the Municipality of Cumberland to determine and recommend changes to Councils remuneration using the average of the six (6) municipalities.

It is also important to compare benefits of these same municipalities with respect to health & dental benefits, pension plans, travel and meeting expenses, parental leave and meal allowance costs for any adjustments that may be required.

In addition, have staff provide a recommendation on an adjustment mechanism that reflects maintaining the cost-of-living increases over the remainder of the Council term.

Request that TOA staff complete this review and present recommendations at the February Committee of the Whole meeting for the purpose of implementing any changes required and approved by Council effective April 1, 2025.



WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY REPORT

Information <input type="checkbox"/>	Recommendation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Decision Request <input type="checkbox"/>	Councillor Activity <input type="checkbox"/>
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To: West Hants Regional Municipal Council

Submitted by: Mark Phillips, Chief Administrative Officer

Date: September 10, 2024

Subject: 2024 Council Remuneration Review

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Section 23(1)(d) of the *Municipal Government Act* states that the council may make policies providing for and fixing:

- (i) the annual remuneration to be paid to the mayor or warden,
- (ii) the annual remuneration to be paid to the deputy mayor or deputy warden,
- (iii) the annual remuneration to be paid to councillors,
- (iv) that part of the salary or remuneration that is an allowance for expenses incidental to the discharge of the duties of such persons as elected officers of the municipality,
- (v) the deduction to be made from the remuneration of such persons, other than persons on parental accommodation, for missing more than three council or committee meetings in a year, and
- (vi) the rate per kilometre as a travelling allowance for such persons for actual distance travelled once each day to go to, and return from, every daily session of a meeting of the council or of a committee.

RECOMMENDATION or DECISION REQUEST

... that the Council Remuneration policy be updated to include the following:

a) That annual remuneration levels for Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councilor increase, as per the September 2024 report, on April 1st of each fiscal year as per the Annual Statistics Canada Consumer Price Index (CPI – All Items) for the Province of Nova Scotia for the preceding calendar year until the 2028 NS Municipal Election

b) That the West Hants Regional Municipality Expense Policy be revised to reflect the updated meal allowance values noted in the report.

- c) That Council continues to extend the defined contribution group pension plan to elected officials with matching funds from the municipal and council member of 8%.
- d) That Council implements a parental/dependent care leave policy for elected officials, allowing elected officials to take up to 52 weeks leave without pay.
- e) That Council provide up to \$1,500 per year for elected officials and \$750.00 per year for non-elected committee members to support dependent care expenses.

BACKGROUND

Property <input type="checkbox"/>	Public Opinion <input type="checkbox"/>	Environment <input type="checkbox"/>	Social <input type="checkbox"/>	Economic <input type="checkbox"/>	Councillor Activity <input type="checkbox"/>
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Council remuneration provides an incentive for community members to hold public office and compensation for the time and energy required to fulfill the duties associated with being a member of Council for the Municipality.

The Council Remuneration Policy was established in 2020 for the West Hants Regional Municipality (WHRM) following consolidation and is set to be reviewed prior to the annual elections taking place in October of 2024. In alignment with the Municipal Government Act (MGA), the outgoing council must determine the remuneration for the incoming council.

Through the Association of Municipal Administrators (AMANS), remuneration data is gathered annually through surveys, and shared with participating municipalities to review and incorporate into their updated remuneration policies to ensure we are compensating our councillors equitably across the province.

DISCUSSION

This report was prepared to review remuneration of Councillors and Mayor of the West Hants Regional Municipality.

Determining the correct remuneration for elected officials of a Municipality is the independent responsibility of the municipal unit. Common community comparisons often include the range of services provided by the municipality, the geographic area serviced, number of residents per district and unit wide, uniform assessment, then number of committees requiring council appointments and direct comparisons to other Towns, Rurals or Regional municipal units. It should be highlighted that Council remuneration adjustments should factor in that regional municipalities truly encompass both rural and town related governance and policy. There are

distinct jurisdictional differences between town and rural community as it relates to municipal service provisions, policy, fiscal responsibilities, planning and land use regulations, municipal infrastructure and the degree of Provincial and Federal collaboration or advocacy depending on the environmental characteristics of the municipal, community. Regional Council agendas very often have items that might otherwise appear singularly on a Town or Rural municipal agenda. Remuneration should be reflective of both the complexity and range of subject matters as well as the time required to perform governance duties.

Over the past 4 years, the Province of NS has experienced numerous socioeconomic and environmental shifts that have led to additional time requirements to the role of our elected officials within the West Hants Regional Municipality and the Province. The accountability, transparency, and number of contacts for councilors has been increased significantly through the expansion of electronic and social media activity. Whether residents live in an urban area or in a very rural community, they expect their Councilor to be accessible, well-informed, dedicated to the task and vocal in the decisions made at the Council table.

With the growing demands required from our elected officials, work-life balance, and time management may become challenging for some who have additional commitments and responsibilities outside of council (i.e. families, less flexible and/or full-time jobs, additional financial burdens, etc.). Ongoing council remuneration review is necessary to ensure that remuneration accurately reflects the time that is necessary to meet the requirements of the position.

Council remuneration alone may not impact the participation of more diverse elected representatives on the WHRM Council, but it is important to review the remuneration policy periodically and see if changes should be made to one or more elements of the policy to improve the potential to attract more diverse voices to Council, and to ensure the different communities within the Municipality have strong representation. Additional items that could be considered in an effort to attract more diverse candidates include additional health and dental benefits, reviewing the time of day that council and committee of the whole meetings take place and the duration of meetings.

Below you will find an overview of the previous five (5) years of council remuneration for the elected officials of the West Hants Regional Municipality:

WHRM Council Remuneration Over the Past Five Years

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Mayor	\$ 53,000	\$ 53,954.00	\$ 58,029.38	\$ 58,740.26	\$ 60,502.43
Deputy Mayor	\$ 27,950	\$ 28,453.10	\$ 30,074.93	\$ 30,977.18	\$ 31,906.49
Councillor	\$ 26,500	\$ 26,977.00	\$ 28,514.69	\$ 29,370.13	\$ 30,251.21

The typical increases each year over this period have ranged from 1.8% to 5.7%, very similar to CPI increases. Note that 2022/23* stands out as having an increase of 5.7%. This change occurred in response to the impacts Covid-19 had on the Consumer Price Index.

In addition to the above salaries, in 2022/23, pension contributions were increased from 6% to 7% for members of Council, and in 2024/25, pension contributions were increased again from 7% to 8%.

Compiling Information about Remuneration, Pension and Benefits

The foundation for collecting the data with respect to reviewing WHRM Council remuneration and benefits is through AMANS, as well as engaging with the below municipalities to gain further insight into their benefits and remuneration for their elected officials to ensure that the data being presented is consistent with what is being offered by other regions as well. Below is a table outlining the details of these findings. For the purpose of this report, we have reviewed council remuneration for like-sized communities' geography and urban/rural mix.

Table A: Remuneration Comparison 2023/24

	Municipality	Population (2021 census)	Mayor Salary	Deputy Mayor Salary	Councilor Salary
	Region of Queens Municipality	10,422	\$41,730.00	\$20,865.00	\$20,865.00
	Municipality of the County of Cumberland	30,538	\$42,058.00	\$27,639.00	\$25,210.00
	Municipality of the District of Yarmouth	10,067	\$46,814.00	\$32,361.00	\$27,867.00
	Town of Truro	12,954	\$53,373.00	\$33,446.00	\$29,723.00
	West Hants Regional Municipality	19,509	\$60,502.43	\$31,906.49	\$30,251.21
	Municipality of East Hants	22,892	\$64,411.00	\$41,289.00	\$33,030.00
	County of Kings	62,914	\$85,355.00	\$56,402.00	\$47,799.00
	Municipality of the County of Annapolis	21,252	\$71,342.00	\$47,319.00	\$35,671.00
	Cape Breton Regional Municipality	93,694	\$143,838.24	\$54,202.40	\$49,202.40
	Halifax Regional Municipality	439,819	\$176,033.75	\$93,988.33	\$82,652.64
TOTAL (excluding CBRM and HRM)		190,548	\$465,585.43	\$291,227.49	\$250,416.21
AVERAGE		27,221	\$66,512.20	\$41,603.93	\$35,773.74
WHRM/Average		72%	91%	77%	85%

Population Data Source: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=West%20Hants&DGUIDlist=2021A0005120B003&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1,4&HEADERlist=0>

Table B: Benefits Comparison

Municipality	Health & Dental Benefits	Pension Plan	Travel and Meeting Expense	Parental /Dependent Leave	Adjustment Mechanism
Region of Queens Municipality	No	No	Yes, reimbursement for travel outside of their electoral district (provincial rate). Meals reimbursed at cost, with detailed receipt and CAO approval.	Yes,	Cumulative percentage of the average salary increase of all employees over the prior 4 years OR CPI, whichever is less
Municipality of the County of Cumberland	No	Yes, 6.5% - 9% depending on length of service	Yes, km reimbursement (provincial rate). Breakfast \$20, Lunch \$20, Dinner \$35.	Yes	No
Municipality of the District of Yarmouth	No	No	Yes, reimbursement for mileage and allowances when travelling outside the municipality for meetings or training.	No	CPI (capped at 3.5%)
Town of Truro	Yes	No	Yes, km reimbursement (provincial rate). Breakfast \$15, Lunch \$15, Dinner \$30.	No	Aligned with collective agreement, however they have often not taken it.
West Hants Regional Municipality	No	Yes - 8%	Yes, km reimbursement (provincial rate). Breakfast \$17, Lunch \$20, Dinner \$30	No	CPI
Municipality of East Hants	Yes	No	Yes, travel allowance incorporated into salary based on distance from municipal office. Any additional travel is reimbursed. Breakfast \$18, Lunch \$21, Dinner \$30.	No	CPI
County of Kings	Yes	No	Yes, expense reimbursement not to exceed 20% of total remuneration	Yes	CPI
Municipality of the County of Annapolis	Yes	Yes	Yes, expense reimbursement.	No reference	Aligned with non-union employee increase annually.
Cape Breton Regional Municipality	Yes	Yes - 8%	No reference	No reference	Aligned with collective agreement for CBRM union

Halifax Regional Municipality	Yes	Yes	Yes, expense reimbursement.	Yes	Average Industrial Weekly Earning. Not to exceed 4% for councilors, or 2% for Mayor.
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Table C: Meal Allowance Comparison 2023/2024

Municipality	Incidentals	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
West Hants Regional Municipality	\$5	\$17	\$20	\$30
Truro	\$17	\$15	\$15	\$30
Cumberland		\$20	\$20	\$35
Kentville	\$17.30	\$17	\$17.25	\$45.25
East Hants		\$18	\$21	\$30
Yarmouth County	\$10	\$20	\$20	\$35
Town of Yarmouth		\$15	\$20	\$40
County of Antigonish	\$10	\$15	\$20	\$36
Town of Antigonish		\$8	\$15	\$20
Amherst		\$15	\$20	\$30
Victoria County	\$10	\$13	\$20	\$30
Inverness County		\$13	\$15	\$20
Town of Lunenburg	\$15	\$15	\$20	\$35

Health and Dental Benefits

From the research gathered included in Table B, there is evidence of increasing interest to offer elected officials the option of joining existing employee health and dental plans, at the same rates and shared costs for employees/employer.

Details on the costs associated with the WHRM benefits are outlined below. The elected official, and the municipality would both contribute the below amounts to be able to participate in the plan depending on the level of coverage chosen.

As of April 1, 2024, the rates are as follows:

Benefit Type	Single – Monthly Rate	Family – Monthly Rate
Health	\$145.84	\$378.19
Dental	\$35.21	\$90.83
Employee Assistance Program (paid by the Municipality 100%)		\$3.54

To be able to participate in the health and dental benefits plan there are eligibility criteria that would need to be met. Additionally, it would be required that all elected officials must enroll for health & dental benefits however, each could waive participation if they have alternate coverage.

The details of a health and dental plan contribution are a little more difficult to estimate, depending on individual choices and family circumstances, but these plans could be extended to Council as a whole for between \$10,000 and \$50,000 annually, depending on the level of participation.

Pension Plan Benefits

Currently our elected officials have the option to participate in our defined contribution pension plan, at the percentage contribution as employees, which is currently 8%. In some municipalities, council members over the age of eligibility for pension contributions, an equal employer contribution is added to the member's monthly remuneration.

Maternity, Parental, Dependent Care Leave

Since the change in provincial legislation to allow for parental leave for elected municipal officials, some municipalities have implemented policies to support this within their organizations, the majority being without pay but with excused leave. Additionally, some municipalities have incorporated expense reimbursement for dependent care needs into their policies as well. This is primarily in response to reducing barriers for broader attraction of candidates to offer in municipal elections and a larger number of younger candidates elected in recent years seeking this type of support. It would be encouraged to consider expanding this to dependent care leave, to support all family members who may require support during various phases of life.

Dependent Care leave is a topic that has become more available across municipal government, while it is not yet a universal benefit for Nova Scotia municipalities, it is something that should be strongly considered if organizations are attempting to support and attract diverse elected officials.

Annual Increase/Adjustment

Remuneration increases are typically tied to the annual Consumer Price Index for all goods in Nova Scotia. The current policy makes it clear to both current officials and potential election candidates and staff when forecasting and developing annual budgets. For the purpose of the policy and report, an annual increase will be defined to be in alignment with the Annual Statistics Canada Consumer Price Index (CPI – All Items) for the Province of Nova Scotia for the previous calendar year and will be effective April 1 for the preceding calendar years and be applied annually until 2028.

Travel and Meeting Expenses

Expenses are currently part of the Municipal Expense Reimbursement policy; and, have been included in this report for review. Many municipalities have similar policies in place where elected officials and staff are reimbursed for travel requirements while performing the duties of the position. Municipalities have policy statements that provide mileage, meal and other claims for officials to attend Council, Committee of the Whole, Committee, and other formal business meetings both within and outside of the municipal unit. Travel by individual Council members to meet with constituents or other purposes are deemed part of the regular duties as well.

This research did not suggest other approaches. The current values for reimbursements are noted below as well as the suggested changes to the values.

NEXT STEPS

The Council Remuneration Policy and Municipal Expense Reimbursement policy be updated as noted, specifically adjusting the annual stipend (remuneration) of all Council Members, including an annual increase in alignment with the Statistics Canada Consumer Price Index (CPI – All Items) for the Province of Nova Scotia effective April 1 for the preceding calendar years until 2028.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The council remuneration and reimbursement values will be increased effective November 1, 2024, and will impact the approved budget for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Based on the proposed remuneration increases, the estimated impact will be a shortfall of \$43,713. Reimbursement benefit is dependant on the individual, but shortfalls are anticipated with any new reimbursement benefits, such as childcare, and health and dental.

This adjustment will be incorporated into the 2025-2026 budgeting process and adjusted accordingly to include other mandatory contributions (i.e. CPP, etc.).

Annual Remuneration

	2020 Salary as per existing policy	Present, 2024 Salary (after annual CPI adjustments)	Proposed Salary – 2024 – 2028 (10% increase / adjustment proposed for Council member)

Mayor	\$ 53,000	\$ 60,502.43	\$ 68,752.66
Deputy Mayor	\$ 27,950	\$ 31,906.49	\$ 37,814.03 (~10% more than Councillor)
Councillors	\$ 26,500	\$ 31,251.21	\$ 34,376.33 (~50% of Mayor)

2020

Remuneration Data

Mayor	\$ 53,000
Deputy Mayor	\$ 27,950
10 Councillors @\$26,500	\$ 265,000
Total Base Pay	\$ 345,950

2020

Annual Pension @ 6% (municipality portion)

Mayor	\$ 3,180
Deputy Mayor	\$ 1,677
10 Councillors	\$ 15,900
Total Pension Contribution	\$ 20,757

2024 - 2028

Remuneration Recommendation

Mayor	\$ 68,800
Deputy Mayor	\$ 37,900
10 Councillors @\$34,400	\$ 344,000
Total Yearly Base Pay	\$ 450,700

2024 - 2028

Annual Pension @ 8% (municipality portion)

Mayor	\$ 5,504
Deputy Mayor	\$ 3,032
10 Councillors	\$ 27,520
Total Yearly Pension Contribution	\$ 36,056

2020 Meal Allowance:

Incidentals	\$5
Breakfast	\$17
Lunch	\$20
Dinner	\$30

2024-2028 Meal Allowance (proposed):

Incidentals	\$10
Breakfast	\$20
Lunch	\$22.50
Dinner	\$35

ALTERNATIVES

Council may consider:

- Making no changes to Councillor remuneration
- Continue to increase Councillor remuneration solely by CPI
- Change Councillor remuneration by an agreed upon amount
- Consider decreasing the number of Councillors, to increase remuneration to reflect a full-time salary.

ATTACHMENTS

- Regional Council Remuneration Report dated 28 October 2019
- Draft Policy of Council Remuneration
- Draft Policy of Parental/Dependent Care Leave Policy
- Municipal Expense Reimbursement Policy

Report Prepared by: 
Mark Phillips, Chief Administrative Officer

Report Prepared by: _____
Sarah Taylor, Human Resource Specialist

Report Prepared by: _____
Deanna Snair, Clerk

Report Review by: _____
Carlee Rochon, Director, Financial Services

Report Approved by: 
Mark Phillips, Chief Administrative Officer

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Small and Members of Council

From: Jason MacDonald, CAO

Date: January 20, 2025

Subject: Council Conference Attendance and Professional Development Policy

The attached Council Conference Attendance and Professional Development Policy states that three members shall be permitted to attend the annual Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Conference and Tradeshow, and that all members may attend if it is held in the Maritimes.

Mayor Small has requested that all members of Council be permitted to attend the annual FCM Conference and Tradeshow this year, being held May 29th to June 1st at the Rogers Centre in **Ottawa**, Ontario.

As this request is outside of policy, staff are looking for a motion directing staff to increase the budget to permit any members wanting to attend to do so. The cost is estimated to be approximately \$3,500 per attendee.

As per the policy, staff will also be sending an email in the coming days to all members of Council with details of other conferences being held this year requesting members indicate which conferences they would like to attend.

TITLE: Council Conference Attendance and Professional Development
SECTION: Executive Office
POLICY NO: 10350-26

APPROVAL DATE: May 23, 2023

CAO Signature: 

PURPOSE:

To set out policy and guidelines for effective professional development for the Mayor and members of Council to ensure proper representation at national and provincial conferences and to allow a fair and equitable schedule for participation at these conferences by the members of Council, including the Mayor. In addition, the policy will also provide for appropriate professional development for the Mayor and members of Council.

POLICY STATEMENT:

1. Staff will prepare a list of known conferences and professional development opportunities for Council, including locations, as information becomes available. Typically, this would include Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) annual conference, Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) spring conference, NSFM fall conference, the Atlantic Mayors' Congress, the Canadian Association of Police Governance (CAPG) conference, and the joint conference of the Nova Scotia Chiefs of Police Association (NSCPA) and Nova Scotia Association of Police Governance (NSAPG).
2. Members of Council will submit conference attendance requests to the Clerk. Staff will compare these requests to the approved attendance in Section 3 of this policy and advise Council accordingly.
3. To ensure adequate representation and appropriate opportunities for Mayor and members of Council to attend, the following maximum numbers will apply and will be included in the annual operating budget:
 - a. NSFM spring conference –three members of Council;
 - b. NSFM fall conference – all members of Council;
 - c. FCM annual conference – three members of Council
 - d. Atlantic Mayors' Congress – Mayor or Deputy Mayor
 - e. CAPG national conference – one member of the Amherst Board of Police Commissioners, not necessarily a Council member
 - f. NSCPA/NSAPG fall conference – all three members of Council on the Amherst Board of Police Commissioners
4. In cases where more members of Council wish to attend an event than is permitted as per paragraph 3 above, Council shall determine which members will be authorized to attend.

TITLE: Council Conference Attendance and Professional Development
SECTION: Executive Office
POLICY NO: 10:350-26

5. All members of Council will be permitted to attend the NSFM spring conference when it is in the Cumberland Region.
6. All members of Council will be permitted to attend the FCM Annual Conference when it is held in the Maritime Provinces.
7. Each member of Council will be provided the opportunity to attend at least one FCM conference or conference other than those listed in paragraph 3 during their four-year term as long as the content of the conference supports the strategic direction of Council, and attendance has been approved by Council.
8. The Mayor may attend one conference other than those listed in paragraph 3 per year.
9. Members of Council wishing to attend other conferences or workshops, not included in paragraph 3, will submit the request to Council for approval. Members of Council wishing to take educational courses or other learning opportunities not listed in this policy will submit the request to Council for approval.
10. Where budget allows, the Town will support members of Council interested in participating in the NSFM / AMA Leadership Education Modules. Information on these modules will be provided to Council by the Clerk as it becomes available.
11. For all members of Council attending a conference or workshop on behalf of the Town of Amherst, a brief written report describing the purpose and results achieved must be submitted to Council for information within 60 days of the date of the conference or workshop.

TITLE: Council Conference Attendance and Professional Development
SECTION: Executive Office
POLICY NO: 10350-26

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Title/Role	Responsibilities
Clerk	Adhere to the requirements of the policy.
Mayor / Council	Approve requests for additional learning opportunities as per Section 11 of the policy.

For Administrative Use Only:

VERSION LOG

Amendment Description	Policy Owner	Approved By	Approval Date
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Housekeeping amendments to reflect current names of current Boards. 2. Add Section 11 to include additional learning opportunities. 	Clerk, LeBlanc	Council	May 23, 2023

Minutes reference date: 24 April 2017

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Small and Members of Amherst Town Council
From: Deputy Mayor Davidson
Date: January 20, 2025
Subject: Anson Avenue CN Crossing Train Whistle

During election campaigning, I was advised that residents in the Anson Avenue area, specifically Southgate Village, are concerned with the noise of the Anson Avenue CN crossing train whistle. It is my understanding that this is the only CN crossing in Amherst where the whistle is still used.

Therefore, I move that staff investigate the feasibility of removing the CN crossing train whistle at the Anson Avenue crossing.

TO: Mayor Small and Members of Council

SUBMITTED BY: Natalie LeBlanc, Municipal Clerk

DATE: January 20, 2025

SUBJECT: 2025 Meeting Dates

ORIGIN: 2025 Holidays and Meeting Dates

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY: Proceedings of Council Policy 10350-24

RECOMMENDATION: That Council forward to the January 27, 2025 regular meeting, approval to change the February 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting date from Monday, February 17, 2025 to Tuesday, February 18, 2025 due to the Heritage Day holiday, change the April 2025 Committee of the Whole date from Monday, April 21, 2025 to Tuesday, April 22, 2025 due to the Easter holiday, change the May 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting date from Monday, May 19, 2025 to Tuesday, May 20, 2025 due to the Victoria Day holiday, change the December 2025 Committee of the Whole start time from 4:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. and further change the December 2025 Council meeting date from Monday, December 22, 2025 to Monday, December 15, 2025 due to the holiday season.

BACKGROUND: The Town's Proceedings of Council Policy sets the third Monday of the month for Committee of the Whole and the fourth Monday of the month for Council. The Policy also permits the rescheduling of such meetings by resolution of Council. Typically, Council will choose to reschedule by one day for minimal disruption. That is the recommended option, however Council may reschedule any of these meetings to other dates at their discretion.

DISCUSSION: In 2025, Heritage Day falls on Monday, February 19, Easter Sunday falls on Sunday, April 20, Victoria Day falls on Monday, May 19, our regular Committee of the Whole meeting dates. The December 2025 Council meeting date falls on Monday, December 22.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: There are no financial implications.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: The public and media will be notified of any changes.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS: No environmental implications.

SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPLICATIONS: No social justice implications.





COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CDR# 2025008

Date: January 20, 2025

ALTERNATIVES: Council may choose any other dates to reschedule the meetings.

Report prepared by: Natalie LeBlanc, Municipal Clerk

Report and Financial approved by:



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Small and Members of Amherst Town Council
From: Jason MacDonald, Chief Administrative Officer
Date: January 20, 2025
Subject: Eastville School

Earlier this month, Councillor Wells advised Mayor, Council and the CAO that she had been contacted by Donald Prest from Upper Stewiacke who is involved with the museum and heritage society in that area. Mr. Prest indicated that they have a one-room schoolhouse called the Eastville School which he stated Ester Cox would have attended. He further indicated that there is talk of tearing the schoolhouse down and he was therefore inquiring if there would be any interest in moving the schoolhouse here as part of Esther Fest as they no longer have the finances to take care of it.

Staff are looking for direction from Council as to whether or not this is something they are interested in pursuing.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Small and Council
From: Dwayne Pike, Chief of Police
Date: January 20th, 2025
Subject: Road Trail Act

There has been a renewed interest in the issue of the newly enacted Road Trail Act by the Province of Nova Scotia. This legislation gives Nova Scotia Municipal Councils the authority to 'designate' a part of a roadway within their municipality as a 'road trail'. The purpose of the legislation is to promote trail connectivity and access to amenities. Section 2 of the Act states: *"The purpose of this Act is to enable the operation of off-highway vehicles on designated parts of highways to allow for trail and amenity connectivity"*.

There are restrictions and conditions in relation to the use of Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV):

- Does not include snow machines
- Drivers must have a valid driver's license
- Vehicles must be insured and registered
- Helmets and, if available, seat belts are required
- The vehicle must have headlights and tail-lights, and headlights must be on
- Side-mirrors are required equipment
- Speeds cannot exceed 25 km/h
- Cannot be operated in the period 30 minutes after sunset or 30 minutes before sunrise
- No passengers under 9 years of age allowed
- Operation is on the shoulder of the road only, with some exceptions

As noted, the purpose of the legislation is to give municipalities the authority to deem certain streets, or portions of streets within their municipality, as a 'Road Trail' to promote connectivity between established OHV trails and to access amenities. The legislation has resulted in the establishment of applicable by-laws in Halifax, Shelbourne, Yarmouth and Oxford. This subject has been discussed on previous occasions, most notably during discussions regarding the Marsh Walking Trail and the problem with ATV's and OHV illegally accessing it. During those discussions, the new legislation was brought up and the issue of 'trail connectivity' in the Amherst area. In other jurisdictions, established trails exist within close proximity or even through the municipal jurisdiction. In Amherst, the nearest established OHV trails are located in two separate areas, off the gravelled portion of Eddy Road/end of Fort Lawrence Road (Fig 1a and 1b) and another off John Black Road across from the D'Orsay Road. (Fig 1c).

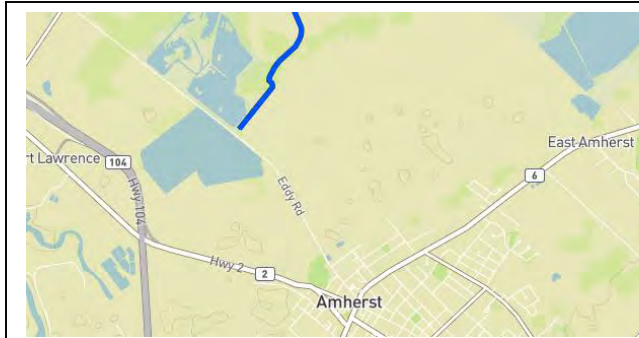


Fig1a

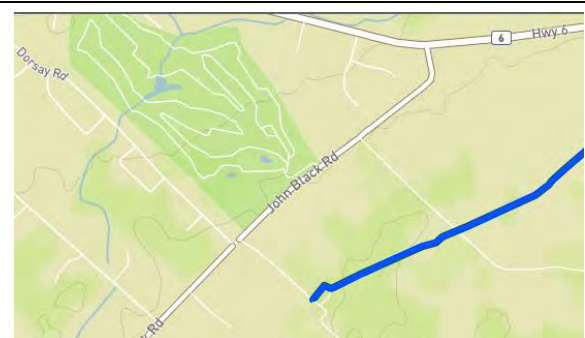


Fig 1b

These areas are not within town boundaries, and are quite a distance from town. Connectivity is an issue as OHV users have to travel outside town limits to access these trails. The trail that ends in the middle of Eddy Street (the gravelled portion that crosses the marsh) is especially problematic as this area is controlled and maintained by TIR/Public Work provincially and is an “I-Class” road, meaning that OHVs are prohibited from using it.

Another issue that has to be noted is that the town is surrounded by property, that for the most part, is privately owned. As a result, permission would need to be granted by existing property owners before those properties could be accessed to permit connectivity. Some of these properties includes lands that are leased from property owners for commercial uses. During our research into these issues, we also learned that some property owners are not willing to allow OHV access on their property because of issues relating to damage to the property and land.

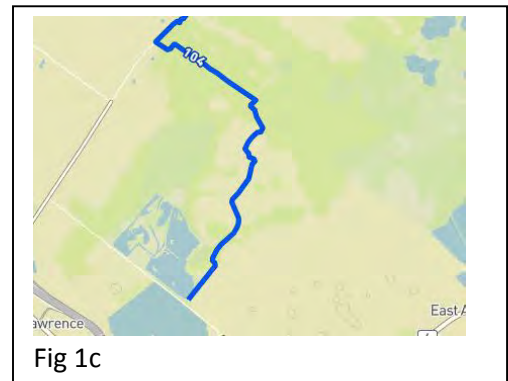


Fig 1c

In many cases, we know there is regular OHVs use in areas surrounding the town of Amherst, much of which is on private property for which no permission has been granted. The regular misuse of the Marsh Walking Trail is but one example of this issue. As a result, many people mistakenly refer to these areas as ‘trails’ when they are not authorized or designated trails.

Off-Highway Vehicles can only be driven on:

- K-Class Roads controlled by Nova Scotia TIR/Public Works;
- Private roads that are designed to be accessible, or are accessible to the public for OHV use where the landowner has given written permission;
- Ditches of highways under certain conditions (night – must be same direction of traffic, Day can be either direction);
- Roadway or highways outside of town or village that is impassible because it is covered in snow AND it is not normally cleared;
- Designated trails with a permit or permission;

- Private land (with permission);
- Public land:
 - Municipal land – (requires written permission for areas that permit it)
 - Federal Land (requires written permission for areas that permit it)
 - Crown land (Where there are no restrictions)
 - Abandoned Rail lines (unless signs are posted that state OHVs are not permitted)
- Municipal Streets as authorized by bylaw under the Road Trail Act (but does not include snow machines)

In cases where land use requires permission (private land/public land), local ATV/OHV clubs and organizations are usually responsible for the groundwork in obtaining such permission. This is the case in Shelbourne where the Woodland Multiuse Trail Association (WMTA) and the Shelbourne County ATV Association submitted applications and other requests for land use permission or change in designation. In September 2024, Halifax Regional Municipality passed a by-law in regard to road trails on municipal highways. This by-law, attached, also recognized the purpose of the Road Trail Act: to allow OHVs to utilize some portions of public roads to travel between established trails or to access services. The purpose is *not* to encourage the widespread use of OHVs as a means of general transportation, but to enhance and support off-road activities. Under the HRM bylaw, requests for the designation of a road trail would have to follow specific guidelines and conditions that include:

- *Applications for a road trail must come from a non-profit organization (Section 8)*
- *Sections of roadway must provide direct connectivity with designated trails or a designated trail and supporting amenities (Section 9(1)):*
- *The non-profit organization is responsible for construction and maintenance relating to access to the municipal road that are required to ensure safe access (Section 16(3));*

It does not appear that there are any designated roads in HRM at this time.

Other jurisdictions, including Yarmouth, Shelbourne and Oxford have designated trails that either pass through their municipalities or come to their borders. As a result, they have passed by-laws that allow OHV's to be used on municipal streets for connectivity. Each of these communities have a designated trail within close proximity of, or passing through their municipal boundaries.

Yarmouth: A designated trail exists in the jurisdiction of Yarmouth, ending at the bottom of Water Street and continuing at the top of Water Street as in Fig 2a. As a result, their 'Road Trails Designation' by-law, in section 3.0 states: *"The Town hereby designates all of Water Street as a Road Trail within the meaning of Section 5 of the Road Trails Act."* This by-law allows for connectivity between two ends of the trail (See Fig 2b and 2c), while also limiting OHV use in areas of the town that do not need to be authorized in the

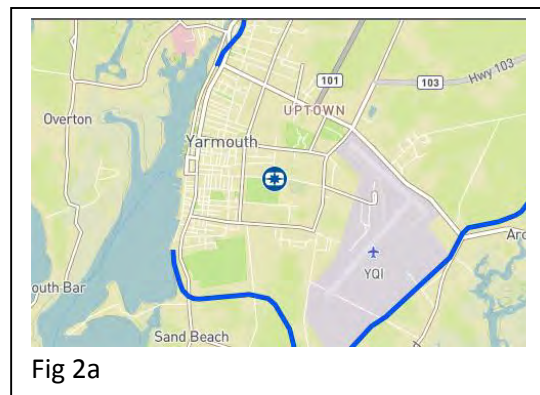
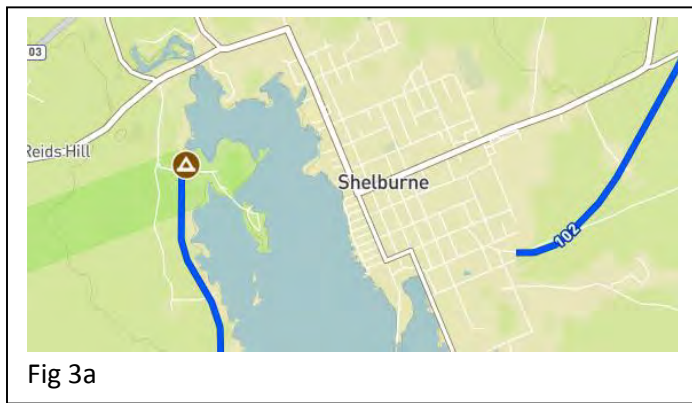


Fig 2a

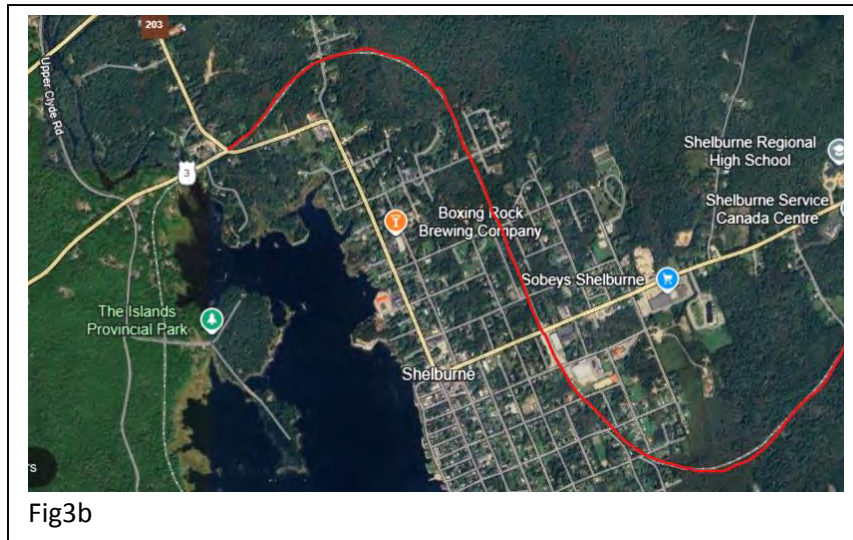
spirit of permitting a trail thoroughfare through town and connectivity. Again, OHV use is limited under the Road Trails Act and must be operated on the shoulder of the road and the other listed conditions.



Shelburne: Shelburne has designated several streets within their jurisdiction for the purposes of connectivity. A trail exists on the east side of the jurisdiction and continues on the west side. Their “Road Trail Designation” by-law authorizes the use of OHVs on certain roads to connect each end of this trail and the trail that exists through the municipality.



Much of the work completed on OHV trails was completed by the WMTA (Woodland Multiuse Trail Association) and the Shelburne County ATV Association and includes applications outside of town for road trails that provide additional connectivity. If the additional applications are approved, this will work towards having trails that could provide legal OHV routes between Shelburne, Barrington and Yarmouth.



Oxford: The new by-law in Oxford allows for OHV use on portions of Main Street, Lower Main Street and Water Street. The designated trail associated to Oxford. As the trail runs parallel to the 104 Highway by Exit 6, a portion of the trail extends to the rear of the Irving Mainway, while the main trail continues east within Oxford municipal boundaries before turning north along the side of Station Street before intersecting with Water Street and then continuing in a north east direction. As a result, OHVs are able to come off the designated trail by the Irving Mainway on Main Street, and continue on Main Street, to Lower Main Street and then Water Street to reconnect with the trail at that location. This situation in Oxford is quite different than that of Yarmouth and Shelbourne, as a trail already exists within the municipality, as opposed to connecting two ‘ends’ of a trail (See Fig 4b).

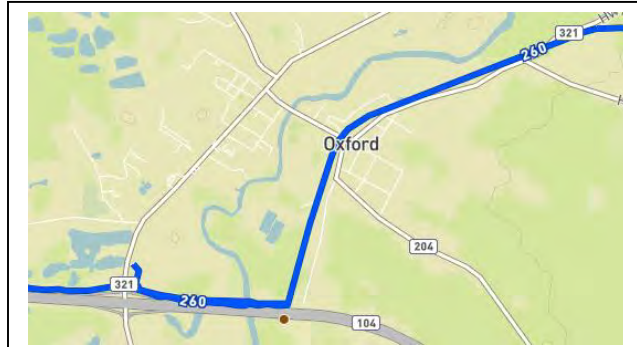


Fig 4a

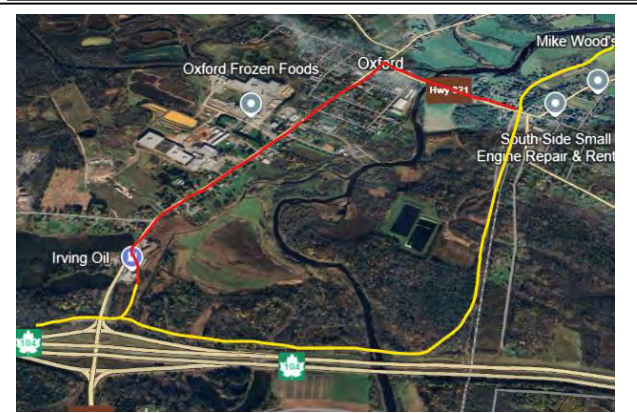


Fig 4b

In any event, in order for council to provide consideration for a new by-law and designating roads as ‘road trails’ under the *Road Trail Act*, the criteria of ‘connectivity’ and ‘access to amenities’ needs to be met. At this point, with no designated trails in town or within reasonable proximity of the town borders, this is not met. In order to meet this criterion, a substantial amount of work needs to be done in regard to trail access, permission to encroach on private property and other areas. As noted, the responsibility for this work should fall upon non-profit OHV associations who can then apply to the town to have application sections of roads designated once a by-law has been explored and developed.

Submitted by _____

Dwayne Pike, Chief of Police and Traffic Authority

**HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
BY-LAW NUMBER R-500
RESPECTING THE DESIGNATION OF ROAD TRAILS ON MUNICIPAL HIGHWAYS**

BE IT ENACTED by the Council of the Halifax Regional Municipality, under the authority of the *Road Trails Act*, and the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*, as follows:

Short Title

1. This By-law may be known as By-law R-500, the *Road Trails By-law*.

Purpose

2. The purpose of this By-law is to designate specific municipal highways, or portions of a highway, as road trails on which off-highway vehicles may be operated to enable connections between designated trails or to access supporting amenities.

Interpretation

3. In this By-law,

- (a) “Act” means the *Road Trails Act*, SNS 2023, c 4.;
- (b) “all-terrain vehicle” means a vehicle as defined by Section 3 of the *Act*;
- (c) “designated trail” means a designated trail as defined by section 3 of the *Act*;
- (d) “ditch” means a ditch as defined by section 3 of the *Act*;
- (e) “Engineer” means the Engineer of the Municipality and includes a person acting under the supervision and direction of the Engineer;
- (f) “highway” means a highway as defined by section 3 of the *Act*;
- (g) “municipal infrastructure” includes surfaces of the highway, curbs and gutters, and shoulders of the highway, and any other infrastructure within or outside the public right-of-way the Municipality is responsible for maintaining;
- (h) “non-profit organization” means,
 - (i) a society incorporated pursuant to the *Societies Act*, RSNS 1989, c 435, as amended,
 - (ii) a not-for-profit corporation incorporated pursuant to the *Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act*, SC 2009, c 23, or
 - (iii) a non-profit organization otherwise incorporated pursuant to an Act of the Nova Scotia Legislature;

- (i) “off-highway vehicle” means an off-highway vehicle as defined by section 3 of the *Act*;
- (j) “road trail” means a road trail as defined by section 3 of the *Act*;
- (k) “supporting amenities” means a business providing services directly related to the operation of off-highway vehicles on nearby designated road trails, such as fuel and service stations, convenience stores, restaurants, and accommodations; and
- (l) “vehicle” means a vehicle as defined by section 3 of the *Act*.

Application

4. Council may not designate:
- (a) a highway owned by the Crown in right of the Province; or
 - (b) a controlled-access highway or part of a controlled-access highway, as a road trail under this By-law.
5. (1) The *Act*, *Off Highway Vehicles Act*, and *Motor Vehicle Act*, and any regulations made pursuant to those acts applicable to road trails, shall apply to a road trail designated by Council, including the *Off-highway Vehicles Equipment Regulations* and the *Off-highway Vehicles Insurance and Passenger Regulations*.
- (2) For greater certainty,
- (a) the same traffic rules and restrictions in the *Act* and its regulations shall apply to the operation of off-highway vehicles on a road trail designated by Council, including the *Off-highway Vehicles Equipment Regulations* and the *Off-highway Vehicles Insurance and Passenger Regulations*;
 - (b) in accordance with section 4 of the *Act*, in the event of a conflict between the *Act* and the *Motor Vehicle Act* or the *Off-highway Vehicles Act*, the *Act* prevails; and
 - (c) in accordance with section 4 of the *Act*, the *Motor Vehicle Act* and the regulations made under that Act applicable to motor vehicles shall apply to the operation of an off-highway vehicle on a road trail, except those provisions that by their very nature can have no application.
6. Nothing in this By-law prevents, restricts, or otherwise limits the requirement to comply with any other by-law of the Municipality, including the requirement for an approval, license, or permit of the Municipality, such as a permit under the *Streets By-law*, or a license or a license agreement under the *Encroachment By-law*.

Designation of Road Trails

7. (1) Council hereby designates as road trails those highways, or those portions of highways, shown or identified on the Schedules to this By-law.

(2) Any Schedule to this By-law shall form part of this By-law.

8. Unless otherwise directed by Council, only applications by non-profit organizations will be considered by the Engineer for designation as a road trail.

9. (1) When recommending a highway, or a portion of a highway, to be designated as a road trail to Council, the Engineer shall consider whether the highway, or the applicable portion of the highway, being considered for designation:

(a) provides direct connectivity between:

(i) designated trails, or

(ii) a designated trail and supporting amenities;

(b) has a posted speed limit not greater than 70 kilometers per hour; and

(c) can provide a safe transition to and from the public highway.

(2) For greater certainty, the posted speed limit relates to the speed limit for motor vehicles on the proposed highway, or the portion of the highway, and not the 25 kilometres per hour rate of speed for the operation of off-highway vehicles on a road trail.

Publication

10. (1) Once adopted by Council, this By-law shall be posted to the website of the Municipality.

(2) Any amendments to this By-law adopted by Council shall be consolidated with the By-law and posted to the website of the Municipality.

Application For Designation of a Road Trail

11. The Engineer shall receive applications to designate a highway, or a portion of a highway, as a road trail.

12. (1) The Engineer, or their designate, may review a submitted application to determine if it is complete.

(2) If an application is incomplete, the Engineer, or their designate, may identify the deficiencies in the application and grant the non-profit organization additional time to submit information to resolve those deficiencies.

(3) If additional time is not granted, or the information is not submitted within the additional time granted, the application shall be deemed withdrawn.

13. Unless Council directs otherwise, the Engineer may only consider complete applications that:

- (a) are submitted by a non-profit organization;
- (b) are in writing;
- (c) include the fee, if any, required by Administrative Order Number 15, *the License, Permits and Processing Fees Administrative Order*;
- (d) contains an acknowledgement that the non-profit organization is required to sign the agreement in section 16; and
- (e) satisfies section 14.

14. The application shall include the following information:

- (a) proof, to the satisfaction of the Engineer, or their designate, the organization is registered as a non-profit organization;
- (b) identification of the highway, or a portion of the highway, that is the subject of the application;
- (c) an application for an encroachment license for any structures proposed within the road trail; and
- (d) a plan of any proposed work and on-going maintenance by the applicant to support the incorporation of the road trail.

15. The Engineer, or their designate, may review a completed application and, after completing that review, may forward a report to Council recommending designating the proposed highway, or a portion of the highway, as a road trail.

Agreement

- 16. (1) The non-profit organization shall agree to sign an Agreement with the Municipality.
- (2) The Agreement shall be in the form determined by the Municipality.
- (3) The Agreement shall include provisions that the non-profit organization agrees:
 - (a) to construct and maintain, at their sole expense
 - (i) any encroachments granted under an encroachment license under *By-law E-200*, and
 - (ii) improvements to the area of access to the municipal highway,

that, in the opinion of the Engineer, are required for off-highway vehicles to safely access the road trail and the highway;

(b) to fully reimburse the costs to the Municipality of repairing and maintaining the municipal infrastructure used by off-highway vehicles on the designated road trail to a general state of good repair, as determined by the Engineer;

(c) where Council repeals the road trail designation, to remove, at their sole expense, any infrastructure installed, and to reinstate the area to its original condition prior to designation as a road trail, to the satisfaction of the Engineer; and

(d) to release and hold harmless the Municipality, its servants, employees, officers, Council, and agents from any claims, demands, suits or liability arising from the road trail, including any losses resulting from the revocation of the road trail designation.

(4) No designation of a highway, or portion of a highway, as a road trail shall be effective until all the parties have signed the Agreement under this section.

Delegation for Agreement

17. Council delegates to the Engineer the authority to enter into and sign the agreement under section 16 on behalf of the Municipality, including any amendments to it.

Repeal of Road Trail Designation

18. Council may consider amending or repealing this By-law at any time, including adding or repealing a road trail designation from any Schedule of the By-law.

19. The Engineer may recommend to Council an amendment to add or repeal a designation of a road trail at any time, including where such designation has resulted in the creation of unforeseen safety issues, there is evidence of continued unsafe operation of off-highway vehicle on the designated road trail, or the agreement with the non-profit organization in section 16 has been terminated.

Done and passed this 10th day of September, 2024.

Mayor

Municipal Clerk

I, Iain MacLean, Municipal Clerk of the Halifax Regional Municipality, hereby certify that the above-noted By-Law was passed at a meeting of Halifax Regional Council held on September 10, 2024.

Iain MacLean, Municipal Clerk

Notice of Motion:	August 6, 2024
First Reading:	August 20, 2024
Notice of Second Reading Publication:	August 24, 2024
Second Reading:	September 10, 2024
Approval of Minister of Municipal Affairs & Housing	N/A
Effective Date:	September 14, 2024

**Schedule A
Designated Road Trails**

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Small and Members of Amherst Town Council
FROM: Sharon Bristol, Director, Community Living
DATE: January 20, 2025
SUBJECT: Accessibility Strategy - Reporting Tool

The Town of Amherst Accessibility Plan was adopted by Council in January 2023. Since that time multiple projects have been implemented and training sessions have been attended by staff. In keeping with the legislation of the Accessibility Act of Nova Scotia the committee is responsible to provide Council with a yearly report on progress.

Accessibility plans

39 (1) Every public sector body shall prepare and make publicly available an accessibility plan within one year of the coming into force of this Act.

(2) A municipality, university or organization shall prepare and make publicly available an accessibility plan within one year of being prescribed as a public sector body. 2017, c. 2, s. 39.

Accessibility plan must include

40 An accessibility plan must include

- (a) a report on measures the public sector body has taken and intends to take to identify, remove and prevent barriers;
- (b) information on procedures the public sector body has in place to assess the following for their effect on accessibility for persons with disabilities:
 - (i) any of its proposed policies, programs, practices and services, and
 - (ii) any proposed enactments or by-laws it will be administering; and
 - (c) any other prescribed information. 2017, c. 2, s. 40.

A copy of the 2023/24 report is attached.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee met on January 8, 2025 at which time they reviewed the reporting tool and made a motion to forward it to Amherst Town Council for review.



Updated
Annual
Report on
Accessibility
2023-24.docx

Town of Amherst 2023-2024

Sharon Bristol, Director
Community Living

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Appendix Items

Interim Indoor and Outdoor Adult Guidelines

Accessible Social Media Practices

How to add Alternate Text

Executive Summary

The Nova Scotia Accessibility Act and Access by Design 2030, provides a framework for how Nova Scotia will achieve the goal of being an accessible province by 2030 and requires that communities across the province work towards being accessible in the following areas:

- Delivery of Goods and Services,
- Information and Communication,
- Transportation,
- Employment and
- the Built Environment.

The Town of Amherst Accessibility Advisory Committee created an accessibility strategy to support their efforts in meeting the Provincial standards which are under development by the Accessibility Advisory Board.

Since the indoctrination of the strategy the Accessibility Advisory Committee, Town Staff and Council have made huge strides in how they coordinate, advertise and facilitate their events, have set out to make their front-line services, website and social media accessible, invested over \$500,000 to date into improving walkways, recreational and leisure spaces in addition to purchasing equipment to ensure these spaces remain usable throughout the year.

The Town of Amherst Annual Accessibility Report reflects our municipalities ongoing dedication and hard work in making Nova Scotia more accessible by 2030.

Summary of Recommendations

The following should be brought to council for consideration as we continue to improve the Town of Amherst's accessible features.

1. Prioritizing people with disabilities and senior safety. Continue and prioritize sidewalk and crosswalk revitalization and offer a pilot snow clearing program offering services to those who need it the most at an affordable rate.
2. Conduct community audits to gain understanding of where we are in regard to meeting the accessibility standards set out in the Nova Scotia Accessibility All municipal owned property and buildings should be accessed.
3. Create a joint accessibility/Inclusion Diversity Equity committee to address the overall needs of underrepresented populations. This will facilitate the establishment of our new Accessibility Strategy Due in April 2025.
4. Investigate the opportunity to enhance or create new fully accessible playground in 2025/26

Introduction and Overview

The Town of Amherst recently established an Accessibility Advisory Committee whose responsibility was to create an accessibility strategy that would help guide us in our effort to become a more accessible community in accordance with the new Nova Scotia Accessibility Act and Access by Design 2030.

Through the Accessibility Act and Access by Design 2030, Amherst Nova Scotia is committed to meeting the accessibility standards outlined in the following areas:

1. **Delivery of goods and Services:** Provide equitable access to goods and services provided by the municipality to our residents and visitors.
2. **Information and Communication:** People with accessibility needs can equitably access information and communications provided by our municipality.
3. **Transportation:** Residents and visitors with accessibility needs have equitable access to move freely and have adequate transportation options.
4. **Employment:** The Town of Amherst is an accessible and equitable employer. It supports the careers of employees with accessibility needs. We will seek to attract and retain a skilled workforce that reflects the diverse residents of the municipality.
5. **Built Environment:** Our buildings and outdoor spaces within the municipality provide meaningful and equitable access for users with accessibility needs.

The following is a review of the accessibility provisions set out with the Town of Amherst and the related accomplishments achieved over the year of 2023-2024 and 2024/25 in red.

Our 2023-2025 Accessibility Accomplishments

Accessible Standard: Goods and Services		
Provision	Objective	Accomplishment
Events	Have all events inclusive	The Town offers all events free of charge and strives to have events inclusive and accessible for all.
Training	Park Program	<p>Training was offered to summer staff to ensure our park programs were more accessible to children with different needs. Safer Spaces training which strives to build and increase awareness of the 2SLGBTQIA+ experience, raises awareness of importance of pronouns, explores privilege and addresses how we can be allies.</p> <p>PHE Training which focused on behaviors and technique, adapting activities.</p> <p>Summer program also offered free snacks and lunch.</p>
	Training for all staff	Multiple training opportunities for staff offered on accessibility and equity offered through the Association of Municipal Administrators Nova Scotia.
	Guide to Planning accessible meetings and events.	The Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings and Events document provided by Accessibility Directorate was shared with the Culture, Marketing and Events Coordinators in order to

		incorporate accessibility into all areas of their planning to ensure all participants have the ability to participate. (Appendix Item)
Active Living Strategy		An Active Living Strategy was developed where fostering equity, access, inclusion and safety were the key components in planning a framework to ensure an active and welcoming community for all.
Community Support Grants		Approximately \$10,000.00 was awarded to community groups and organizations to help with accessible projects including Fundy Winds to develop accessible trails, Autism Nova Scotia with community programming, the 50 + Club to improve the parking lot to be more accessible as well as the Cumberland County Museum to update displays to be more accessible.

Accessible Standard: Information and Communication		
Provision	Objective	Accomplishment
Delivery of Communication	Communication Training	Offered through Communication Disabilities Access Canada, a 40-minute Communication Training was offered to Town of Amherst staff to provide insight on how we can make our Municipal services accessible for people with communication disabilities and ensure our policies and procedures for meetings, public consultations,

		conferences, workshops and events are accessible and inclusive for the community.
	Communications/Marketing Training	Staff attended Accessible Communications regional training on digital communications and plain language.
	Website re-development	The Town of Amherst recently completed a website re-development project, which included making improvements for accessibility. (Appendix Item)
Advertising and Marketing	Accessible Social Media Practices Training	An Accessible Social Media Practices workshop was facilitated by the Accessibility Directorate and through conversations two resources were developed to support those who oversee social media content at their organization. 1. Social Media accessibility handout includes basic information and resource recommendations for further learning. 2. How to add alternative text by social media platform document includes step by step directions on how to add alt text and image descriptions on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. (Appendix Item)
	Information	Community Well Being team exploring different platforms to help information be more accessible to the public on events on activities.

Accessible Standard: Transportation		
Provision	Objective	Accomplishment
Pedestrian Infrastructure	Improvement of Town sidewalks	<p><u>\$145,000 for sidewalk improvements.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maltby Court from Park Street to West Highlands • Cornwall Street from Anson Ave to Kent Drive • Prince Arthur Street from Maple to Church • Mission Street from Hickman to York (TOA) <p>All the sidewalk improvement projects included the installation of Tactile walking surface indicator plates. They are used to alert people with low or no vision of potential hazards, such as moving vehicular traffic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LaPlanche Street - East side Victoria Street to Lawrence Street • Cornwall Street - Anson Avenue to Cordova Street • Beacon Street – Croft Street to Church Street • West Victoria - South side Hickman Street to CN rail crossing • Derby Street – Victoria Street to Walking Trail • Tactile Plates installed at the Victoria Street / Havelock Street Intersection
Accessible Standard: Built Environment		

	Snow Removal	<p><u>\$210,000 for a new sidewalk plow</u></p> <p>The new sidewalk plow will enable the Town to continue to provide safe and reliable vehicles for our employees to carry out their duties. The reliability of our sidewalk plows is key to being able to provide the level of service for sidewalk snow removal expected by our residents.</p>
Active Transportation		Investigating possibility of transit system.
Provision	Objective	Accomplishment
Public Space	Memorial Park at Town Hall	When the Memorial Park was being constructed, accessible features were incorporated into the design plan such as the use of concrete for the walkway instead of brick which allows individuals who use different mobility devices the ability to access the walkway with ease.
	Accessible Walkways	<p>In 2022 the Town of Amherst and a crew from Costin Paving and Contracting Ltd. began preparing the accessible park walkway project which included four (4) parks within the town to be renovated.</p> <p>The \$31,000 project in Lions Park saw an asphalt accessible pathway begin on Hill Street and travel to the park's splashpad and play structures.</p>

		<p>As the project progressed, about \$28,000 was spent on an accessible asphalt pathway in Dickey Park, which runs from East Pleasant Street to the park’s splashpad.</p> <p>In addition, an asphalt pathway was constructed in the Elmwood Drive Park, at a cost of about \$8,000 that made the washrooms and food pantry more accessible.</p> <p>\$5,000 was spent building a concrete pathway in the Beacon Street Park that made it easier for all to access that park’s washroom and play structure.</p> <p>50 percent of these projects were funded by the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, under its Canada Community Revitalization Fund.</p>
<p>Town Hall</p>		<p>Replacement of the ramp at Town Hall to current standards -approx. - \$45,000</p> <p>Addition of handrails at Town Hall entrances- approx. - \$5000</p> <p>Ensuring new reception desk is at proper height</p>
	<p>Playground Review</p>	<p>In the summer of 2023, staff reviewed playground accessibility through consultation with Parrsboro Playground Committee, Camp Tidnish, the Town of Westville. A survey was also</p>

		provided to the community to assess the various barriers individuals may experience at Amherst Parks. Work to continue in this area.
	Robb's Complex and trail system	<u>\$21,000 for a new trailer groomer</u> The new groomer attachment can bury stones, remove surface vegetation, breakup clumps of hard packed soil, fill in holes / washouts, and leave behind a levelled surface layer with a single pass of the tractor. The attachment will also be used to maintain the foul lines and warning tracks at the Robb's Complex. The groomer has improved operational efficiency and accessibility of our trail system. 2023
Buildings	Stadium Platform	To allow individuals who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices have access to view the ice surface over the dasher boards during an ice event, the Facilities Department at the Town of Amherst built a \$2000 10' high raised platform. It is 8 feet wide by 20 feet long and has a ramp that is 5 feet wide with a slope that meets regulation. The ramp can be moved and stored until needed. This project was completed as of September 30 2023.
	Stadium Elevator	The elevator at Amherst Stadium is in working condition. If it breaks, they have repair man on call who

		services it in a timely manner to keep this accessibility feature functional.
	Pedestrian Bridge	The Town of Amherst provided a Community Support Grant of \$5000 that allowed an accessible pedestrian bridge to be built connecting the Amherst Community Garden to the Dickey Brook Trail. 2023
	Accessible Garden Beds	Town of Amherst provided \$5000 to the Amherst Community Garden to build accessible raised garden beds. 2023

Recommendations

The following is a list of recommendations for the Accessibility Advisory Committee to review.

1. Sidewalks and crosswalks becoming top priority.

The Accessibility Advisory Committees number one concern should be sidewalks and should send recommendation to council for 24/25. As the sidewalks are being revitalized, the demographics of the pedestrian population as well as the mix of road users at different time periods should be considered, and crossing facilities and control devices should be designed accordingly. As the population changes, a “design pedestrian” should be considered to ensure the accessibility of all road users and not only those with good visual, mental, and physical capabilities. The design pedestrian will determine the walking and crossing speeds for the planning and design of these facilities. Furthermore, establishing equal access to the system by providing for the movement of people as for vehicular traffic is fundamental.

2. Snow Clearing Program for Seniors and persons with disabilities

The Town could facilitate the start of a program to aid seniors and persons with a disability in their residence snow clearing. This service could provide subsidized snow removal services to clients; seniors 65 years of age or more and individuals with disabilities who reside in a single dwelling home that they own or rent and where snow removal is the responsibility of the municipality. Areas that can be cleared include:

- Front and back steps
- Walkways

- Ramps
- Access to fuel tanks

The total gross household income of all people living on the premises ages 18 or older must not exceed \$35,000 and the subsidy would not apply to the cost of clearing driveways or roofs.

To access the snow clearing program residence must complete an application process and be willing to provide a copy of their notice of assessment(s) from the Canada Revenue Agency for the previous taxation year.

The program could operate on a first come first serve basis. When maximum capacity in the program is reached, it would come to a close and individuals will be placed on a wait list. Annual costs for this service are between \$200-\$600 and the subsidy could cover a percentage that is based off of the services requested or the applicant's income.

3. Community Audits

The Accessibility Directorate released a set of Interim Accessibility Guidelines for Indoor and Outdoor Spaces, which public sector bodies can refer to while awaiting the final set of Built Environment Accessibility Standards from the province. It is recommended that moving forward community audits using this Interim Accessibility Guideline be completed by the Town of Amherst Engineer Technician to ensure the right requirements are met when updating our indoor and outdoor spaces. Salary: \$60,481 to \$73,314 per year for engineer technician (**Appendix Item**).

4. Combine Accessibility and IDE committees to develop a new Strategic Plan for both in April 2025.

Celebrating Progress

The partnership between the Amherst Lions Club and the Town of Amherst has led to some exciting ingenuities such as the Lions Park. With a new, renewable 10-year memorandum we are able to work collaboratively to ensure that the park will continue to be integrated into the town's recreation plan and meet accessible standards when any new construction is being initiated. One such project was working together on constructing the new accessible asphalt walkways.

Moving Forward 2024-2025

The following are examples of the accessible work that the Accessible Advisory Committee and the Town of Amherst will undertake over the next year.

Accessible Playgrounds

Terms of reference for an external Accessible Playground Committee has been developed. Work is currently underway to bring the draft terms of reference to the Accessibility Advisory Committee for a recommendation to Council.

Building Accessibility Partnerships

Staff recently worked with the Bridge Adult Service Centre to submit a grant for the accessible walking track and entry ramp improvements. This will be reviewed and hopefully approved in the spring.

New EDIA Strategy

Staff have been attending training sessions on developing the framework for a new combined Accessibility and IDE Strategic Plan. Work will begin on outreach to equity deserving groups this month.

MEMO

To: Mayor Small and Members of Amherst Town Council
From: Sharon Bristol, Director, Community Living
Date: January 20, 2025
Subject: Town of Amherst Website Improvements

The Town of Amherst recently completed a website re-development project, which included making improvements for accessibility.

There was a complete review of the site's content and updates were made to improve clarity through use of plain language while also ensuring accuracy of information. The site's menu was re-organized to present content in the most logical way, so users can easily find the information they need. Some content was moved to new pages where users would be more likely to search first. New feature item icons were also added to the homepage for easiest access to popular and important pages.

New categories were created for content in the Town News section that allow users to filter articles by type, providing easier access to desired information. Old or redundant files were purged from the site to ensure only the most up-to-date information is accessible.

Several application processes were updated to improve clarity and ease of participation.

Images used on the new site are relevant to the information being presented and the use of unnecessary or gratuitous images was eliminated. Whenever possible, images are not used that contain text. If this is unavoidable then the image's content is also presented below in text format.

Wherever links are presented, they are now incorporated into a sentence to indicate a logical place to access more related information, instead of writing "click here" followed by a long URL. And, when users do click links, the content opens in the current window, to avoid confusion for people who may not recognize that a new tab has opened.

High-contrast colours are used in the overall design, and a site-wide accessibility tool was added that allows users to make adjustments as they desire, including colour inversion, contrast, saturation, link highlight, font size, and screen reader.

The site was re-developed to ensure functionality across a variety of popular browsers, and it was built to be fully responsive – re-sizing and re-ordering as required to properly display on any device type.

PROVIDING MEDICAL FIRST RESPONDER SERVICES

2025-01-15



Prepared by:

Greg Jones, ECFO, CFEI
Director of Fire Services
Town of Amherst

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OVERVIEW OF WHAT MEDICAL FIRST RESPONSE PROGRAM IS IN NOVA SCOTIA

The EHS Medical First Response (MFR) program is a provincial-based program that serves to enhance pre-hospital patient care provided by the Emergency Health Services system in Nova Scotia. Beyond the lifesaving instructions provided by the EHS Medical Communications Officer, a Medical First Responder is often the first physical contact that the patient has with an individual who can offer some form of medical assistance. This assistance can range anywhere from a person who knows First Aid and CPR to an organization that is certified as a Medical First Response agency.



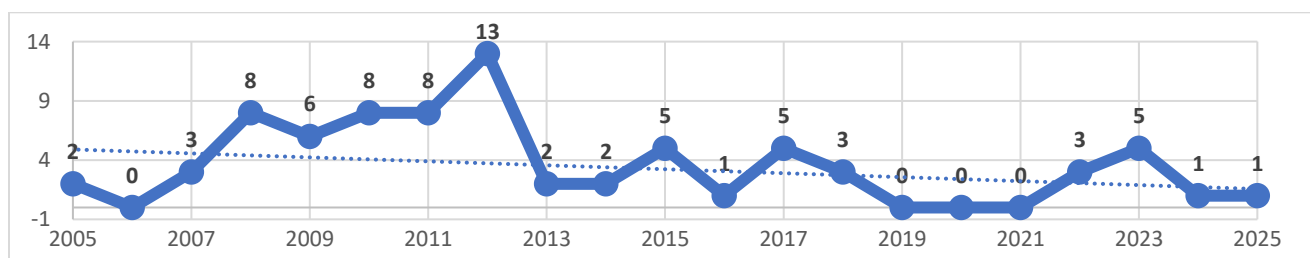
Medical First Responders provide patient care where the patient is initially located and do not transport patients to the hospital. Transportation of patients is completed by EHS paramedics following their assessment. In addition, Medical First Responders are volunteers across the province who are trained to provide advanced medical First Aid to the residents of their communities. In addition, all registered EHS MFR agencies have at least one Automatic Electronic Defibrillator (AED) so that they can provide early defibrillation before the paramedics arrive on scene.

CURRENT MFR LEVEL OF SERVICE

Continuously over the years the Amherst fire department has been faced with numerous occasions where the Amherst fire department has been questioned why we do not provide support services to Emergency Health Services. Unfortunately, this is untrue. The Amherst fire department has had numerous response interactions with EHS in my time with the Amherst fire department. Primarily, the AFD has responded to service level 4 responses (Cardiac and lift assists) since the 90's; however, over the last few years these requests from EHS dispatch of this nature have been reduced and continue to trend downward. February 2019, Greg Herrett, Mayor Kogan and Chief Jones met with EHS headquarters staff for a discussion on this topic and the concerns around EHS shortages in our area. This provided an opportunity to ask why we are not being requested for cardiac arrest calls and lift assists as we had always been. Unfortunately, we have never received a formal response from EHS.

RESPONSES HISTORY

The following chart represents only service level 4 responses (Cardiac and lift assists), which were provided by the fire department over a 22-year span within the Town of Amherst only. In total, the AFD responded to 103 known MFR requests within the Town of Amherst over a 22-year span.



In many cases the members of the Amherst fire department provide medical services in advance of EHS personnel arriving on emergency scenes. Examples of this would be motor vehicle accidents, structure fires, hazardous materials operations, confined space entry and medical assistance.

Total events since 2015

Motor Vehicle Accidents	387	EHS forceful entry	3
Structure fires	125	Explosion	3
Hazardous materials operations	15	Medical assist	23
Electrocution	1		

TRAINING - Medical First Responder

Medical first responders (MFR) must successfully complete MFR training through one of the EHS approved Medical First Responder training agencies - St. John Ambulance or Canadian Red Cross (Approximately \$750 per member or 56 members at \$750 = \$42,000). * Please note: Each consecutive year, a fully sponsored EHS MFR agency is entitled to receive reimbursement for MFR training of two (2) persons at a maximum rate of \$150/person.



This 40-hour course teaches students the patient assessment model, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, hemorrhage control, and care for a variety of acute and chronic conditions. Participants will be engaged in dynamic training techniques including video, media presentations, skills demonstrations, practice sessions, discussions and scenarios based on real-life situations.

All students must successfully demonstrate the required skills; maintain a minimum 75% mark for written, closed book, knowledge evaluation; shall successfully complete two evaluated scenarios (one each, medical and trauma); and shall attend and participate in 100% of the course. Upon receiving their certification, they will retain their certification for three years and will be required to complete the 20-hour Medical first responders (MFR) recertification training.

Following successful completion of the MFR training, and acceptance by the agency as an MFR, the member will be required over a three-year period to maintain their EHS/MFR competencies. This is additional competency training which is available free through EHS/MFR program. The program has the ability to provide the department a volunteer paramedic free of charge to deliver the required EHS / MFR training locally. With the exception of a few members of the Amherst Fire Department, all members will need to successfully complete this training to volunteer to provide MFR services.

RESPONSE DEPLOYMENT

Regardless of the situation MFR agency fire department would need to respond to all assigned call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; regardless if they are already engaged in another emergency event. In addition, fire departments could not send a mutual aid fire department in these situations.



When the Amherst fire department receives a single response request of any type the two on duty staff will respond and follow the still alarm protocol. Please note: during a still alarm response only the on-duty staff will respond to the scene with engine 1 and all personnel who want to attend to the emergency scene.

Unfortunately, multiple response requests for separate calls are dispatched to the fire department things change a bit. In these situations, a general alarm is sounded and all personnel with the exception of apparatus drivers report directly to the emergency scene. Apparatus drivers will report directly to the fire station and continue to the emergency ground or a designated staging area with the apparatus.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I would like to present the following recommendations for consideration:

1. Request a presentation from EHS-MFR Services - Request a presentation from MFR services coordinator Mike Lockett to present to council on the MFR program.
2. Engage the members of the AFD on this topic and conduct a poll - Re poll the members of the fire department to define current acceptance to receive MFR training and commitment to attending MFR calls. The last poll was conducted in 2019, where 76 percent of the members wanted to be engaged in medical first responder activities.
3. Budget allotment to support MFR training - A budget allotment of \$46,000 in year one to bring all members of the Amherst fire department up to the accepted MFR training level. Followed by a budget allotment of \$16,200 every third year to recertify all members of the Amherst fire department up to the accepted MFR training level at that time.
4. Level of response – It is recommended that if the discussion would be to move forward with providing MFR services the we provide service at the “IMMEDIATE LIFE THREAT” level only. This would mean that the AFD would respond to all calls identified as Immediate Life Threat by Medical Dispatch Protocols (AMPDS -Echo) - Examples -Cardiac Arrest, Respiratory Arrest, Choking with Complete Obstruction. This includes 1 to 2 % of EHS calls in Nova Scotia as defined by EHS.

ATTACHMENTS

I have attached the following information documents related to providing MFR services.

1. ANNEX A – DISCUSSION NOTES FROM THE 2017 PROMAX REPORT
2. ANNEX B – EHS MFR - CRITERIA, GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION FOR EHS MFR SPONSORSHIP
3. ANNEX C – EHS MFR - CURRENT LEVELS OF SERVICE
4. ANNEX D – AGENCY RESPONSE LEVEL SELECTION

ANNEX A – DISCUSSION NOTES FROM THE 2017 PROMAX REPORT

PROMAX REPORT 2017 – PROMAX Consulting - Report commissioned by Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities & Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia

Reimbursement for delivering services deemed provincial responsibilities, (i.e., Medical First Responder, vehicle extrication, hazardous materials, hydro responses and standby, traffic control). These services are generally not a provincial responsibility but rather private or municipal.

Funding – Municipal Perspective

What we heard about the Impact on Municipal Governments	What we heard about the Impact on Public Safety
<i>EHS is a private business* but municipalities are subsidizing this enterprise through provision of emergency first responder services in their communities.</i>	<i>Funding for local fire service needs are limited in order to fund provincial responsibilities. *EHS is actually contracted to the province and committed to province-wide service standards.</i>

Funding – Fire Services Perspective

What we heard about the Impact on fire services	What we heard about the Impact on Public Safety
<i>Fire departments respond to these incidents but must fund training and equipment from within, with no reimbursement from the province. Volunteers are required to take on these extra responsibilities and related training.</i>	<i>Local taxpayers are subsidizing provincial services with funds that may be required for community fire protection needs and circumstances.</i>

Recommendations

Recommendations	Discussion
<i>UNSM and AMANS establish a committee to lobby, and work with, the province to review fire and emergency service legislation, and establish regulation, guidelines, and an oversight body similar to the Offices of the Fire Marshal in British Columbia, Ontario, and other provinces.</i>	<p><i>a. Existing legislation allows municipalities to provide fire services in the form that best suits each community, and allows them to set operational and administrative parameters. However, the application of this authority has practical, financial, and political implications.</i></p> <p><i>b. Several studies have been completed in the province in previous years. Further consultation or studies, (other than for the purposes indicated in this recommendation), will delay necessary decisiveness and action.</i></p> <p><i>c. This recommendation will not eliminate instances of political influence from some fire services, as related during consultation sessions, but it will mitigate it.</i></p> <p><i>d. Guidelines and oversight resulting from this recommendation should be adaptable to the specific needs of groups of municipalities based on size and economic circumstances.</i></p> <p><i>e. The interaction between UNSM, AMANS, and the province will provide an opportunity to clarify responsibilities and cost recovery pertaining to support services provided by fire departments.</i></p>

ANNEX B – CRITERIA, GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION FOR EHS MFR SPONSORSHIP

This is only an excerpt of the form. The full form can be found at: <https://ehsmfr.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ApplicationforEHSMFRSponsorship.pdf>



Criteria, Guidelines and Application for EHS MFR Sponsorship

Purpose:

To provide the criteria used to evaluate applications for EHS sponsorship of an MFR agency.

The following process will be used in sponsorship applications:

A more detailed application process, supported by data from the EHS Medical Communications Centre, the Manager, EHS MFR Services, and other sources, will assist in more effective and consistent MFR sponsorship criteria.

EHS MFR sponsorship must meet the following criteria and agreed to by all parties involved.

1. File an application for sponsorship. The application form will include the following information:
 - The number of certified MFR members. There is an expectation that an MFR agency is available to respond to calls 24 hours per day/7days per week in their coverage area.
 - Confirmation that the application is approved by the area Municipal Government (i.e. signature from Warden, Mayor or CAO).
 - Type of agency sponsorship:
 - ✓ Fire Department MFR agency
 - ✓ Community-based MFR agency
 - Estimated population
 - Areas of risk
 - Service level (level of response) requested
 - Signature of Fire Chief (or MFR Coordinator for a community-based agency)
2. Applications being presented must be legible and accurate. Upon receipt, the application will be evaluated and presented to the EHS MFR Stakeholders Committee. The applicant agency will be advised of the decision both verbally and in writing. All evaluations, reports and noted findings will be filed for future reference.
3. Department or agency applying for sponsorship must be, or eligible to be, listed within the EHS Medical Communications Centre Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system as a response agency.
4. The Evaluation Committee will review/confirm:
 - MFR agency Application for Sponsorship
 - The agency applying for sponsorship is a community-based volunteer organization and is listed as a response agency in the EHS Medical Communications Centre Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system
 - Documentation of location, population, hazards, risks

ANNEX B (Cont'd) – CRITERIA, GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION FOR EHS MFR SPONSORSHIP

- Availability and location of other responding agencies to a call in the applicant's jurisdiction (coverage area)
 - ✓ Ambulance
 - ✓ Police
 - ✓ Mutual Aid Agencies
- Strategic location, i.e. remote area

General Information

1. Any questions pertaining to the EHS MFR Program should be directed to:

Manager, EHS MFR Services
239 Brownlow Avenue, Suite 300
Dartmouth, NS B3B 2B2
Tel: (902) 832-8620
Fax: (902) 832-8602

2. The Manager, EHS MFR Services shall use all available data and resources to review all applications. The Manager will then present the application to the EHS MFR Evaluation Committee and the EHS MFR Stakeholders Committee.
3. Any application which has not been approved may be appealed within thirty (30) days of written notification. Appeals should be addressed to:






EHS MFR Stakeholders Committee
c/o Director of Provincial Programs
EHS Emergency Health Services
Brownlow Avenue, Suite 160
Dartmouth, NS B3B 2C5

237

or faxed to (902) 424-1781.

ANNEX C – CURRENT LEVELS OF SERVICE

MFR Revised Response Levels

	<p>Regardless of level ALL AGENCIES will be requested for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Motor Vehicle Collision• Fire or explosion• Haz-Mat or related rescue type situation• Electrocuting• Confined space and industrial extrication• Request of responding Paramedics• Any other situation that the Ground or MCC Watch Commander suspects might require the presence of a fire department
	<p>Does Not Respond To Medical Calls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agency will still be requested as per the "All Agencies" list above
	<p>Immediate Life Threat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will respond to all calls identified as Immediate Life Threat by Medical Dispatch Protocols (AMPDS - Echo)• Examples - Cardiac Arrest, Respiratory Arrest, Choking with Complete Obstruction• Includes 1 to 2 % of EHS calls in Nova Scotia
	<p>Time Critical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will respond to all condition in the above level as well as Time Critical conditions identified by Medical Dispatch Protocols (AMPDS - Echo & Delta)• Examples - Shortness of Breath, Cardiac Chest Pain, Choking with Partial Obstruction• Includes approximately 25% of EHS calls in Nova Scotia
	<p>Urgent / Potentially Serious</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will respond to all condition in the above levels as well as Urgent and Potentially Serious conditions identified by Medical Dispatch Protocols (AMPDS - Echo, Delta & Charlie)• Examples - Burns \geq 18% Body Area, Active Seizure, Stroke, Symptomatic Overdose• Includes approximately 49% of EHS calls in Nova Scotia
	<p>Not Urgent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will respond to to all condition in the above levels as well as Not Urgent conditions identified by Medical Dispatch Protocols (AMPDS - Echo, Delta, Charlie, Bravo)• Examples - Assault, Severe Eye Injury, CO Poisoning without Difficulty Breathing• Includes approximately 72% of EHS calls in Nova Scotia

ANNEX D – AGENCY RESPONSE LEVEL SELECTION



Agency Response Level Selection

239 Brownlow Avenue, Suite 300
 Dartmouth, NS B3B 2B2
 Tel: 902-468-3051
 Email: mfrservices@emci.ca
PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

All areas of this document should be completed and submitted to MFR Services.
 All agency changes must be received by 1600 hrs on the first Monday of the month, if not the change will not be made during the same month.

Agency Info

MFR Agency Name	<input type="text"/>	
Civic Address	<input type="text"/>	
Mailing Address	<input type="text"/>	
	<input type="text"/>	
Agency Phone	Agency Fax	<input type="text"/>
Agency Email	Alternate Email	<input type="text"/>
Primary Contact Name (usually Chief)	Secondary Contact Name (usually DC)	<input type="text"/>
Primary Contact Phone	Secondary Contact Phone	<input type="text"/>
Primary Contact Email	Secondary Contact Email	<input type="text"/>

Response Level Selection

Our agency wishes to be notified of up to and including the following level of emergencies as determined by medical dispatch protocols:

Select One

Authorized By (Print Name)

Signed

Date

Regardless of level selected above ALL AGENCIES will be requested for the following:

- Motor Vehicle Collision
- Fire or explosion
- Haz-Mat or related rescue type situation
- Electrocutation
- Confined space and industrial extrication
- Request of responding Paramedics
- Any other situation that the Ground or MCC Watch Commander suspects might require the presence of a fire department

CAO Task Report

January 2025

Task Updates:

Task: Inter Municipal Services Agreement

This agreement has been signed. We are currently working through the execution of such documents, instruments and other writings as may be necessary or desirable to implement same. Some will be brought to Council for approval. Amendments to policies have been drafted by the Town. They have been sent to the MCC for their review

Status: Ongoing

Task: MAP Request to Present

Given that this item is almost two years old, and we have disbanded the joint committee, and we have not appointed a councillor to the MAP, I will be closing this task unless directed otherwise.

Status: Ongoing

Task: Anson Aircraft Monument

Allocation made in the draft capital budget. Staff have yet to meet with Mr. Gould.

Status: In Progress

Task: Committee Review

Combine the Accessibility Advisory Committee and the Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Committee, dissolve the Poverty Reduction Advisory Committee and implement any related poverty related issues in with the newly combined Committee's strategic plan.

Status: In Progress

That Council not appoint a member to the Cumberland Housing and Homelessness Association Board of Directors.

Status: Complete

The Committee agreed to keep the appointment of Councillor Ripley to the Intermunicipal Tourism Committee.

Status: Complete

That Council forward to a future meeting, the appointment of Deputy Mayor Davidson to the L.A. Animal Shelter.

Status: Will be on January Council agenda

That Council not appoint a member to the Municipal Alcohol Project.

Status: Complete

That the Joint Councils Committee be disbanded, and that the CAO communicate this motion with the CAO of the Municipality, indicating the desire to continue to meet and collaborate as needed.

Status: Complete

That Council not appoint a member to the Bridge Adult Workshop Board of Directors.

Status: Complete

Task: Request to Present – Social Media and Communication

This will be undertaken when drafting our new marketing / communications plan.

Status: In Progress

Monthly Report

Business Development

January 2025

New Business Recognition certificates were presented to two businesses - House of Birria and Jinx Dog Grooming and Pet Services. They received certificates from members of Council and their businesses were promoted on the Town's social media pages.

Year one of the two-year Nova Scotia Nature Agreement with the Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Climate Change ends on March 31, 2025. The Town continues to pursue opportunities to purchase properties within or around the North Tyndal Wellfield. Negotiations continue for a trade of lands with JD Irving Ltd. to protect a large area within the wellfield with an expected MOU to be received this quarter.

Staff continue to work with LED Roadway Lighting to identify a funding source to upgrade Amherst's streetlighting inventory to the latest LED technology with dimming capabilities while providing safe light levels. Staff are also investigating potential funding opportunities to upgrade the town's existing 'slow EV charger' behind Town Hall.

The designs for the business promotional signs between Laplanche Street and Fort Lawrence Road corridor are complete. In partnership with the Municipality of Cumberland, three new signs will be purchased and erected at permitted locations along the corridor. Staff are developing a program to allow businesses to apply to be included on the signs. The work for the removal of the existing signs and installation of these new signs is intended to be completed before the 2025 tourist season.

Work continues on the marketing and promotion of the Industrial Park, including a new Industrial Park Welcome Sign and site improvement. A vendor has been selected to construct the sign with an expected delivery in February. The new sign is to replace the old off-highway signage along Tantrammar Crescent. Its design is to showcase the park to travelers on the trans-Canada highway.

The application for the 2025/2026 Digital Marketing Campaign Program has been submitted to Tourism NS with results expected to be announced in Q2 of 2025. If successful, the program will continue the success of the Town's 2024/2025 program. Following the links in their social media feeds, interested visitors will find new photo and video content developed in 2024 and be directed to Amherst's newly revised community page on novascotia.com.

Staff are working on 2025 marketing and promotional projects across a range of advertising mediums. New Industrial Park advertisements will be placed on websites for AllNovaScotia and ViewPoint. Amherst Tourism Promotional Advertisements will be placed in a series of SaltScape annual and bi-monthly magazines. All the images for these new tourism advertisements utilize the content developed by the 2024 Tourism Nova Scotia Content Marketing Program.

The Town of Amherst will be showcased in an article in the February 2025 issue of Business View Magazine. The magazine is publishing a series to generate awareness of how Nova Scotia communities are 'open for business'. During an interview, magazine editors collected a list of past, current, and future developments highlighting the progressiveness of our Town.

The ACOA Destination Market Readiness Program final report is under review. Town and County staff are reviewing the report to prepare a summary of recommendations for Council consideration in the near future. The comprehensive report summarizes the consultant's research projects, surveys, and public engagement sessions over six months in 2024 and provides recommendations on the feasibility of implementing a regional marketing levy.

The Town will be a major sponsor of the 2025 Amherst Home Show to be held in May. The event will take place at the Amherst Stadium with the anticipation of over 80 exhibitors participating. Amherst Home Show is a non-profit group led by Alan Taylor that will donate proceeds from the show to a charity.

Businesses continue to benefit from the Town's Commercial Development Support Program. Incentivizing business development and growth, the Phased-In Assessment Agreement provides relief of tax increases over a 10-year period incurred by a property developments assessment increase. TN Trenholm Holdings Inc. and Cumberland Honda are the latest program participants.

Team Cumberland (regional economic development stakeholders) met with Darrell Samson, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Rural Economic Development responsible for ACOA. As a follow-up to the meeting, attendees provided the attached summary of the discussion points and takeaways for the Secretary. The expectation is that these points will inform ACOA's programs and prioritize our region in their planning.

The Dine Around Cumberland initiative is underway presented by the Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia. The Cumberland Business Connector has begun visiting restaurants throughout Amherst and Cumberland to encourage participation in the program.

The Mind Your Business committee has released the 2025 winter series of business workshops. Starting on January 23rd in Oxford will be a bookkeeping and income tax workshop. February 5th, in Amherst, will be Merchandising for Slow Seasons. February 19th in Amherst will be AI and Social Media training. March 19th in Joggins, will be a Making your Rural Business a Destination workshop and May 14th in Pugwash will be a workforce retention workshop. Details and the sign-up portal can be accessed on the Cumberland Business Connector website.

ACOA Information Session

Discussion Points

November 22, 2024 – Amherst, Nova Scotia

- ACOA should consider supporting businesses/ projects that actively contribute to reshaping the brand image of Cumberland/ rural Nova Scotia. This shift in perception would not only aid in talent retention within the region but also empower businesses to address ongoing labour market shortages effectively.
- As the Federal Government cuts back on immigration, they need to prioritize allowing the smaller number of immigrants to come primarily to rural areas such as Rural Atlantic Canada and Manitoba/Saskatchewan. Almost all of our workforce growth this past decade has been from newcomers. We have an aging workforce, especially in rural areas, and need new people moving here to sustain and grow our economy as more and more people retire.
- The work to protect the Isthmus is key - not just for Amherst and Sackville, or the Maritimes, but the national/North American transportation system.
- The largest manufacturing sector in Atlantic Canada is Food and Beverage Manufacturing. However, we need to stabilize the supply chain to maintain and grow our food processing industry which is an industry where Canada is globally competitive in. The aggregate farm profitability in Nova Scotia has been negative for several years. This sector needs to have additional funding committed from the Federal/Provincial governments to be able to cost share larger productivity enhancing investments on farms similar to what the fish processing sector has had in the Atlantic Fisheries Fund. For example, a \$100,000 investment in irrigation, drainage, freezing or other value-added food processing, etc. that was funded 50% by the farm and 50% by the government.
- Could the Federal Government (perhaps through ACOA or CMHC) provide an interest-free 1-3 year construction loan for construction of multi-unit apartment buildings. The loan could then be paid out by a commercial lender once the project is finished and is generating rental revenue? This would likely reduce the cost for new builds by over 5% as interest wouldn't be accruing during the construction phase. This could accelerate supply coming onto the housing market.
- Expanding market access is vital for businesses in Cumberland County to grow and thrive. Geographic isolation within Nova Scotia and inability to create partnerships inter-provincially creates difficulties in accessing larger markets or attracting out-of-region investors and customers. The integrated economy of Cumberland/Westmorland Counties is important to be aware of, similar to connection between Ottawa and Gatineau. Within 2 hours of travel distance, this region accesses all major population centers in the Maritimes. A focus on how the Maritimes could be better served by working collaboratively on economic development and investments by our Provincial and Federal partners with a commitment to develop the Northern Region of Nova Scotia would be progressive and provide much needed support for growing our region.
- Infrastructure limitations with digital connectivity for reliable cell and internet services, and road maintenance in rural tourist areas is a major concern. Lack of reliable cell and internet services in the area are not only a safety concern but also impede business and tourism operators from their full potential to adapt to digital platforms to meet changing consumer preferences. These gaps were also noted as crucial by tourism consultants recently as barriers to the development of Cumberland region tourism. Considerable gaps in way-finding signage and harnessing the potential of the Cliffs of Fundy UNESCO Geopark requires support. Funding to support a tourism signage package along with road and digital connectivity improvements are key to growing the Cumberland Region as an emerging destination. With strong reliance on tourism as key economic driver in the region, funding for these projects is critical.

- It's becoming increasingly more difficult to sustain a living as a small-scale wild blueberry farmer in Cumberland. In recent years, the global market has been saturated, driving prices down with unpredictable weather patterns impacting yields. Rising costs for fertilizers and other farm inputs is making it harder to stay viable. The 2024 market situation indicates the wild blueberry crop was smaller than average with small-scale farmers leaving crops on fields due to low returns. There is a need for more investment in wild blueberry cultivation to support farmers and sustainability of rural farming. Support in expanding international markets and value-added agri-food processing, like jams, jellies and beverages could be key.
- Cumberland is positioning itself as a leader in renewable energy through geothermal, wind and solar development with opportunities in forestry biomass, tidal and hydrogen. Research and development funding for green and tidal energy can play a transformative role in building a sustainable energy future. Integrating educational stewardship through institutions like Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) is equally critical, particularly for retaining youth and developing the local talent pipeline necessary to support this burgeoning industry.
- EV charging networks require Federal funding to help meet climate change goals.
- The Amherst Industrial Park boasts a geographic advantage, positioning itself as a regional distribution center for the Maritimes. This unique, logistical advantage reaches the Maritimes key markets more than any other location in NS. The park sits directly on the major Moncton to Halifax corridor and has been open and ready for business for many years. Attention and resource investment from Federal and Provincial agencies is necessary to capitalize on this opportunity.



- The Cumberland Region is a bounty of various natural resources with only a handful of existing businesses and organizations managing these resources. Agriculture lands like blueberries, farmlands for cattle and dairy, abundant forestry, and fishing co-exist in one region and can be turned into a major economic generator for Nova Scotia.
- Our region is dedicated to housing development through intermunicipal relationships. The Town of Amherst, like many other Municipalities, has prioritized the development of available housing for residents and new citizens. Amherst has actively supported and approved the development of over 800 units in our Town. Through unique inter-municipal collaboration, the Town of Amherst and the Municipality of Cumberland agreed to transfer land from the Municipality to the Town to advance this effort. These ongoing creative efforts demonstrate the progressiveness of our Municipal governments in the Cumberland Region.

Monthly Report Community Living January 2025

This month the Community Living Department has been working on the following things:

- Planning for African Heritage Month with CANSA, and Office of ANSA
- Planning Winter Carnival
- Assisting the NS Healthcare recruitment with events, sourcing potential housing, arranging welcome baskets
- Liaising with Schools to create a scooter program, received funding to purchase scooters
- Meeting with the Community Executive Directors for non profits
- Arranging the APD Strategic Planning sessions for the public
- Meeting with the Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Various ongoing projects such as NS Walks, Parks and Facilities Marketing plan and update of marketing materials

Task Updates:

<p>Task: NSCC presentation on Strategic Priorities Update: Looking at ways to implement some of the recommendations Status: in progress</p>
<p>Task: Volunteer Recruitment Procedure Update: Develop procedures around recruitment and selection for Volunteer of the year. Status: Ongoing</p>
<p>Task: Accessible playground Update: An internal committee of staff has been struck to determine plan, design and cost moving forward Status: Ongoing</p>
<p>Task: APD Strategic Plan Update: Working on Survey and process for community engagement Status: Public Meetings January 16 and 18th</p>

Monthly Report

Communications and I.T.

January 2025

IT Services:

- Completed Server updates.
- The Wi-Fi upgrade for the Stadium started as planned. All the old equipment has been removed and upgraded to new wireless equipment. Configuration is still ongoing as there was an issue with the firmware that needed to be addressed by the manufacturer.
- Dispatch remodel is still on going. We are still waiting for the VOIP phone and new radios to be installed. The radio people were supposed to come before Christmas to install the radio software on the new laptops, but they were unable to make it.
- The new video surveillance system has been installed at the Stadium. There is a new NVR and 20 new cameras. The new NVR can take up to 32 cameras so there is plenty of room to add additional cameras if required.
- Started on the list of new computers, monitors and cell phones that will need to be replaced for the 2025/26 fiscal year.
- The building controls server and software has been upgraded. The old server has been deactivated.
- Day to Day IT issues.

Procurement:

ID	Type	Project	Process Type	Budget Type	Released	Closed	App'd	App'd By
24-15	RFQ	Salt Hauling	Regular	O			X	CAO
24-51	RFP	Ventilation Fans	Regular	C			X	CAO
24-04	RFQ	Ammunition	Regular	O			X	CAO
241-08	ALT	Body Camera Lease 2	Alternative	O			X	Council

Other Communications:

Prepared and distributed December Council meeting highlights to media; posted to website and social media. Coordinated an interview with Eastlink TV to promote Winter Carnival and other winter events in town. Uploaded several rounds of documentation to maintain electronic records on the Town website; completed additional web maintenance and updates. Developed and distributed content for social media – communicating Town holiday closures, holiday greetings, and New Year’s Eve fireworks street closure. Shared details of winter parking ban across channels. Wrote and published two stories celebrating new business certificate presentations, and conducted an interview to complete a third. Wrote and published a story about the Amherst Police Department’s new chaplain. Prepared and published tax sale notification to website. Completed the Council spotlight series, sharing information with residents about Mayor and Councillors on social.

Task Updates:

<p>Task:</p> <p>Update:</p> <p>Status:</p>

Monthly Report

Cumberland Business Connector

January 2025

Priority: Support Businesses (primarily 0-50 employees)

- The Cumberland Business Accelerator Program continues to support businesses with high growth potential. Accelerator businesses have been supported in the following ways:
 - We have connected one client to Invest Nova Scotia's Accelerate program.
 - We have identified multiple ways for a startup business to monetize their unique intellectual property.
 - We have provided advice on developing influential customers early on in new product launches.
 - A business has an older, inefficient building that needs to either be replaced or reconfigured to optimize efficiency. A brainstorming session is planned for late January to identify all the improvements needed and identify the best course of action.
 - One business has chosen to walk away from a marginal, high-cost business location with profitability expected to increase by at least \$250,000 in 2025 because of this decision.
- The Business Spotlight program continues to highlight small businesses on social media. So far, this year, there have been 56 Business Highlights. Relevant partner organizations' programs and services have also been shared.
- Business Retention and Expansion visits are going well. Some highlights include:
 - One new business to the region wants to invest significantly in Amherst. They are open to suggestions and recommendations as to what will be most beneficial to both the local economy and their business.
 - Another business who has been in the region for many years is planning a multimillion-dollar expansion that will increase productivity, while maintaining their existing staff level. Their planned investments will also allow them to become more vertically integrated and have more control of their input costs.
 - Most of the restaurants in the Town of Amherst and throughout the Cumberland Region, have been visited to make them aware of the Dine Around Cumberland program for February. This initiative is in collaboration with the Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia.
- Workshops

Eight workshops have been scheduled between January and May for local businesses. Some we are leading and others we are supporting. These includes:

 - Four in person workshops in collaboration with our local partners.
 - January 22nd – Bookkeeping and Taxes
 - February 19th – AI and Social Media
 - March 19th- Making Your Rural Business a Destination, Joggins or Parrsboro
 - The 14th- Workforce Retention
 - Another virtual meeting for businesses in the Tourism Sector has been arranged for February 5th
 - Two sessions with the Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia are planned for March 25th
 - On January 29th a province-wide virtual workshop with the Regional Enterprise Networks regarding the HST tax holiday on remitting taxes and other questions that business owners have.

New Businesses

- The Youth Entrepreneurship business plan training will be held in May.

Priority: Increase Housing Inventory

- We will be attending the Nova Scotia Cross-Sector Housing Summit on January 20th in Halifax.

Priority: Labour Availability and Workforce Development

- We have confirmed that we will be holding Career Fairs in the fall of 2025 at the High Schools in Springhill and Oxford. We are discussing holding another Career Fair at the Amherst Regional High School in May. This is yet to be confirmed.
- We continue to connect clients to provincial staff that can help them through the process becoming Atlantic Immigration Program (AIP) certified which will make it easier to hire skilled immigrants, including those that have studied in Maritime Universities and Colleges.
- An employer with over 100 employees approached us for advice. They plan to invest significantly in their current employees as they need to bridge the skills gap that will result since the organization is completely changing its organizational model over the next two or three years. They need a consultant to do a workforce assessment. We were able to refer this organization to a smaller consulting business with expertise in their sector.

Other Work

- We continue to attend monthly Team Cumberland meetings
- We continue to work with the Valley Regional Enterprise Network, the Truro Colchester Partnership, and other organizations to discuss the Ag. Tech. Corridor that encompasses our three regions. Over the past seven years Nova Scotian farms have collectively lost money. Part of this is weather related, part is related to interest rates, and part is accounting related due to aggressive depreciation. However, the sector is not healthy. There has not been a comprehensive agricultural strategy for the province for at least a generation. Support is fragmented and ineffective. One goal is to work towards a comprehensive strategy that could potentially be incorporated into a future 10-year economic development strategy for the province.

Monthly Report

Finance

January 2025

FINANCE

The 2025/26 operating budget preparation is underway. Staff have submitted their departmental budgets and they are being reviewed by finance. The CAO and Director of Finance have reviewed the 5-year capital budgets and Directors are working on the RFD's for year 1 capital projects.

A meeting with the Audit Committee was held on January 15th. Since this was the first meeting in this council term an orientation was done for all members as well as a review of the second quarter financial results.

TAX / ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE / COLLECTIONS

Water Collections – Statements sent for overdue accounts.

Tax Sale – A tax sale is scheduled for February 11, 2025. There were 7 properties sent for title search and notices were posted on the 7 properties on December 10, 2024. There are 6 properties that are currently still scheduled for tax sale.

2024 Assessment Appeals – The Town received the appeal inventory from PVSC. There was a total of 95 appeals of which fifty-nine (59) appeals are complete, fifteen (15) are outstanding and four (4) withdrawn. NS Assessment Appeal Tribunal status for 2024: 3 total, 1 complete, 1 withdrawn and 1 outstanding.

	# Of Accounts Appealing		Appeal Completed as of Dec 1/24	Pending as of Dec 1/24	Withdrawn as of Dec 1/24	Outstanding Appeals as of Dec 1/24	Appeals Successful as of Dec 1/24	Loss of Assessment Value	Amount of Revenue Reduction	Nova Scotia Assessment Appeal Tribunal Status
Residential /Resource	74	\$26,779,800	44	0	3	14	10	\$537,800	\$8,981.26	1
Commercial	21	\$21,610,100	15	0	1	1	6	\$973,000	\$43,493.10	0
TOTAL	95	\$48,389,900	59	0	4	15	16	\$1,510,800	\$52,474.36	1

Tax Certificates – There were 13 tax certificate requests in December.

WATER/SEWER

The process for 3rd quarter water / sewer billing is now underway through the month of January. Meter reads will be completed by Public Works and billing should be completed and mailed out by January 31st.

CUSTOMER SERVICE TRACKING – E11

There was a total of 54 opened cases in December and 55 cases closed. The category with the most opened/closed cases in December was Icy Streets, with 12 cases for the month.

TASK UPDATES

Task: No outstanding tasks.

Monthly Report

Fire Department

January 2025

RESPONSES (December)

	<u>Town of Amherst</u>	<u>District 2</u>
Confirmed Extinguished fire	2	
Carbon Monoxide detector activated		1
Dumpster fire		1
Fuel Leak - Gasoline/ Fuel oil	2	
Monitored alarm	6	1
Motor vehicle accidents	1	3
Mutual aid requests	3	
Oil burning appliance Malfunction	1	
Open burn / Wildland fire / Mulch		1
Smell of smoke / Air quality check	2	
Smoke alarm activations	3	
Total events	20	7

As of December 31st, the Amherst Fire Department has responded to **268** requests for assistance.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Weekly fire fighter training

During the month of December, the fire department focused it's training on lithium-ion battery fires and the operation of hazardous material equipment, followed by two weeks of no training in observation of the holiday season.

Recruit fire fighter training

Over the last several months new members have joined the department. In the coming weeks, these new recruits will start the basic fire fighter training program. This program will run for approximately seven months, where the recruit firefighters will complete their in-house practical fire fighter training.

Junior firefighter program

The junior firefighters' program sees junior firefighters attend weekly training and weekend training once a month. Their training is focused on teaching them basic firefighting operations in a safe environment.

RECRUITMENT

The fire department continues to look for new members to join our team. For more information on becoming a member of the Amherst fire department, please go to www.amherst.ca/volunteer-firefighter.html

TASK UPDATES

Task: **No open tasks at this time**

Monthly Report

Human Resources

January 2025

Staffing Updates

A recent reorganization has taken place resulting in a number of staffing changes:

- The Procurement Coordinator position has been eliminated.
- A new position for Marketing Manager has been created and will report the CAO.
- Andrew Fisher, the Director of Planning & Strategic Initiatives, will be renamed to Director of Planning & Economic Development.
- Jeff Bacon, the Business Development Officer will be renamed to Economic Development Officer.
- Kim Jones will be reassigned to the newly created Deputy CAO position.
- The CAO's office will now consist of the Deputy CAO, the Municipal Clerk, the Marketing Manager, the Communications Officer and the Administrative Assistant (Clerk's Office).

Current Recruitment

Police Constable: Our recruitment campaign for an additional full-time Officer remains open. Staff had previously developed a video to promote the benefits of living and working in Amherst and becoming a member of the Amherst Police Department family to support the recruitment efforts. The video and posting will continue to be circulated online until the position is filled.

Police Science Cadet Program: The Amherst Police Department has applied and was awarded a student position in the January 2026 police class and is also on the wait list for a position in the spring 2025 class. An information session was held on January 18, 2025, at 6:00 pm at the Amherst Police Department. We had a great response from interested applicants. All vacant seats have been filled, and no further applications will be accepted at this time.

Marketing Manager: A competition process is anticipated to begin in the coming weeks for this new position.

Other HR News

Labour-Management Meeting

Staff are preparing for the semi-annual labour-management meeting with our Police department/APA Local 104 with the next meeting to take place in early February 2025.

Employee Wellness Survey and Strategy

The confidential employee wellness survey was completed on December 13, 2024, with a very strong response rate. A great big thank you to all staff that completed the survey!

Human resources staff are compiling the responses and will present the findings to Directors in the coming weeks with the intention of developing actionable plans to further support employee wellness.

The survey responses will also help frame the development of an official employee wellness strategy to be completed in 2025.

Annual Performance Evaluations

HR staff are working on rolling out our annual employee performance evaluations. Historically, these reviews have not been completed in-step with our fiscal year. It is our goal to begin the evaluation process this month with the intention of having the evaluations completed to align with our new fiscal year April 1, 2025.

HR Policy Review

Staff also continue to review all HR policies and procedures with the “Staff Training and Professional Development” policy currently under review for recommended revisions.

Payroll

Payroll and WCB remittances are up to date.

Payroll remittances are remitted to CRA bi-weekly by the payroll company.

WCB is remitted automatically via our payroll provider.

Staff are actively preparing payroll year-end processes which will continue throughout January resulting in the issuance of 2024 T4 and T4A's in February 2025.

Monthly Report

Operations

January 2025

In addition to their routine maintenance work Operational Services staff worked on and will be working on:

RECREATION & HORTICULTURE

- Dickey Park washroom is open daily 8:00am to 5:00pm.
- The walking track at the stadium is generally available for use daily from 7:00am to 9:00pm.
- Outdoor rink is open for the season. Depending on the weather the ice surface is open daily from 9:00am to 9:00pm.
- Stadium Events in January included;
 - Chuck Linney U7 Jamboree
 - U18 League All Star Game
 - Amherst Junior A Ramblers 5 home games
 - Amherst Senior Ducks 2 home games
- Capital Projects finished in the past month;
 - Dickey Park washrooms – new steel roof
 - Replacement utility trailer purchased
 - Security fencing at Angus building compound completed
- The RFP's for 2025 hanging baskets and bedding flowers have been reviewed and revised and will be sent out by the end of the month
- New Years Eve skate and fireworks show at the stadium was well attended

PUBLIC WORKS

- There were 3 snow events in the last month that required plowing of streets and sidewalks
- Sidewalk salting took place on 5 occasions and the salt truck was dispatched 15 times due to icy conditions
- There were 4 broken water mains and 3 plugged sewers repaired in the past month
- Staff have been patching potholes with recycled asphalt, typically 3 days per week
- Decorative Christmas lighting is being removed and stored
- Quarterly meter reading has started and will be ongoing until late January
- Operations staff are working on the Town Hall office renovations, goal is to have the work completed by the end of January

UPCOMING

- Following quarterly meter reading, staff will investigate any high or zero consumption meter reads
- Snow and de-icing operations of streets, sidewalks and VIA rail platform as needed
- Patching of potholes with recycled asphalt is ongoing
- Dickey Park hosting Coldest Night of the Year Event on February 22
- Hosting U9 Jamboree at the stadium from February 14-16
- Hosting Nova Scotia Provincial Figure Skating Championships on February 28

Task Updates:

Task: Havelock / Victoria Street Intersection Traffic Signals

Update: Staff will include options for intersection improvements in the 2025/26 capital budget

Status: In Progress

Task: WWTP Grey Water Energy Extraction Report

Update: Staff did not have time to prepare the memo for December COW, will be completed for February 2025 COW.

Status: In Progress

Task: Sidewalk Curb and Construction

Update: A recommendation for Council from the Accessibility Advisory Committee will be brought to COW in February 2025

Status: In Progress

Task: Water Utility Dump Truck

Update: Delivery expected by the end of January 2025

Status: In Progress

Task: Capital Budget Amendment – New Loader

Update: The new loader has been ordered; delivery is expected February 2025.

Status: In Progress

Monthly Report

Planning & Strategic Priorities

January 2025

The attached development activity report shows permits issued in December and a 2023/2024 comparison. A total of 90 new dwelling units were permitted in 2024, a significant increase over the 61 permitted in 2023. 2025 is anticipated to be another strong year for residential development permits. Non-residential permits have been down the last two years; however, with the two malls under new ownership staff anticipate more activity in these sectors going forward.

The Planning Advisory Committee met on January 13th. A motion was passed to recommend Council enter into a development agreement for 96 Church Street to permit a total of seven units on the property. Council will consider 1st reading of the agreement this month. The PAC were also provided with revised Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw drafts with a view to undertake a more detailed review in February.

Staff are processing several permits for dwellings within the Hillsdale development. The application received in the fall of 2024 for a development agreement to permit a large-scale development near Russell Street has been paused by the owner. Staff have scheduled a meeting with the developer soon to discuss their new plans. A Public Participation Opportunity is scheduled for February 6th for development agreement applications to permit an 18-unit apartment building at 91 Rupert Street and an 8-unit apartment building at 3 Robie Street.

As noted above, staff delivered revised MPS & LUB drafts to the PAC and are working on further refinements to these documents for February. The PAC will have a more in-depth review of the drafts in February and March if needed. Council will be asked to consider 1st reading of the drafts in March, followed by public engagement in April-May. The goal is to put Council in a position to approve the new planning documents by July.

Staff are also developing a Request for Proposals for new e-permitting software and a report to Council regarding development fees for affordable housing.

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

A report on business development activities is provided in the meeting package separately.

Task Updates:

Task: 15 & 31 East Victoria Street Development Agreement

Update: The agreement is ready to be signed but the developer is sorting through land encumbrances before they can execute the agreement. Staff continue to engage them.

Status: Ongoing

Task: 9 Laplanche Street Development Agreement

Update: The agreement has been executed and has been forwarded for registration.

Status: Complete

Task: Industrial Park Land Acquisition

Update: The land transfer received ministerial approval and legal/survey work to complete the transfer is underway with a completion date scheduled for March.

Status: Ongoing

Task: 105 South Albion (Blaine Street) and Ottawa Avenue Acquisitions

Update: Staff are working with the developer to execute the development agreement with a tentative closing date in March for the land transaction.

Status: Blaine Street is ongoing. Development of the Ottawa Avenue property is paused.

Task: Hotel Levy

Update: The final report was completed in December. Staff are working on a summary of the report recommendations that will be presented to Council, tentatively in February.

Task: Nova Scotia Nature Agreement (formerly the Nature Challenge Fund)

Update: Council approved a 2-year agreement to continue seeking acquisitions in and around the Tyndal Wellfield. This agreement is executed.

Status: Complete and actioned

Task: LED Roadway Lighting Proposal

Update: With previous funding applications having been denied, LED Roadway continue to identify potential funding opportunities for a pilot project that would include replacement of almost all of the town's streetlights to more efficient lights, while testing LEDs radar and camera technologies.

Status: Paused, pending outcome of funding application

Task: 8 Lower Laplanche Purchase

Update: Staff and the town's solicitor continue to get updates on the finalization of the property vendor's estate. Indications are that the estate has been settled but has yet to be registered.

Status: Pause, pending settlement and registration of the vendor's estate.

Permits Issued in December 2024

PERMIT APPLICATIONS								For the Month of December
Number	PID	Civc Address	New Units	Work Type	Bldg Type	Proposed Use	Permit Fee	Value
C2024-110	25027004	13 West Pleasant St	0	Renovate	Commercial	Office	1,550.00	600,000.00
B2024-109	25025719	2 Patterson St	0	Renovate	Single Detached Dwelling	Accessory Uses - Other	53.00	1,500.00
C2024-106	25519398	15 Oakwood Path	1	Construction	Double Dwelling	Semi-Detached Dwelling	121.00	170,000.00
C2024-107	25038720	17 Oakwood Path	1	Construction	Double Dwelling	Semi-Detached Dwelling	121.00	170,000.00
C2024-111	25519844	3 Oakwood Path	1	Construction	Double Dwelling	Semi-Detached Dwelling	121.00	170,000.00
C2024-112	25519836	1 Oakwood Path	1	Construction	Double Dwelling	Semi-Detached Dwelling	121.00	170,000.00
C2024-114	25519893	13 Oakwood Path	1	Construction	Double Dwelling	Semi-Detached Dwelling	121.00	170,000.00
C2024-115	25519968	27 Oakwood Path	1	Construction	Double Dwelling	Semi-Detached Dwelling	121.00	170,000.00
C2024-116	25519950	25 Oakwood Path	1	Construction	Double Dwelling	Semi-Detached Dwelling	121.00	170,000.00
C2024-117	25519851	5 Oakwood Path	1	Construction	Apartments	Triplex	96.00	115,000.00
C2024-118	25519869	7 Oakwood Path	1	Construction	Apartments	Triplex	96.00	115,000.00
C2024-119	25519877	9 Oakwood Path	1	Construction	Apartments	Triplex	96.00	115,000.00
C2024-120	25519927	19 Oakwood Path	1	Construction	Apartments	Triplex	96.00	115,000.00
C2024-121	25519935	21 Oakwood Path	1	Construction	Apartments	Triplex	96.00	115,000.00
C2024-122	25519943	23 Oakwood Path	1	Construction	Apartments	Triplex	96.00	115,000.00
C2024-104	25520099	10 Vista Dr	1	Construction	Single Detached Dwelling	Single Detached Dwelling	164.00	245,000.00
Total	16		14				3,190.00	2,726,500.00

2023-2024 Comparison

ACTIVITY REPORT							For Month of December 2024-12-31
Type	Dec 2023			Dec 2024			
	Permits	Units	Value of Construction	Permits	Units	Value of Construction	
Single Family	7	3	1,168,682	2	1	246,500	
Duplex/Semi	0	0	0	7	7	1,190,000	
Apartments	0	0	0	6	6	690,000	
Other Residential	1	0	1,800	0	0	0	
Commercial	0	0	0	1	0	600,000	
Industrial	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Inst & Gov	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Agriculture	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Total	8	3	1,170,482	16	14	2,726,500	
Year To Date	90	61	72,797,053	119	90	21,069,650	

MONTHLY REPORT

POLICE SERVICES

January 2025

PERSONNEL

New Part-Time Dispatcher: On January 2nd, 2025, APD welcomed its newest employee, part-time Dispatcher Scott MacKay. Scott was in the military for 25 years from 1997 to 2022 and held the rank of Master Corporal. Upon his retirement he studied carpentry at NSCC, graduating in 2024 and was his class valedictorian. Scott expressed a desire to be of service to his new community and decided working in Police Dispatch would be a good way to achieve this. Scott will be filling in for shortages, vacations and other operational requirements.

GENERAL OPERATIONAL UPDATES:

Stolen Vehicles: The month of December saw an increase in the issue of stolen motor vehicles.

On December 23rd, APD had three complaints of stolen vehicles:

- At approximately 5:45am, police were called regarding a stolen 2021 Toyota Highlander that was stolen from the area of Dickey Street. This vehicle was recovered in Moncton on January 8th, 2025. The investigation continues.
- At approximately 6:20am, police were contacted when the owners of a 2017 Hyundai Santa Fe discovered it had been stolen from the Donald Avenue area. A few days later, police recovered some of the vehicle contents in the area of the Stadium overflow parking lot. The abandoned vehicle was located in Berry Mills, NB on the 26th of December. The matter is still under investigation.
- At 3:58pm, police received another call of a stolen 2010 Toyota Tundra that was stolen from Eddy Street. The vehicle had been parked on the street with a trailer and went missing sometime since 1:00pm. This vehicle has not yet been recovered or located.

Amherst Police also recovered 3 stolen vehicles during the month:

- On December 12th, 2024, APD received word that individuals were in the area in a Dodge Ram that had been stolen from Moncton, NB. The vehicle was located parked on Spring Street by police. It was seized and brought back to the office where it was searched. A loaded 12-gauge shotgun was located behind the seat as well as a baseball bat. The owner advised that the items did not belong to him. The matter is still under investigation.
- On December 23rd, at approximately 6:30pm, Amherst Police received a call concerning a car that had smashed into a parked truck on Anson Avenue. Witnesses advised that the four occupants exited the car and fled the scene. Police attended and both vehicles had sustained significant damage. The car, a black 2022 Toyota Corolla had been reported stolen in New Brunswick on November 30th. This matter remains under investigation.
- On December 26th, at approximately 9:15am, an APD member observed a truck that had been reported as stolen on Church Street in Amherst. The truck had been reported as stolen from Moncton, NB the previous day. Police were able to do a high-risk takedown of the vehicle on Laplanche Street and took three people into custody. 1 person was released without charge, the second person, an adult female from New Brunswick was held on a New Brunswick warrant and later turned over the NB RCMP. She is also facing several charges that include possession of property obtained by crime. The third person, a 35-year-old Michael Brydges was held in custody and has been charged with 2 counts of property obtained by crime (the truck and a keyfob belonging to a vehicle stolen in Amherst on December 23rd) as well as a breach of a weapons prohibition and taking a car without consent. He was remanded into custody.

Shoplifting Complaints: During the month of December, the Amherst Police received 13 complaints of shoplifting. In November shoplifting complaints had reached 17 occurrences as compared to 8 in October and 11 in September. Outside of shoplifting complaints, APD also received 22 complaints concerning other types of theft, which compares to 27 complaints of theft in November and 31 complaints in October. December also saw 3 reported gas drive-offs as compared to 4 in November, 7 in October and 9 in September.

Homelessness: During the month of December, APD members responded to 34 complaints that had a nexus to homelessness. This is a drop from 41 complaints in November and 47 complaints during October. As previously indicated, the majority of homelessness complaints are generated by the same 3-4 of people.



2024 -Year in Review – Comparison to 2023:

As 2024 came to a close, we were able to compare our annual stats to those in 2023. In some areas, the stats decreased from year to year, while in other areas there was an increase. Our total occurrence numbers dropped by 0.6% (6256/6294). Below are some of the other changes in stats between 2023 and 2024, which are categorized by ‘occurrence type’:

Increases included:	Decreases included:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suspicious person, vehicle: increase of 26.1% (556/441) Trespass Act: increase by 11.6% (355/318) Flight from Police: increase of 83.3% (33/18) Traffic Accidents: increase of 12.1% (157/140) Theft: increase of 8.5% (295/272) Disturbing the peace: increase of 9.9% (133/121) Criminal Harassment: increase of 12.9% (79/70) Poss of stolen property: increase of 4.2% (25/24) Foot patrol hours: increase of 24.4% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assault: decrease of 8.8% (187/205) Break and enter/Unlawfully in a dwelling: decrease of 15.9% (106/126) Harassing/indecent phone calls: decreased by 47.5% (31/59) Domestic incident: decrease of 12.4% (197/225) Spousal/Partner Abuse: decrease of 54.9% (14/31) Impaired Operation: decrease of 12% (66/75) Fraud: decrease of 21.8% (104/133) Shoplifting: decrease of 27% (146/200) Theft from motor vehicle: decreased by 20.1% (54/68) Mischief: decreased by 35.6% (217/337) Trespass at night: decreased by 18.2% (18/22) Uttering threats against a person: decreased by 6.0% (110/117) Mental Health Act: decreased by 10.8% (406/455)

OPERATIONAL

Drug Charges: A 36-year-old Cumberland County woman has been charged and convicted following an incident in Amherst on December 12th 2024. Police had observed an assault in progress on Eddy Street and arrested the female who was wielding a baseball bat. On her arrest, police located methamphetamine, fentanyl and prescription pills. Kristyn Walton was charged with 3 counts of possession for the purpose of trafficking and 3 counts of failing to abide by a probation order. She appeared in court on December 19th 2025 and received 2 years custody.

OPERATIONAL STATS – DECEMBER 2024

Occurrences:	398	Criminal Code Charges:	51
Impaired by Alcohol:	2	CDSA:	4
Impaired by Drug:	0	CBCA:	0
Traffic Tickets:	14	PPA:	0
Traffic Written Warnings:	0	Vehicle Checks:	66
LCA:	1	Parking Tickets:	4
Parking Warnings:	0		
Foot Patrol Hours:	31hrs, 26min		

TASK REPORT

<p>Task: SARV – Safe Approach and Rescue Vehicle: GARDAWORLD has supplied APD with an armoured vehicle and we are slowly equipping it. It is operational, but requires additional emergency equipment</p> <p>Update Status: In Progress: 2025-01-13: No additional updates at this time.</p>
<p>Task: Marsh Trail ATV Issues: That staff be directed to install signs, barriers and cameras along the centennial walking trail, and further that Council approves funding for such.</p> <p>Update Status: In Progress: 2025-01-13: Public Works remains the lead on this at this time.</p>
<p>Task: Body Worn Cameras: Switch capital budget for BWC to annual operational budget lease.</p> <p>Update Status: 2025-01-13: agreement with Motorola for 12 BWC reviewed and signed. PAR signed and information forwarded to Motorola</p>

Monthly Report

Solid Waste Education and Enforcement

January 2025

Presentations & Events

Nova Scotia Housing Apartment Complexes

Presentations were given to tenants in River Hebert & Joggins. All the buildings have now been visited and provided with education and sorting pamphlets.

Curbside Collection Changes

The transition to bi-weekly collection of all three streams on the same day has been received well by many residents. Currently, the solid waste collectors are noting that some homeowners are placing materials curbside after the 7:00 a.m. set-out time, therefore these properties are not receiving collecting. Staff will continue to promote the importance of proper set-out times.

GFL Community Liaison Committee Meeting

- The committee met on December 11th.
- As per the municipalities' request, GFL Cumberland is exploring the possibility of having a HHW drop off location at the landfill in Little Forks. They have engaged a consultant to investigate the costs and should have an update for the next meeting.
- The landfill will no longer be accepting electronics as part of the electronics recycling program. For a full list of drop off locations, please visit <https://recyclemyelectronics.ca/ns/where-can-i-recycle?>
- Stephen Rayworth's last day with GFL Cumberland was January 3rd as he took a new position with Circular Materials

Household Hazardous Waste (HHW)

Staff are in the process of reviewing submissions for the Provision of Collection and Transportation of Household Hazardous Waste.

Christmas Tree Collection

Christmas tree collection is taking place the week of January 21st. All trees must be curbside by 7:00 a.m. on Tuesday, January 21st.

Social Media

Staff continue to post curbside reminders and sorting information on social media.

