

**Minutes of a Regular Meeting of Amherst Town Council  
Held in Council Chambers  
Monday, April 6, 2009 at 7:00 PM**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Rob Small  
Deputy Mayor Robert Angel  
Councillor George Baker  
Councillor Robert Bird  
Councillor Dale Fawthrop  
Councillor David March  
Greg Herrett, CAO  
Kim Jones, Recording Secretary

**REGRETS:** Councillor Terry Rhindress

**1. O CANADA**

**2. HEARINGS / PRESENTATIONS**

**3. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Small called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

**3.1 Additions to Agenda**

**3.2 Approval of Agenda M-0904-01**

Moved by Councillor Baker, seconded by Councillor Fawthrop to approve the agenda as circulated

**MOTION CARRIED**

**3.3 Approval of Minutes – February 23, 2009 Regular Council Meeting M-0904-02**

Moved by Councillor Baker, seconded by Councillor March to approve the minutes of the February 23, 2009 regular Council meeting as circulated.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**4. REQUESTS FOR DECISION**

**4.1 Police Dispatch Contract, RFD#2009012 M-0904-03**

Moved by Councillor Fawthrop, seconded by Councillor Baker that Council approve a proposal to initiate a dispatch service with dispatchers employed by the Town of Amherst, as recommended by the Amherst Board of Police Commissioners.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**4.2 Amend Tax Collection Policy, RFD#2009013 M-0904-04**

Moved by Councillor March, seconded by Deputy Mayor Angel that Council approve an amendment to the Tax Collection Policy, #03800-01, to allow the interim tax bills to be based on last year's assessment, not the current year's assessment.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**TAX COLLECTION POLICY, #03800-01**

**PURPOSE:**

To set out policy and guidelines for the collection of all outstanding taxes due to the Town of Amherst in accordance with the provisions of the *Municipal Government Act, S.N.S., 1998, c.18, Part VI, "Tax Collection"*.

**1. BILLINGS, NOTICES AND REMINDERS**

1. Under the adoption of a resolution by Council each year, interim tax bills may be issued. They are to be calculated in accordance with the Town's Instalment Billing Policy, #03800-03.
2. Following the setting of the tax rate, final tax bills shall be issued, due no earlier than 30 days from the date of issue.

3. At Council's discretion and following the setting of the tax rate, tax bills may be issued once during the year.
4. Statements of account shall be issued periodically throughout the year for all amounts due, and shall contain either of the following headings:
  - (a) Reminder – Overdue Account
  - (b) Tax Sale Warning
5. Discretion is exercised by the person fulfilling the duties of Tax Collector, who may suppress the dispatch of notice on certain accounts because of special circumstances or smallness of balance. As a general rule, however, all procedures will be followed right up to an actual Tax Sale if the arrears are \$100 or more. (With this first notice of intended sale, there is some benefit in mailing notices to property owners owing less than \$100 in an endeavour to induce payment to clear accounts.)

**2. INTEREST ON OVERDUE ACCOUNTS**

Simple interest at the rate of one percent per month shall be added to each account for which taxes have not been paid in full by the due date.

**3. INTEREST ON OVERPAYMENTS/APPEALS**

Where an overpayment of taxes has been made, or where an assessment appeal is pending, the Town shall pay interest on the excess taxes paid at the rate of 0% per annum from the date of overpayment.

(For greater clarity, Section 114(1) of the *Municipal Government Act* states: "**Taxes on property may be collected or recovered even if the assessment of the property is under appeal.**")

**4. FEE FOR EXECUTION OF WARRANT**

The person executing a warrant is entitled to be reimbursed in the amount of 30% of the total collected.

**5. COLLECTION LIMIT**

If the amount of taxes, including interest, is below one hundred dollars (\$100.00), then, in accordance with Section 134(4)(b) of the *Municipal Government Act*, the property shall not be put up for tax sale.

**6. PRELIMINARY NOTICE**

The time period for payment of overdue taxes to be set forth in the preliminary notice described in Section 138 of the *Municipal Government Act* shall be extended from 14 days to 21 days.

**7. TAX CERTIFICATES**

The fee for a Tax Certificate shall be the sum of Fifty Dollars (\$50.00) for each certificate. There shall be only one certificate for each property.

**8. FEE FOR ISSUING OF TAX DEEDS**

Deeds for property purchased at tax sales shall be prepared and registered by the Town Solicitor and it shall be the responsibility of the purchaser to refund the Town for the full cost of having the deed prepared and registered, in accordance with Section 155 of the *Municipal Government Act*.

**9. PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

The Town of Amherst hereby delegates to the Treasurer the power to enter into tax arrears payment agreement with the taxpayer, pursuant to Section 134(4)(3) of the *Municipal Government Act*. Such payments shall be made in accordance with the Tax Collection Procedures adopted by Council.

**10. SURVEYS FOR PROPERTIES TO BE SOLD AT TAX SALE**

Included in the documentation of the tax sale file shall be the PID number and map showing the location of the property and its boundaries, and any buildings that appear on the property. This policy shall permit the Treasurer, if he or she deems it necessary, to engage a survey firm to perform work on a property which may include a survey of the property which has been sold or will be sold at tax sale. In exercising this discretion, the Treasurer shall take into account the work to be performed by a survey firm in relation to the overall benefit to the Town and all of the circumstances of the particular case.

**11. OTHER**

All other tax collection activities shall be performed in accordance with the ***Guide to Part VI of the Municipal Government Act – Tax collection***, prepared by Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, as amended from time to time.

**12. REPEAL**

All existing tax collection and tax sale policies and procedures and amendments thereto are hereby repealed and this policy substituted therefore.

**Moved by Councillor March, seconded by Councillor Fawthrop that Council approve amendments to the Salary Administration Policy, #4530-01, to include a 3% increase to all non-union salary scales (Appendix C-3), and a 50 cent hourly increase to Appendices C-3 and C-4, effective April 1, 2009, and further, that Council approve amendments to the Classification Structure, Appendix B.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

SALARY ADMINISTRATION POLICY, #04530-01

**PURPOSE:** To set out the Policy of the Town of Amherst for Salary Administration for all non-union employees.

**POLICY STATEMENT:** The Town of Amherst will ensure the fair and equitable compensation of all non-union employees in relation to the duties of their position within the Town.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. To eliminate the possibility of salary inequities in the Town's non-union sector.
2. To establish a framework and procedure to determine levels of compensation for new positions.
3. To establish basic principles of a job evaluation system.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Position Evaluation** is the process of analyzing the various components and requirements of a position in order to determine the relative value of the position. Position Evaluation is based on KPMG's "Aiken System". The end result of Job Evaluation is ranking, in which the more complex, responsible and skilled jobs are grouped at the higher end of the hierarchy, while the less complex jobs fall at the lower end of the job position hierarchy. The criterion used in position evaluation is set out in Appendix A. Note: Position Evaluation means the value of the position, rather than the qualification and abilities of an employee. The current job classification list is set out in Appendix B

**Salary Grid** shows all the salary scales applicable to positions within the Town. The salary grids are contained in Appendices C, C-1, C-2, C-3 and C-4. The salary grid - Appendix C - has five steps.

**Step Adjustment** - a move from one step, within a given salary range, to another (usually the next step) for individual employees is based on a satisfactory performance evaluation.

**Salary Range** is defined as a range of pay for a level of duties, with a minimum and a maximum. The level and step will initially be established in accordance with Position Evaluation Procedures, and, thereafter, by Performance Appraisal.

**Reclassification** is the realignment of a new Level to a group, or position, following a review of the entire class of positions, and a comparison with the prevailing market rate for that type and level of work.

**Performance Evaluation:** A formal evaluation of the employee's job performance. All employees will receive at least one Performance Evaluation in each year of service. Such evaluation shall be carried out in accordance with the Performance Evaluation & Development System.

**Annual Economic Adjustment:** The adequacy of the salary grid as a whole is reviewed annually by Town Council and adjusted at April 1st in each year by an amount equal to or greater than the annual average percentage change in the Consumer Price Index, All-items, for the Province of Nova Scotia for the previous calendar year, as determined by Statistics Canada. The exception is the non-union Police salary, appendix C-2. This grid is updated in accordance with the PANS contract.

**Job Evaluation Coordinator** - A senior employee designated by the Chief Administrative Officer, tasked with impartially evaluating positions within the organization, in accordance with the Aiken System, using the criteria set out in Appendix A.

POSITION EVALUATION

**Position Evaluation** is concerned with the job requirements, not the qualifications of the employee in the position, or the wages paid to the individual.

The Treasurer shall maintain current **Position Evaluation Forms** for each established non-union position within the organization.

The **Job Evaluation Coordinator** shall evaluate each job using KPMG's "Aiken System" and shall recommend a determination of the relative worth of each job to the Chief Administrative Officer who shall consider it, make appropriate revisions if necessary and recommend a job evaluation to Council for inclusion in the job classification list. The following sources of information should be considered:

- i Existing job descriptions.
- ii A written submission Job Facts prepared by the employee.
- iii An interview with the Supervisor and/or Department Head, if necessary.
- iv Any existing Job Evaluations completed for the position being analyzed.

**All Position Evaluations should be periodically examined** (every two years) to ensure the validity of the Position Evaluation.

When Position Evaluations have been completed for the entire Town, the Treasurer shall review the Position Evaluation Factors and grades for the various Departments and groups within the Town. All jobs evaluated should be listed on the **Job Classification List**, beginning with the highest point ranking.

**The coordinator shall review the job description of all proposed new positions** and shall recommend a relative job evaluation to the Chief Administrative Officer for purposes of setting classification levels for new positions.

**Employees who wish to have the job evaluation relating to their position reviewed** may request such action, in writing through his or her department head, to the Treasurer citing the reasons why he or she feels the review is necessary. The job evaluation coordinator and the Chief Administrative Officer shall conduct the review.

#### SALARY GRID

An appropriate salary grid for all non-union positions shall be determined by the Council in accordance with the following:

**New Positions:** Recommendations for placement on the salary grid shall be prepared by the Chief Administrative Officer considering, among other things, the relative worth of the job as recommended by the job evaluation coordinator and forwarded to Council for approval.

**Re-Evaluation of Positions:** Recommendations shall be prepared by the Chief Administrative Officer considering, among other things, the relative worth of the job as recommended by the job evaluation coordinator and forwarded to Council for approval. Generally, a revised Salary Rating for an existing position will be considered only in cases where the Job Description or Position Evaluation has substantially changed.

**Salary Ratings for temporary and casual positions** shall be determined by the Chief Administrative Officer, in consultation with the Department Head.

**The salary grid shall be reviewed each year** after considering any increase in the cost of living and a survey of the salary market for comparable positions may be conducted.

**Step Adjustment shall be made** only when:

- i The adjustment can be accommodated within the Salary Account of the appropriate Department; and
- ii. A Current Performance Evaluation Form is on file.

Upon completion of a satisfactory annual evaluation the employee shall be moved to the next step on the salary grid within his or her level. If that employee is already at step 5 within his or her level, he or she shall be granted a payment equal to one-half of the difference between step 4 and step 5 of his or her level.

#### CAR ALLOWANCES

The Treasurer and Directors of Departments shall receive a monthly car allowance of \$150.

Mayor and Council shall receive the same monthly car allowance of \$150 effective November 1, 2008.

The monthly car allowance is for reimbursement for all local travel using one's personal motor vehicle for travel within the boundary of the Town of Amherst. Travel outside the boundary is covered under Policy #03000-01.

**The monthly car allowance shall be reviewed each year** after considering any increases in the cost of operating a motor vehicle.

#### PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

**Performance Appraisals** shall be conducted by the Chief Administrative Officer/Department Head at the completion of the probation period, and at least annually thereafter recorded on Performance Evaluation Forms.

The Chief Administrative Officer/Department Head shall discuss the employee's Performance Evaluation in detail with the employee, in accordance with the employee evaluation system and standardized forms.

**SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY**

***The Town Council shall:***

- i Authorize changes to the Policies and Procedures comprising the Program of Employee Compensation.
- ii Review and approve salary ratings for all established positions within the Town.
- iii Determine the annual economic adjustment factor to be applied to the salary grid each year.

***The Chief Administrative Officer shall:***

- i Review and recommend changes to Policy and procedures as they relate to the Employee Compensation Program.
- ii Ensure the implementation and maintenance of position Evaluation and Salary Rating and Performance Appraisal Procedures.
- iii Conduct Position Evaluation, Salary Rating and Performance Evaluation Procedures relative to Department Head positions.
- iv Conduct annual salary surveys and make recommendations to Council concerning the annual economic adjustment factor.
- v Grant Merit Adjustments to individual employees in accordance with approved Policies and Procedures and, subject to budgeting limitations.
- vi Maintain all personnel files and records.

***The Department Head shall:***

- i Conduct Position Evaluations, Salary Ratings, and Performance Evaluation procedures relative to the positions and employees within their respective departments, and make appropriate recommendations to the Chief Administrative Officer.
- ii Make recommendations to the Chief Administrative Officer regarding step adjustments for employees within their departments.

**APPENDIX A - Job Factors Used in Evaluating Positions**

- Complexity - Judgement
- Education
- Experience
- Initiative
- Result of Error
- Contacts
- Character of Supervision
- Scope of Supervision
- Physical/Mental Demands
- Working Conditions

**APPENDIX B - Job Classifications**

Level 12	Vacant
Level 11	Town Treasurer Director - Community & Economic Development Director of Planning & Engineering Services Director of Transportation & Public works
Level 10	Fire Chief
Level 9	Vacant
Level 8	Public Works Foreman Engineering Services Manager Planner
Level 7	Community Program Director Building Inspector Technology Officer Transportation Foreman Accountant
Level 6	Executive Assistant - Executive Office Executive Assistant – Policy, Research, Human Resources & Special Projects Firefighters/Inspectors CED marketing/Special Events Geographic Information Systems Technician
Level 5	Revenue Officer Firefighters Engineering Technician Executive Assistant - Corporate Services Executive Assistant – Planning & Engineering Services Executive Assistant - Community & Economic Development Maintenance Supervisor - Recreation Facilities

Level 4	Transportation & Public Works Clerk/Secretary Human Resource Officer Accounts Payable Clerk Water/Sewer Billing Clerk
Level 3	Cashier/Receptionist - Corporate Services Technology Assistant Dispatcher By-law Enforcement Officer
Level 2	Vacant
Level 1	Vacant

Salary Scale

April 1, 2009

1.03

**APPENDIX C**

<b>Job Level</b>	<b>Step 1</b>	<b>Step 2</b>	<b>Step 3</b>	<b>Step 4</b>	<b>Step 5</b>
12	81,953	84,236	86,520	88,804	91,086
11	72,042	73,888	75,783	77,726	79,720
10	63,645	65,283	66,921	68,560	70,195
9	58,039	59,032	60,025	61,018	62,007
8	53,031	54,034	55,037	56,042	57,046
7	47,016	48,222	49,458	50,727	52,027
6	42,204	43,287	44,396	45,535	46,702
5	38,364	39,004	39,643	40,283	40,924
4	34,090	34,965	35,861	36,781	37,723
3	30,259	31,035	31,830	32,646	33,484
2	26,897	27,586	28,293	29,019	29,763
1	23,534	24,138	24,757	25,391	26,043

**Town of Amherst**

April 1, 2009

**APPENDIX C - 1**

**Salary Administration Policy**

1.03

**Salary Grid**

<b>Job Level</b>	<b>Salary Amount</b>	
Mayor	Stipend	\$12,260
	Allowance for expenses incidental to the discharge of duties	<u>6,130</u>
		<b><u>\$18,390</u></b>
Deputy Mayor	Stipend	\$10,315
	Allowance for expenses incidental to the discharge of duties	<u>5,517</u>
		<b><u>\$15,472</u></b>
Councillor	Stipend	\$9,542
	Allowance for expenses incidental to the discharge of duties	<u>4,771</u>
		<b><u>\$14,313</u></b>

Town of Amherst  
April 1, 2009

Appendix C-2

**Salary Scale  
Non-Union Police Positions  
Salary Amounts**

<b>Job Level</b>	<b>Effective April 1, 2009</b>
Chief of Police	\$98,576
Deputy Chief of Police	\$88,883
Executive Assistant/ Dispatch Coordinator Police	\$46,986

**Town of Amherst**

Hourly Rate Scale - Casual  
April 1, 2009

**APPENDIX C - 3**

<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Hourly Rate</b>				
	<b>Step 1</b>	<b>Step 2</b>	<b>Step 3</b>	<b>Step 4</b>	<b>Step 5</b>
<b>Casual Firefighter</b>	14.96	15.22	15.48	15.74	16.00
<b>Jail Guards</b>	10.75	11.11	11.48	11.84	12.26
<b>Canine Control Officer</b>	10.75	11.11	11.48	11.84	12.26
<b>Ice Marshall</b>	10.69	11.20	11.71	12.22	12.73
<b>School Crossing Guards</b>	8.30	8.67	8.93	9.24	9.50
<b>Other</b>	8.30	8.67	8.93	9.24	9.50

Hourly Rate Scale - Students  
April 1, 2009

**APPENDIX C - 4**

<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Hourly Rate</b>				
	<b>Step 1</b>	<b>Step 2</b>	<b>Step 3</b>	<b>Step 4</b>	<b>Step 5</b>
<b>Planning Technician</b>	10.69	11.20	11.71	12.22	12.73
<b>Surveyor/Engineer Assistant</b>	10.69	11.20	11.71	12.22	12.73
<b>Tech Assistant</b>	10.69	11.20	11.71	12.22	12.73
<b>Accounting Clerk</b>	8.65	9.16	9.67	10.18	10.69
<b>Records Management Assistant</b>	8.65	9.16	9.67	10.18	10.69
<b>Maintenance &amp; Park Worker</b>	8.65	9.16	9.67	10.18	10.69
<b>Physical Activity Coordinator</b>	8.65	9.16	9.67	10.18	10.69
<b>Youth Program Coordinator</b>	8.65	9.16	9.67	10.18	10.69
<b>Summer Secretary</b>	8.40	8.91	9.42	9.93	10.44
<b>Tennis Instructor</b>	8.40	8.91	9.42	9.93	10.44
<b>Activity Leader</b>	8.40	8.91	9.42	9.93	10.44
<b>Tourism</b>	8.40	8.91	9.42	9.93	10.44
<b>Other</b>	8.40	8.91	9.42	9.93	10.44

Note: This scale does not apply to the Co-Operative/Internship Student Program.

Moved by Councillor Baker, seconded by that Councillor March that Council approve the proposed Personal Leave of Absence Policy, #04000-14 as presented, and repeal the Personal Leave of Absence Section of Personnel Policy #04000-12 (pages 9 to 11 inclusive).

MOTION CARRIED

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY, 04000-14**

**PURPOSE:**

To clearly establish a uniform policy on employee leaves of absence and to specify, as near as is possible, the conditions under which such absences will be granted.

**POLICY:**

Leaves of absence without pay may be granted to maintain continuity of service in instances where unusual or unavoidable circumstances require an employee's absence. Leave is granted on the assumption that they employee will be available to return to active employment when the conditions necessitating the leave permit.

In general, a leave of absence is considered a privilege. In no circumstances is leave granted automatically but must be requested by the employee. Granting leaves of absence should be administered with utmost discretion since employees are protected with some of the Town's benefits while on leave. In granting a leave of absence the employee's service record and circumstances requiring the leave should be carefully examined.

Leaves of absence are broken down into three categories:

- a) Short-term Leave of Absence (two through five working days)  
Such absences may be granted without pay when the cause is reasonable and/or unavoidable (such as an extension of Compassionate Leave), and provided the absence is arranged in advance with the Department Head or, if this is prevented by an emergency, reported promptly to him/her.

The Department Head may at his/her discretion and in conformance with the provisions of this policy, grant employees up to one week (5 working days) of unpaid leave of absence. Such leaves are subject to review and approval of the Chief Administrative Officer for conformance to policy.

Employees granted such leaves of absence by the above authority shall resume work on the first scheduled workday following the expiration date of the approved unpaid absence.

An employee, with the prior approval of the Chief Administrative Officer, may receive salary for short term absence if it is deemed to be in the interest of the Town of Amherst.

- b) Long-Term Leave of Absence (in excess of five working days)  
Consideration for such a leave of absence will depend upon:
- i) the reason for the leave
  - ii) length of service of the employee
  - iii) liability under any Provincial or Federal law
  - iv) probable extent of the absence
  - v) cost to the Town of Amherst of covering the absence

The terms and conditions of such leaves may vary with each case and are usually subject to research and negotiation by the Chief Administrative Officer.

Such long-term leaves shall require the approval of the Department Head and the CAO.

More specifically, but not to restrict the generality of this or any other paragraph contained herein, consideration will be given to requests and recommendations for unpaid absences in excess of five (5) working days in accordance with the following conditions, and upon approval from the CAO:

- i) Family Illness – When circumstances are of exceptional nature and compel absence from work, requests must be submitted specifying complete details of the reason for the request and an estimation of the extent of the request for leave.
- ii) Personal Business or Educational Leave: Absences may be considered when circumstances are of an exceptional nature and do not involve outside employment. Leave for educational reasons of benefit to both employee and the Town of Amherst may be viewed favorably but shall be given the same consideration prior to a decision. All requests must be submitted in writing specifying complete details of the reason for, and length of the request.

- iii) Qualification for Canada Pension Plan (CPP) Retirement Pension  
 A leave of absence to allow employees over the age of 60 years, to apply to receive early CPP benefits may be considered on a case by case basis. Factors for consideration will include, but not limited to:
- a) impact on operations during the period of leave, including the employee's position and the Town's ability to provide the service during an extended absence.
  - b) department staffing levels meet minimum levels to ensure service delivery
  - c) in the event that more than one employee for a specific department request this form of leave within the same time period, and such requests are viewed favorably, the Department Head will have the authority to stagger the absences.
  - d) The employee must agree to abide by all rules and regulations as outlined in the appropriate Federal Legislation related to the Canada Pension Plan.

**Benefits:**

Employees who currently participate in the Blue Cross Benefit Plan will be required to pay 100% of the premium while on leave in excess of 5 working days. Payment must be provided to the Town in the form of post-dated cheque.

Employees on approved leave in excess of 5 working days will be allowed to remain on the coverage for STD, LTD and life insurance for a period of 2 months during their qualifications for CPP Benefits. They will continue to pay their portion of the premium while on reduced hours to comply with the rules and regulations surrounding eligibility for CPP.

Employees granted any form of Leave of Absence must report to work on the first scheduled workday following the expiration of the leave.

**4.5 Interim Tax Billing Resolution – RFD#2009015 M-0904-07**

The following Resolution was moved by Councillor March and seconded by Councillor Baker:

**WHEREAS** the Town's Installment Billing Policy provides authority and guidelines for interim tax billing,

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT** Council authorizes an interim tax billing for the 2009/2010 fiscal period; and

**THAT** the interim bills be sent during the Month of April 2009, with interest at 12% per annum to commence June 1, 2009; and

**THAT** the interim bills be based on last year's assessment times one half of the tax rate levied in the previous fiscal year.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**4.6 Accounts Receivable – Write Off Uncollectibles – RFD#2009007 M-0904-08**

Moved by Councillor March, seconded by Councillor Fawthrop that Council authorize staff to write off uncollectible accounts in the amount of \$75,604.69, as recommended by Administration.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**4.7 Memorandum of Understanding, Town and Chamber – RFD#2009017 M-0904-09**

Moved by Deputy Mayor Angel, seconded by Councillor Bird that Council enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Amherst and Area Chamber of Commerce to formalize the existing relationship between the two parties, and that the Mayor and CAO be authorized to sign on behalf of the Town of Amherst.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**5. INFORMATION / DISCUSSION ITEMS**

## 6. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

### 6.1 Dickey Park Redevelopment

#### 6.1.1 Project Status Report

Councillor Baker presented the following Project Status Report on the Dickey Park Redevelopment Strategic Priority:

During the month of March, staff has been gathering information and prices in preparation of the budgeting process in April. In addition, presentations and comment sheets were prepared for the public consultation meeting held on Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup>. With the information gathered during this meeting we will continue to finalize our budget figures.

I will now present the findings from our public meeting and I have attached this to my report.

#### 6.1.2 Public Information Session, March 25, 2009

In preparation for the public meeting, staff prepared mapping information relative to the proposed redevelopment components. In addition, historic aerial photos were blown up that depict the park in 1995 and 2008. These photos were used only as a reminder of where the park was once and its current status.

Representing Council at this meeting was Deputy Mayor Robert Angel and Councilor David March, along with me. There were about 12 people from the community attending. The general consensus was that the presented redevelopment plan for Dickey Park was a "good first step" and a great place for families to take their children.

Commenting on the plan, speakers felt that an outdoor pool and wade pool should be incorporated. However, it was realized that this may be cost prohibitive, but at least, a wade pool would have merit at some stage of redevelopment and may be included in the plan for future consideration.

There was discussion on location of various components and equipment such as the picnic tables. Discussions on utilizing the park year round and having the ability to have winter activities there gave all some excellent food for thought.

All in all, participants were very pleased with the direction being taken and appear to be very supportive. I would like to thank all those who attended.

## 6.2 Festival Sponsorship / Support

**M0904-10**

#### 6.2.1 Project Status Report

Councillor Angel presented the following Project Status Report for the Festival Sponsorship/Support Strategic Priority;

Over the past month, staff has worked on preparation of a budget for the Four Fathers Festival. Items such as promotional materials, artist and performer fees, rentals, exhibition costs and general operation costs have been taken into account. It is estimated that the Town commitment will be \$20, 900.00 plus staff time. With the summer staff in place, we can draw for the existing capacity that we have to address staffing needs. The budget for the festival will be incorporated with our 2009/10 budget process for approval.

During the first week of April, letters will be sent to key organizations in the community inviting them to participate in the Four Fathers Festival. The letters will provide information to these groups on the objective of the festival, offer suggestions as to the type of activities they could provide and confirm that we will support their efforts. It will be our intention to hold a meeting with interested organizations in mid April to establish a steering committee and move forward with creating marketing and promotional material.

In addition, staff has been working diligently on both the draft of a enabling policy for Festivals and Events along with a criteria for supporting festivals and events in the Town. Research of policies and mechanisms in other Nova Scotia Municipalities have resulted in little to draw upon and it appears that we are somewhat unique in the approach being taken. In this regard, additional time is required by staff to forge out a enabling policy and criteria that will best suit the needs of the community.

**Moved by Councillor Angel, , seconded by Councillor Fawthrop that Council amend the Project Action Plan for Festival Sponsorship/Support to have a draft policy and enabling criteria for support ready for consideration during the April meeting of Council.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

### 6.3 Arts Culture & Heritage

#### 6.3.1 Arts Culture & Heritage Project Status Report

Councillor Fawthrop presented the following Project Status Report on the Arts Culture & Heritage Strategic Priority:

Significant progress continues to be made on the Arts Culture and Heritage Strategy. I have meet with staff a number of times to develop the draft request for proposals which is being (has been) presented to you tonight.

The RFP is quite detailed and is intended to provide potential submitters with enough information for their proposals to adequately address all project objectives.

We continue to work with CREDA to obtain funding for the project, with a number of potential different sources being identified. Council's approval of funding for this project will be sought through the 2009-2010 budget process.

#### 6.3.2 Request for Proposals

**M-0904-11**

The main objectives of the RFP include recommendations or information on the following topics:

1. Arts and Cultural Centre
2. Town Support for Arts Culture and Heritage
3. Promotion of Arts Culture and Heritage
4. Arts Culture and Heritage for Business Development
5. Cumberland County Museum
6. Town as Enabler
7. Implementation Strategy

**Moved by Councillor Fawthrop, seconded by Councillor March that Council accept the Request for Proposals for the Arts Culture and Heritage Strategy as submitted.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

### 6.4 Skateboard Park Feasibility

#### 6.4.1 Project Status Report

Councillor Bird presented the following Project Status Report on the Skateboard Park Feasibility Strategic Priority:

During the past month, meetings have been held with Provincial representatives to gather information and input related to the completion of a Request for Proposal for a Skateboard Park Feasibility Study. Through their guidance, the following will be the terms of reference for this study. A draft RFP is attached to this report.

- Public input will be gauged through various means include meetings with stakeholders, surveys, collection of statistical data, etc.
- Recommendations will be made based on the information gathered on whether the Town should have a skateboard facility and if so, the appropriate size.
- Provision of an elementary schematic design plan that highlights the scale of activities for such a park along with a estimated cost estimate to complete.
- Recommendation for site selection criteria to assist in identifying the optimum location for this facility.
- Provide governance and administration protocols that will address ongoing operations including safety concerns.

It is estimated that the cost of this study will be in the area of \$16,000.00 to be addressed under the 2009/10 budgeting process. Up to 50% funding for this is available through Nova Scotia Health Promotion, Planning Assistance Program.

#### 6.4.2 Request for Proposals

**M-0904-12**

**Moved by Councillor Bird, seconded by Councillor Baker that Council approve the Terms of Reference in the Request for Proposals to Conduct a Feasibility Study for a Skateboard Park, as presented.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

## 6.5 Downtown Revitalization

### 6.5.1 Project Status Report

Councillor March presented the following Project Status Report:

Significant progress continues to be made on the Center First – Downtown Amherst Action Strategy. I have meet with staff a number of times to develop the draft request for proposals which is being (has been) presented to you tonight.

The RFP is quite detailed and is intended to provide potential submitters with enough information for their proposals to adequately address all project objectives

I am happy to report that at this time ACOA has committed \$60,000 to this project. A request for Council funding of this project will be forthcoming in the 2009-2010 budget process.

The main objectives of the RFP include:

1. Downtown Business Strategy
2. Residential Strategy
3. Land Use Strategy
4. Parking Strategy
5. Traffic Circulation Strategy
6. Building Design Strategy
7. Beautification Strategy
8. Implementation Strategy

### 6.5.2 Request for Proposals

**M-0904-13**

**Moved by Councillor March, seconded by Councillor Bird that Council accept the Terms of Reference as presented in the Request for Proposals to conduct a Downtown Amherst Action Strategy.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

## 6.6 Youth Issues

### 6.6.1 Project Status Report

**M-0904-14**

Mayor Small presented the following Project Status Report on the Youth Issues Strategic Priority: seconded March

The emergence of *Youth Advisory Councils* began throughout Nova Scotia and New Brunswick in 2004. They developed out of recognition that this group needed increased attention based on statistics from youth crime. Therefore, this endeavor would alter negative perceptions of this cohort, while enhancing the ability of adults to engage in a positive manner with youth. Overall the initiative was implemented to involve youth in their community, breaking barriers between adult and youth populations and creating a means for youth to communicate their needs to local government in a meaningful approach.

The most profound examples of youth councils can be seen locally, in HRM, Dieppe and Moncton. While these municipalities are larger in comparison to Amherst, these examples can be used as models in the formation of such a council to fit the demographics of our region. The youth council is comprised of several youth, municipal staff member, and often a member of council. Typically, one annual forum is held, where numerous youth issues related to municipal government can be discussed. Dieppe has an interesting aspect- instead of reporting during a council meeting the youth hold their own meeting in council chambers, council names are removed and replaced with the names of the youth. This is an open public meeting, however adults are *not* permitted to ask questions, it merely provides the youth an opportunity to present their issues to council, and the public.

In Amherst, our current options are; to work in collaboration with another board in place at the high school, or to create an independent board for the Town to operate with the support of school administration. CREDA also has numerous youth initiatives underway and would provide excellent support for the Town's youth involvement projects.

The most viable option appears to be; to utilize the pre-existing *School Advisory Council* at ARHS to assist the Town to develop a new independent committee to operate as a *Youth Advisory Council* to the Town of Amherst.

The *School Advisory Council* currently has its own mandate and commitments; this committee is comprised of only two students, (Student Council President and Vice-president) and therefore could not fully represent needs of all youth. To be successful at youth engagement/inclusion, a larger representative sample must comprise a Town affiliated committee. Previous youth forums/committees in other regions have failed by design as a result of having a majority of adult presence and participation on the committee.

Cooperation is present between school administration and the Town, however, to reduce extra bureaucracy at the high school this committee should be facilitated by Town of Amherst Staff. This will essentially see the youth as active participants to relay the realities of all youth, while acquiring an understanding for the internal dynamics of municipal government.

Through active engagement and team-based structures youth will become empowered, knowing their voice is being heard and ultimately; that they are becoming a part of their community. The aforementioned has a positive long term effect on the Town, as it fosters community pride and could maintain a larger percentage of young persons remaining in Amherst or returning after completion of post-secondary education.

**Moved By Mayor Small, seconded by Councillor March that Council accept the recommendation of staff and move forward in development of actions that will lead to the creation of a Youth Advisory Council to the Town of Amherst.**

## 6.7 Town Beautification

### 6.7.1 Project Status Report

Councillor Angel presented the following Project Status Report on the Town Beautification Strategic Priority:

Significant progress continues to be made on the Town Beautification Strategy. I have met with staff a number of times to develop a list of specific projects to be undertaken. Some of the projects currently under development include:

1. Improved Entrance Signage at the main entrances to the Town;
2. A Most Improved Yard competition
3. An Anti-Litter campaign
4. Vacant Building By-Law
5. A review of the Dangerous or Unightly Premises Policy and Procedure
6. Curb Islands and Plantings at the LaPlanche Street entrance to Town.

The draft 2009/2010 budget being submitted to Council includes:

1. \$75,000 for the installation of curb islands and landscaping at the LaPlanche Street entrance to Town
2. \$20,000 for the implementation of the other items listed above (funding for individual projects to be approved by Council as they are developed after the budget process).

### 6.7.2 Communities in Bloom Report

Jason MacDonald, Director of Planning and Engineering Services, reported the following on behalf of the Town Beautification Strategy:

For a number of years the Town has been participating in the Communities in Bloom program, and is scheduled to do so again this year. The following is a description of the program taken from the programs information guide:

**Communities in Bloom is a Canadian non-profit organization committed to fostering civic pride, environmental responsibility, beautification and to improving quality of life through community participation and the challenge of a national program with focus on the protection and conservation of green spaces.**

To paraphrase a fellow Nova Scotia Planning Director, "Any community that implements all aspects of the Communities in Bloom Program would be a clean, environmentally friendly, well planned and maintained community that would simply be a great place to live".

The program guide, as well as the Town's results from last year, are attached for your review. Generally the Town performed very well, receiving four out of five 'blooms'. The judges specifically noted positive aspects of the town. Some of the more significant recommendations by the judges for improvement include:

- a. hiring of a marketing person;
- b. an anti-litter awareness campaign;
- c. improved condition of private buildings;
- d. more public recycling containers ;
- e. municipal energy conservation programs;
- f. increased community participation;
- g. improved local heritage promotion;
- h. procedures for the management of public landscaped areas;
- i. expanded trails system;

Notwithstanding the above recommendations, I must emphasize that the Town did very well in the competition and many positive aspects were noted by the judges. Further, as Council is aware many of the above recommendations have been implemented or are being explored as a component of one of our strategic priorities.

### 6.7.3 Dangerous and Unsightly Premises, RFD#2009018

**M-0904-15**

**Moved by Councillor Angel, seconded by Councillor March that the Dangerous or Unsightly Premises Policy and Procedure be referred to Committee of the Whole for further refinement and consideration.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

## 7. INTERNAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

### 7.1 Planning Advisory Committee

Councillor Bird reported that a meeting of the Planning Advisory Committee was held on March 4, 2009. Topics of significance discussed included:

1. A staff report containing proposed amendments to the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw that were referred to the Committee by Council was distributed to all members. The proposed amendments were identified during the development of the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan for the Town. These proposed amendments will be discussed at the April meeting of the Committee.
2. Jeremy Fenton provided a presentation on basic planning principals, including the concept known as New Urbanism. Following the presentation the Committee passed a motion asking Council to direct staff to provide a report, with recommendations, on how some of these applicable land use planning principals could be implemented in Amherst.

## 8. EXTERNAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

### 8.1 Cumberland Regional Library Board Nil Report

### 8.2 CREDA

Councillor Fawthrop presented the following report on behalf of the Cumberland Regional Economic Development Association:

**Care Kits** - As part of CREDA's Youth Attraction and Retention Strategy, a local steering committee is putting together Cumberland Care Kits for our young people away at post-secondary institutions across Canada. The Care Kits are also a opportunity for companies or organizations to take advantage of an important promotional opportunity.

**CREDA has partnered with a third party service provider**, YLM – Your Local Marketplace, to offer the [Cumberland County "Online Business Directory"](#). This new Directory is the most comprehensive and up-to-date online database of Cumberland County businesses to be found anywhere. All Cumberland County based businesses are provided with a basic listing that includes contact information, a brief marketing message, searchable key words, a locator map, services icons, hours of operation and website link. These listings will showcase our local businesses on the [CREDA website](#), the [Province of Nova Scotia online directory](#) and internationally across the Internet. CREDA encourages new businesses, or any who may be missing from the Directory to [register free of charge](#). For assistance contact the YLM toll free help desk at 1-888-741-3488 ext. 123.

**CREDA is partnering with the Department of Labour and Workforce Education** and CBDC Cumberland in the 'Small Business Essential Skills Program' for the Springhill business community. The program has a designated project team with a mandate to bring the program to the development stages and have identified a need for tourism related training. The project team will participate in a 'needs assessment' this month with curriculum to be developed based on this evaluation. The Small Business Essential Skills Program has had previous success in the Towns of Amherst and Parrsboro through basic computer and communication skills training.

### 8.3 DARS Nil Report

### 8.4 CJSMA

Councillor Rhindress reported that The CJSMA did not meet in March. The next meeting is scheduled for April 16, 2009, at which time the Operating and Capital budgets will be brought forward.

### 8.5 Northern Region Waste Resource Committee Nil Report

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

On motion by Councillor Fawthrop, the meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM

**APPROVED BY:**

Gregory D. Herrett, CA  
Town Clerk and Chief Administrative Officer

Robert Small  
Mayor

**AGENDA**

<b>1.</b>	<b>O'CANADA</b>		
<b>2.</b>	<b>HEARINGS/PRESENTATIONS</b>		
<b>3.</b>	<b>CALL TO ORDER</b>		
3.1	Additions to Agenda		
3.2	Approval of Agenda		
3.3	Approval of Minutes – February 23, 2009 Regular Council Meeting		
<b>4.</b>	<b>REQUESTS FOR DECISION</b>	<b>RFD</b>	<b>Presenter</b>
4.1	Police Dispatch Contract	2009012	Fawthrop
4.2	Tax Collection Policy – Amendment	2009013	March
4.3	Salary Administration Policy – Amendment	2009006	March
4.4	Leave of Absence Policy - New	2009014	
4.5	Interim Tax Billing Resolution	2009015	March
4.6	Accounts Receivable – Write Off Uncollectible Accounts	2009016	March
4.7	Memorandum of Understanding, Town / Chamber of Commerce	2009017	Angel
<b>5.</b>	<b>INFORMATION / DISCUSSION ITEMS</b>		
<b>6.</b>	<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITIES</b> Project Summary		
6.1	Dickey Park Redevelopment		Baker
	6.1.1 Status Report		
	6.1.2 Public Information Session, March 25, 2009		
6.2	Festival Sponsorship / Support		Angel
	6.2.1 Status Report		
6.3	Arts Culture & Heritage		Fawthrop
	6.3.1 Status Report		
	6.3.2 Request for Proposals		
6.4	Skateboard Park Feasibility Project Status Report		Bird
	6.4.1 Status Report		
	6.4.2 Request for Proposals		
6.5	Downtown Revitalization		March
	6.5.1 Status Report		
	6.5.2 Request for Proposals		
6.6	Youth Issues Project Status Report		March
	6.6.1 Status Report		
6.7	Town Beautification		Rhindress
	6.7.1 Status Report		MacDonald
	6.7.2 Communities In Bloom Report		MacDonald
	6.7.3 Dangerous or Unsightly Premises Policy	2009018	
<b>7.</b>	<b>INTERNAL COMMITTEE REPORTS</b>		
7.1	Planning Advisory Committee		Bird
7.2	Amherst Board of Police Commissioners		No report
7.3	Tyndal Wellfield Advisory Committee		No report
7.4	Tree Committee		No report
7.5	Heritage Advisory Committee		No report
7.6	Audit Committee		No report
7.7	Committee of the Whole		No report
<b>8.</b>	<b>EXTERNAL COMMITTEE REPORTS</b>		
8.1	Cumberland Regional Library Board		No report
8.2	CREDA		Fawthrop
8.3	DARS		No report
8.4	CJSMA		Rhindress
8.5	Northern Region Solid Waste (to be distributed Monday)		Baker
8.6	Cooperation Committee		No report
8.7	Airport Committee		No report
<b>9.</b>	<b>ADJOURNMENT</b>		