

**TOWN OF AMHERST**  
**Advisory Committee to Reduce Poverty Issues**  
**Minutes**

**Date:** January 19, 2023  
**Time:** 4:30 pm  
**Location:** Council Chambers, Town Hall

**Members Present** Leon Landry, Town of Amherst Deputy Mayor, Chairperson  
Alison Lair, Cumberland County Citizen Representative  
Jennifer Houghtaling, Cumberland County, Councillor  
Evelyn Pollard, Town of Amherst Citizen Representative  
Helen Read, Town of Oxford Citizen Representative  
Rachel Sovka, Cumberland County Citizen Representative

**Members Regret** Carla Black, Town of Oxford Councillor  
Michele Cann, Town of Oxford Citizen Representative

**Members Absent** Karen LeBlanc, Town of Amherst Citizen Representative

**Staff Present** Kim Jones, Town of Amherst, Municipal Clerk  
Cindy Brown, Town of Amherst, Administrative Assistant  
Linda Cloney, Town of Oxford, CAO  
Jason MacDonald, Town of Amherst, CAO  
Stanley McDougall, Town of Oxford, Office Assistant

**Staff Absent** Shelley Hoeg-Eaton, Cumberland County, Municipal Clerk

---

**1. Call to Order**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM.

**1.1 Approval of Agenda**

**Moved By** Councillor Houghtaling

**Seconded By** Helen Read

**That the agenda of the January 19, 2023 Poverty Reduction Advisory Committee Meeting to be approved as circulated.**

**Motion Carried**

**1.2 Approval of Minutes - December 15, 2022**

**Moved By** Helen Read

**Seconded By** Councillor Houghtaling

**That the minutes of the December 15, 2023 Poverty Reduction Advisory Committee Meeting be approved as circulated.**

**Motion Carried**

**1.3 Introducing Rachel Sovka**

Councillor Houghtaling introduced Rachel Sovka. She has met with Rachel in person and Sharon Bristol has sent her documents from the previous meetings to get her acquainted with the committee.

## 2. Discussion Items

### 2.1 *Round Table - Houghtaling*

Alison Lair arrives at 4:42 PM.

**Councillor Houghtaling** spoke of lack of engagement with their community and a lack of local knowledge (work and volunteer opportunities). We need to educate the youth about the opportunities that are in the Cumberland region.

**Linda** mentioned that Oxford has Oxford Frozen Foods and it seems to be growing and there are some departments in there that has some great professionals but not enough. The students tend to move on after high school. We need to keep up with the trends for youths.

**Sharon** discussed that we need to encourage them to see the opportunities that coming back to the community could offer them. This could be employment/volunteer opportunities, and/or a great place for recreation/leisure pursuits. Need to do more to showcase the community to the 18 - 30 yr. old age group. We could use the same recruitment efforts they are using for the physicians and health care professional, to encourage University students to come back to the Community. We need to work more with the schools/community college/universities to encourage the students to come back because once the students leave the community is hard to get them to come back.

**Alison** felt there is a lack of opportunities and recreational including sports. There are not much for good paying jobs and there needs to be more than family to keep them here.

**Evelyn** there is no financial support for youth programs for dealing with issues for the ages 16 - 19-year-old age group.

**Helen** discussed about the lack of transportation, cultural experiences, shopping, entertainment, and not enough infrastructure and it is difficult to retain. Not enough infrastructure for professionals to grow their credentials particularly in the health community.

**Jason** talked about how the youth here is about their living experience. If they have good friends and good network they may easily come back. If they don't have that and once, they get to university and make good friends for life there is not chance of them coming back. People who are suppose to be mentors needs to be taught how to be a good mentor. We need to try to make this community the best place to live in all aspects.

**Kim** said it was the contacts that brought her back to the community and how contacts and support system are valuable.

**Deputy Mayor Landry** needs. We need to increase our engagement with youth and get better at it.

**Linda** suggested to work with COOP programs with the schools.

**Rachel** discussed the opportunities for jobs, housing, transportation, community engagement, and healthcare are main issues. One idea I was just discussing with someone in Cumberland is small businesses buying in together on health plans to give benefits to employees to keep them around longer. (Maybe teaming up with Cumberland business connector to see what can be done about that).

Housing is the most urgent issue in my view (rent and cost of living etc.). It may help to have more landlord awareness about how challenging it is to get out of poverty with bad insulation when oil heating is the only option and they often won't make good on their promise to install heat pumps. The 16–19-year-olds just mentioned a few minutes ago may struggle to set up more permanent infrastructure due to the natural high turnover of that age group. In order to have programs for them be self directed there is a narrow window of opportunity in time and access; so engagement needs to begin earlier than that to hit that demo. All in all, the issues are intersectional, and it's important to prioritize feedback directly from the target demographic we are seeking to serve.

## **2.2    *Reports to Town of Amherst Council - December 19, 2022 - Landry***

Deputy Mayor Landry presented his report that he gave to the Town of Amherst Council.

## **2.3    *Tamarack Update - Houghtaling***

Councillor Houghtaling met with Natasha from the Tamarack Institute in December. She gave her a lot of good information pertaining to our priorities. They discussed collaborating intermunicipal and the barriers to that. Natasha gave her some examples on ways they can work together in collaborating.

They discussed system changes, municipal policies including: raising awareness, building critical massive support, information and education gap, raising collaborative funds, creating community plans including food security and gardens, transportation, and welcoming gathering spaces.

They discussed housing including host homes for at risk youth, food security, and asset mapping. There is a webinar for Ending Poverty Pathways. Sharon Bristol has already signed up for this course and Rachel Sovka is interested in taking it.

## **2.4    *Mitacs Meeting Update - Houghtaling***

Councillor Houghtaling discussed the meeting held with the Mitacs representatives and researchers from Mount Allison, MSVU, and UNB Transportation Haillie Tattrie that was held in December.

Councillor Houghtaling felt we should meet with Haillie to discuss her proposal. (Pathways to Resiliency and Cumberland County Youth Resiliency).

Sharon suggested that we invite Haillie to the February 16th meeting and share her proposal to the committee. Sharon will email the committee for questions to give to Haillie that are specific to the outcomes from Municipal Government.

## **2.5    *Housing Forum - Bristol***

Sharon Bristol presented the Housing Forum report that was held in October 2022.

**2.6 Strategic Priorities and Action Plan - Bristol**

Sharon Bristol presented the Strategic Priorities and Action Plan to the Committee. She would like to have more local photos taken, including a group photo of the Committee. The only item left for her to add is the references and resources to finalize the Plan by next month.

Linda leaves the meeting at 5:30 PM.

**3. Next Meeting: February 16, 2023 4:30 PM**

**4. Adjournment**

**Moved By** Councillor Houghtaling

**Seconded By** Rachel Sovka

To adjourn the meeting.

**Motion Carried**

---

Kimberlee Jones  
Municipal Clerk

---

Deputy Mayor Leon Landry  
Chair