

TOWN OF AMHERST
Advisory Committee to Reduce Poverty Issues
Minutes

Date: April 20, 2023
Time: 4:30 pm
Location: Council Chambers, Town Hall

Members Present Jennifer Houghtaling, Cumberland County, Councillor, Chairperson
Leon Landry, Town of Amherst, Deputy Mayor
Carla Black, Town of Oxford, Councillor
Rachel Sovka, Cumberland County, Citizen Representative (ZOOM)
Melissa Johnson, Town of Amherst, Citizen Representative
Lynne Welton, Town of Amherst, Citizen Representative

Members Regrets Alison Lair, Cumberland County, Citizen Representative
Helen Read, Town of Oxford, Citizen Representative
Carrigan Guthro, Town of Oxford, Citizen Representative

Staff Present Natalie LeBlanc, Town of Amherst, Municipal Clerk
Cindy Brown, Town of Amherst, Administrative Assistant
Sharon Bristol, Town of Amherst, Director of Community Living
Jason MacDonald, Town of Amherst, CAO
Peter McCracken, Cumberland County, Deputy CAO

Staff Regrets Stanley McDougall, Town of Oxford, Office Assistant

Staff Absent Linda Cloney, Town of Oxford, CAO
Shelley Hoeg-Eaton, Cumberland County, Municipal Clerk

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:38 PM.

1.1 Territorial Acknowledgement

The Chair gave the Territorial Acknowledgement.

1.2 Approval of Agenda

Moved By Deputy Mayor Landry

Seconded By Councillor Black

That the agenda of the April 20, 2023 Poverty Reduction Advisory Committee Meeting to be approved as circulated.

Motion Carried

1.3 Approval of Minutes - March 16, 2023

Moved By Carla Black

Seconded By Deputy Mayor Landry

That the minutes of the March 16, 2023 Poverty Reduction Advisory Committee Meeting be approved as circulated.

Motion Carried

1.4 *Introducing New Members*

The Committee welcomed new members, Melissa Johnson and Lynne Welton. Sharon Bristol has sent them documents from the previous meetings to get them acquainted with the committee's mandate.

2. Discussion Items

2.1 *Universal Lunch Program*

Councillor Jennifer Houghtaling discussed the Universal Lunch Program meeting she attended. This is a pilot project that began on April 11th by the federal government through the province taking place at six schools in Nova Scotia. The hope is to have the program running in all of our schools for the September fall start. They have fresh food carts with locally grown vegetables and fruit available on Tuesdays and Thursdays at those schools. Once the Federal Government finalizes their plan the province will hopefully have for this program for all schools all across Nova Scotia five days a week.

2.2 *Round Table Discussion - PRAC Strategy Working Group and Action Items*

Sharon Bristol discussed the Poverty Reduction Advisory Committee Strategy, noting the three main pillars. The following discussion took place:

Food Security

Councillor Houghtaling reported on the initiative taken in Pugwash at the Farmer's Market in partnership with the Pugwash Food bank for market bucks. She will bring back more information at the next meeting. Deputy Mayor Landry suggested perhaps the Committee could look at doing something similar with shop local bucks, perhaps in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and/or the Business Connector.

Councillor Black noted a program in Oxford where garden beds are provided and seeds donated.

Housing

Sharon noted the work done already with Cornerstone, the Shelter, the YMCA, the PACE program and Low-Income Exemptions.

Youth Outreach and Education

Sharon spoke to the youth center, and gap in services for youth ages 16-25, adding Ruth Currie will be presenting to the Committee in September. The Committee needs to know where the resources are and what the Committee can do to assist.

She also spoke to the Mitacs project undertake by Hallie Tattrie.

Sharon would like to create working groups for these three main pillars. She will email the committee the details and asked that committee members respond with their interest in participating within a week's time so she can schedule meetings and workshops.

Jason MacDonald left the meeting at 5:00 pm. Peter McCracken left at 5:30 pm.

3. **Next Meeting - September 21, 2023**
4. **Adjournment**
Moved By Melissa Johnson
Seconded By Deputy Mayor Landry
To adjourn the meeting.

Motion Carried

Natalie LeBlanc
Town of Amherst, Municipal Clerk

Councillor Jennifer Houghtaling
Cumberland County, Chair