



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MR# 2021009

DATE: 19 February 2021

RE: Proposed revisions, consolidations and amendments to policies presented to committee of the whole

AMHERST, Nova Scotia – Town staff presented Amherst town council's committee of the whole with proposed revisions, consolidations and amendments to town policies during its Feb. 16, 2021, meeting.

The proposed revision was to the town's Appointment of Council Members to External Boards, Committees and Commissions Policy. It clarifies the circumstances in which council would consider formal appointments of its members to external agencies, such as the library board, and the role of councillors once they are formally appointed by council to such boards, committees and commissions.

In addition, the revision requires council members to inform the town clerk if they are sitting on any committee to which they have not been formally appointed to by council. Doing so will help prevent any conflict-of-interest situations from arising.

The committee agreed with the revisions, passing a motion that they be sent to council's Feb. 22, 2021, meeting for approval.

The proposed consolidation saw staff recommending the terms of reference of all the town's existing internal committees, such as the Planning Advisory Committee, be placed into one document so that a consistent approach is achieved in the operation of all the internal committees.

The proposed amendment is to the town's Proceedings of Council Policy.

Currently, all council and committee meetings are done virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic protocols established by the province. However, it is the town's intention to resume in-person meetings once provincial health orders and logistics permit that to happen.





The proposed amendment would allow one or more participants of a council or committee meeting to attend a session via video conferencing should circumstances prevent their attendance in person.

It was noted that several Nova Scotian municipalities have made similar changes to their proceedings of council bylaws.

Staff asked committee members to provide feedback on both the proposed consolidation of the terms of reference of its internal committees into one document and the amendments to the Proceedings of Council Policy. Once that feedback is received, both documents will be refined and brought back to the committee for further discussion.

Mandatory provincial contribution rate

The committee approved a staff recommendation to send a proposed mandatory provincial contribution area rate of 40.2 cents per \$100 of assessment to the Feb. 22, 2021, council session for approval.

The mandatory provincial contribution rate provides funding for provincial services the town is mandated by the province to pay for. These include education, assessment services, correction services, housing and library services.

The proposed rate is half a cent higher than that 2020-2021 mandatory contribution rate of 39.7 cents per \$100 of assessment. The increase is mainly due to increased costs for education and library services.

Northern Region Solid Waste Agreement

The committee approves a staff recommendation to send the Northern Regional Intermunicipal Solid Waste Agreement to the Feb. 22, 2021, council meeting for approval.

The agreement enables the municipal units in Colchester County, Cumberland County and the District of East Hants to collaborate in order to meet the waste resource objectives established by the provincial environment minister.





The updated agreement contains mostly housekeeping items, such as removing the former towns of Springhill and Parrsboro from the agreement and allowing the committee chair to serve more than two consecutive terms.

A clause in the agreement would also change the quorum required for a meeting to take place to four elected representatives from five. There is no change to the funding formula.

Noise bylaw

The committee directed staff to proceed with the development of a noise bylaw and to present a draft of that bylaw for discussion at the March committee of the whole meeting.

Request to make a presentation

The committee directed staff to arrange a time for Allison Lair to make a presentation on the YMCA Cumberland Uplift Program during an upcoming meeting of the committee.

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