



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RE: Council appoints inaugural members to two new committees

AMHERST, Nova Scotia – The Amherst town council appointed the first-ever members to two new committees when it met on Monday, Sept. 27, 2021.

Appointed to the newly established Town of Amherst Accessibility Advisory Committee for one-year terms as citizen appointees were George Godfrey, Joanne Hopper and Tammy Allen. They will be joined on the committee by councillors Dale Fawthrop and Leon Landry.

The committee will play a pivotal role in helping the town become a barrier-free community and help ensure the town meets the obligations established by province in the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act.

Tammy Drew, Holly Martin, Tammy Gero and Jolene Gouchie were appointed to the town's recently formed Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Committee as citizen representatives. They will be joined on the committee by Deputy-Mayor Hal Davidson and Councillor Lisa Emery.

The purpose of the committing is to advise the Amherst town council on matters related to inclusion, diversity and equity within the community and within the Town of Amherst itself.

Appointment to Amherst Youth Town Council

The council approved the appointment of Kiahna Brennan to a two-year term on the Amherst Youth Town Council.

Kiahna will join Rowan Blanch, Alexis Landry, Kendaylynn Brown, Leah Brunt, Madeleine Davage, Hallee Humphrey, Oskar Sigtryggsson, Serah Quinn, Olivia





Pulsifer, Kennedy Allen and Aurelia Mitchell around the youth town council table during the upcoming school year.

Her appointment also brings the youth town council up to its full compliment of 12 youth.

Community Support Grants

The council approved the awarding of three Community Support Grants.

The West Highlands Home and School will receive a \$4,000 grant to assist in the purchase of playground equipment.

The Amherst Artisan Gallery will receive a \$3,000 grant to help support their When Elvis Met Jerry Lee, Johnny and Carl musical festival, which begins on Oct. 1, 2021.

Trail for Treats, a collaboration between Maggie's Place, the Cumberland Library and the local YMCA, will receive a \$750 grant to help purchases treats for the businesses participating in the second annual Trail For Treats event, which is being held on Oct. 31, 2021, between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m.

Scholarship and Bursary Policy Amendment

The council approved an amendment to the town's scholarship and bursary policy that removes the reference to the W.A. Reid Memorial School Trust Fund from the policy because the fund is no longer administered by the town.

The fund is now administered by the Chignecto-Central Regional Centre for Education.

User Fee Policy amendment

An amendment to the town's User Fee Policy that corrects an error in the policy was approved by the council.





The policy currently indicates HST is to be added to sanitary and storm sewer connections fees, but should state those fees are exempt from the HST.

There is no financial implication due to this change in wording because staff have not been adding HST to the connection fees.

'A' Fresh Start Initiative

The council approved the cancellation of the fall round of the 'A' Fresh Start Initiative.

The decision to cancel the fall session came after the town didn't receiving any applications for the fall portion of the initiative despite it being advertised on social media and radio.

The council also directed staff to review the Community Support Grants Policy and bring back any recommended changes to the October committee of the whole meeting.

Solid Waste - Memorandum of Understanding

The council authorized the mayor and CAO to sign a Memorandum of Understanding between Amherst, Oxford and the Municipality of Cumberland regarding solid waste education, enforcement and co-ordination.

The memorandum is needed because the three municipal units will still have to deliver the education and enforcement functions in regards to solid waste once the sale of the landfill in Little Forks is completed.

The memorandum would result in Amherst hiring an education officer who would provide solid waste education, co-ordination and communication services for all three municipal bodies.

Divert Nova Scotia provides the funding for most of the services covered in the memorandum, including education, enforcement and co-ordination. While the amount varies from year to year, it is generally enough to cover the costs of the services.





Any shortfall or surplus will be shared among the three units according to the existing Cumberland Joint Services Management Authority funding formula.

Exit 3 Sanitary Sewer agreement

The council tabled a discussion on a proposed Sanitary Sewer Agreement between the Town of Amherst and the Municipality of Cumberland to a future meeting.

Tactical Placemaking funding agreement

The council authorized the CAO to sign a contribution agreement and a memorandum of understanding that facilitate the implementation of a Tactical Placemaking Program.

The program was created by the Nova Scotia Business and Economic Labour Coalition as part of their plan to kick start economic recovery following the COVID-19 shutdown.

It supports community-led projects that encourage people to gather and connect downtown, supports economic recovery and invites increased visitation to downtowns.

More details will be released once the agreement and memorandum of understanding are signed.

Adjustments to Capital Funding

In keeping with the town's philosophy to pay for capital projects in cash, the council approved some changes in the source of funding for a number of capital projects contained in the 2021-22 capital budget.

The adjustments would see the water operating capital from revenue increased to \$114,497.16 from \$40,000, the general operating capital from revenue increased to





\$606,018.17 from \$575,000, withdrawing \$591,000 from the operating reserve to fund the new pumper fire truck and withdrawing \$271,271.93 from the operating reserve's stabilization reserve to fund the stadium solar project.

The increases in the water operating capital from revenue and the general operating capital from revenue were enabled due to surpluses in the water and general operating budgets at the end of the 2020-21 fiscal year.

Transferring the extra funds to those sections of the budget enabled the town to forgo or reduce long-term borrowing for several projects and enabled the town to save about \$12,000 in debenture interest payments.

A year-end surplus in the general operating budget also enabled the town to cover the costs of purchasing the new \$591,000 fire truck without having to incur long-term debt. The move saves the town about \$125,000 in interest costs over a 15-year debenture.

The adjustment to the solar project clarifies that the funding for the project comes from the operating reserve's stabilization reserve. This was not clearly indicated when the budget was set.

Year-end operating reserve transfer to general operating

The council approved the transfer of \$14,378.17 from its operating reserves to its general operating budget in order to cover a \$14,378.17 deficit in the solid waste department.

Covering the deficit from the operating reserves keeps the solid waste budget from affecting the general tax rate.

Debenture request

The council approved sending the Municipal Finance Corporation a request to issue a \$390,000 debenture to the town this fall.





The borrowed funds will be used to cover the costs of the Albion Street water main replacement. The resolution also sets the maximum interest rate at 5.5 per cent and states the term is not to exceed 15 years.

The annual debenture principal and interest payments would start in 2022.

Municipalities requiring debenture funds from the corporation in the fall of 2021 are required to make a written commitment by Oct. 1, 2021. The process followed by the committee and recommended by staff is the established process for borrowing from the Municipal Finance Corporation.

As with all borrowing by a municipality for capital purposes, it will also require the approval of the Minister of Community Affairs.

Zamboni purchase

The council approved a staff recommendation that changes to the way a new Zamboni for the Amherst Stadium is purchased.

The change will see the \$200,000 cost of purchasing the Zamboni be covered by a transfer from operating reserves instead of long-term debt. The transfer to funding from the operating reserves is a direct result of the town having a surplus at the end of the 2020-21 fiscal year.

By forgoing the use of long-term debt to fund the purchase of the Zamboni, the town will save about \$43,000 in debt interest costs over the next 15 years.

Capital Funding Adjustment – fire station parking lot

An \$80,000 increase to the general operating budget capital from revenue was approved by the council.

The increase will pay for the paving of the Amherst Fire Department's parking lot and comes from a \$296,000 surplus that was reported in the first quarter of the 2021-22 fiscal year.





Staff believe funding the paving from the surplus is a positive use of surplus funds.

Financial Statements

27 Sept 21 council meeting – Council accepted the recommendation of its audit committee and approved the acceptance of the 2020-21 audited financial statements for the town and its water utility.

The financial statements were audited by Jorgensen & Bickerton Inc. They will be available on the town's website at:

https://amherst.ca/index.php?option=com_docman&view=list&layout=table&slug=financial-statments&own=0&Itemid=376.

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