

**Amherst Town Council
Committee of the Whole
Minutes**

Date: December 15, 2025
Time: 3:00 pm
Location: Council Chambers, Town Hall

Members Present
Mayor Rob Small
Deputy Mayor Charlie Chambers
Councillor Hal Davidson
Councillor Nic Furlong
Councillor Terry McManaman
Councillor Dwayne Ripley
Councillor Kathy Wells

Staff Present
Jason MacDonald, Chief Administrative Officer
Aaron Bourgeois, Director, Operations
Andrew Fisher, Director, Planning & Economic Development
Dwayne Pike, Chief, Police Services
Greg Jones, Director, Fire Services
Kim Jones, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Krista Crossman, Director, Human Resources
Sarah Wilson, Director, Finance
Sharon Bristol, Director, Community Living
Mallory Klooster, Manager, Community Well-Being
Jeff Bacon, Economic Development Officer
Lori O'Connell, Marketing & Communications Officer
Sean Payne, Marketing & Communications Officer
Natalie LeBlanc, Municipal Clerk
Cindy Brown, Administrative Assistant

1. Call to Order

Mayor Small called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

1.1 Territorial Acknowledgement

Mayor Small gave the Territorial Acknowledgement.

1.2 Approval of Agenda

Moved By Councillor Furlong

Seconded By Deputy Mayor Chambers

That the agenda be approved as circulated.

MOTION CARRIED

1.3 Approval of the Consent Agenda

Moved By Councillor Wells

Seconded By Councillor Ripley

To approve the consent agenda with the removal of items 3.1 Holiday Events, 3.2 User Fee Comparison, 3.3 Cumberland Business Connector and CBDC Comparison, 3.6 ATV Trail and 3.8 CAO Task Report.

MOTION CARRIED

1.4 Acceptance of Minutes

1.4.1 November 17, 2025

Mayor Small called for any errors or omissions in the minutes. There being none, the minutes of the November 17, 2025, meeting of the Committee of the Whole were accepted as included in the agenda package.

2. Council Direction Requests

2.1 Community Support Grant

Moved By Councillor Furlong

Seconded By Councillor McManaman

That Council forward to the December 15, 2025, regular meeting, the application from the Nova Scotia Community College to be denied.

MOTION CARRIED

2.2 Brand, Marketing and Communications Strategies

Moved By Councillor Wells

Seconded By Councillor Furlong

That Council forward to the December 15, 2025, regular meeting approval of the Town of Amherst Brand Strategy and Strategic Marketing/ Communications Plan 2026-2028 with amendments including page 1 of the Brand Strategy under Mission change “a welcoming” to “an inclusive” and page 16 of the Marketing and Communications Plan within the Brand Pyramid under values change “welcoming” to “inclusive.”

Against (4): Mayor Small, Councillor Davidson, Councillor Furlong, and Councillor Ripley

MOTION DEFEATED

Moved By Councillor Ripley

Seconded By Councillor Davidson

That this item be on the agenda of the January 2026 Committee of the Whole meeting to allow Council time to discuss the Brand, Marketing and Communications Strategies with their constituents.

Against (1): Councillor McManaman

MOTION CARRIED

2.3 Demographics Strategy

Moved By Councillor Davidson

Seconded By Councillor Wells

That the 2025 Demographic Strategic Plan be amended under the Executive Summary section paragraph 4 to change the words "a welcoming" to "an inclusive".

MOTION CARRIED

Moved By Councillor McManaman

Seconded By Deputy Mayor Chambers

That Council forward to the December 15, 2025, regular meeting, approval of the 2025 Demographic Strategic Plan.

MOTION CARRIED

2.4 Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Committee Recommendations

Moved By Councillor McManaman

Seconded By Councillor Wells

That Council forward to the December 15, 2025, regular meeting, the following Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Committee motions for approval:

- 1. That the Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Committee recommend that Council request staff to investigate the feasibility of having inclusive, all gender restrooms at all Town of Amherst facilities.**
- 2. That the Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Committee recommend Council request staff to complete an audit of all Town of Amherst facilities and infrastructures, including accessible parking spaces, to ensure they are fully accessible as it is laid out in the Council approved Strategic Plan and to bring a report back to this Committee for review.**

MOTION CARRIED

2.5 Banner Request

Moved By Councillor McManaman

Seconded By Deputy Mayor Chambers

That staff be directed to investigate the appropriateness of hanging a banner at the Amherst Stadium in memory of Vaughn Martin.

MOTION CARRIED

2.6 Social Media and Communication Presentation

Information item only. Further to the motion passed at the December 16, 2024, Committee of the Whole meeting, staff will formally invite Bridgewater Mayor David Mitchell to do a presentation for Council regarding social media and communication.

2.7 Community Centre and Council Remuneration

Moved By Councillor Davidson

Seconded By Deputy Mayor Chambers

That the November 17, 2025, Committee of the Whole Closed Session motion be removed from the December 15, 2025, regular meeting of Council agenda, and that staff be directed to schedule a meeting in January 2026 with Council to discuss a new and/or renovated stadium and next steps.

MOTION CARRIED

3. Information Items

3.1 Holiday Events

Moved By Councillor Davidson

Seconded By Deputy Mayor Chambers

That staff be directed to have Council participate in future Christmas parades together as a group with one inclusive mode of transportation.

MOTION CARRIED

3.2 User Fee Comparisons

Councillor Davidson asked for clarification on expenses incurred during special off-season events at the Amherst Stadium. The Director of Operations responded these expenses are mostly related to stadium employee wages.

3.3 Cumberland Business Connector and CBDC Comparison

Mayor Small clarified the purpose of this report is to outline the different services offered by the Cumberland Business Connector and the Community Business Development Corporation. Information item only.

3.4 Color Themed Flowers

Information item approved as part of the consent agenda.

3.5 2026-2028 People Strategy

Information item approved as part of the consent agenda.

3.6 ATV Trail

**Moved By Councillor Ripley
Seconded By Councillor Furlong**

**That staff be directed to communicate with Maritime Sod about the potential of
ATV access on their property.**

MOTION CARRIED

3.7 By-Law / Policy Review

Information item approved as part of the consent agenda.

3.8 CAO Task Report

Councillor Davidson asked about the status of the Committee Review, particularly the Joint Councils Policy. The CAO advised that he has consulted with the Municipality of the County of Cumberland CAO regarding this and that this policy will likely be repealed and that meetings between the Town of Amherst and Municipality of the County of Cumberland Mayors, Deputy Mayors and CAOs will continue as needed.

5. Closed Session

**Moved By Councillor Wells
Seconded By Councillor Furlong
That the Committee move to a Closed Session.**

MOTION CARRIED

Natalie LeBlanc
Municipal Clerk

Rob Small
Mayor