

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

Date: February 17, 2026
Time: 4:00 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
Krista Crossman, Director, Human Resources
Sarah Wilson, Director, Finance
Lori O'Connell, Marketing & Communications Officer
Sean Payne, Marketing & Communications Officer
Torben Laux, Planner
Jeff Bacon, Economic Development 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 Furlong

Seconded By Councillor McManaman

To approve the consent agenda with the removal of item 4.5 Tourism Strategy Update.

MOTION CARRIED

1.4 Acceptance of Minutes

1.4.1 January 19, 2026

Mayor Small called for any errors or omissions in the minutes. There being none, the minutes of the January 19, 2026, meeting of the Committee of the Whole were accepted as included in the agenda package.

1.4.2 February 9, 2026

Mayor Small called for any errors or omissions in the minutes. There being none, the minutes of the February 9, 2026, meeting of the Committee of the Whole were accepted as included in the agenda package.

2. Presentations

2.1 Transit System Feasibility Study – WSP Global Inc.

David McCusker, with WSP Global Inc. consulting firm, presented to Council on the findings of the recent Transit System Feasibility Study. Information item only at this time.

Greg Jones arrived at 4:54 p.m., and Torben Laux left the meeting at this time.

3. Council Direction Requests

3.1 Volunteer Code of Conduct Policy

Moved By Councillor Furlong

Seconded By Councillor Wells

That Council forward to the February 23, 2026, regular meeting, approval of the Volunteer Code of Conduct Policy.

MOTION CARRIED

3.2 Appointment of Members of Council to External Boards, Committees and Commissions Policy

Moved By Deputy Mayor Chambers

Seconded By Councillor Davidson

That Council forward to the February 23, 2026, regular meeting, approval of the amendments to the Appointment of Members of Council to External Boards, Committees & Commissions Policy #10350-28.

MOTION CARRIED

3.3 Membership on National Boards and Committees Policy and Membership in Clubs, Societies and Associations Policy

Moved By Deputy Mayor Chambers

Seconded By Councillor McManaman

That Council forward to the February 23, 2026, regular meeting, the repeal of the Membership on National Boards and Committees Policy #10350-17 as well the repeal of the Membership in Clubs, Societies and Associations Policy #10350-18.

MOTION CARRIED

- 3.4 Commercial Development Support Program By-law**
Moved By Councillor Davidson
Seconded By Deputy Mayor Chambers
That Council forward to the February 23, 2026, regular meeting First Reading of the By-law to Amend the Commercial Development Support Program By-law P-9 with a provision that staff investigate the procedure for issuing a rebate to a company that no longer exists that is part of the program.
- MOTION CARRIED**
- 3.5 Rounding of Cash Transactions Policy**
Moved By Councillor Furlong
Seconded By Deputy Mayor Chambers
That Council forward to the February 23, 2026, regular meeting, approval of the Rounding of Cash Transactions Policy as amended.
- MOTION CARRIED**
- 3.6 Strategic Priorities – Points to Capture - Reward for Development**
The Director of Planning and Economic Development reviewed his memo included in the agenda package outlining initiatives and programs the Town has to encourage and promote development. Council unanimously agreed this item can be removed from the Strategic Priorities - Points to Capture list.
- 3.7 Bike Lockers Request**
Moved By Councillor Davidson
Seconded By Councillor Furlong
That Council not proceed with a bike locker pilot project at this time.
- MOTION CARRIED**
- 3.8 Social Media Presentation**
Moved By Councillor Ripley
Seconded By Councillor Wells
That Mayor Small contact Bridgewater Mayor Mitchell to invite him to give a presentation to Council.
Against (2): Councillor Davidson, and Councillor McManaman
- MOTION CARRIED**
- 3.9 Pain Clinic**
Moved By Councillor Furlong
Seconded By Councillor Wells
That the CAO be directed to contact Bethany McCormick, Nova Scotia Health's Vice-President of Operations for the Northern Zone, for a general update on the status of the pain clinic, and further that this item be added to the CAO's task report to keep Council informed.
- MOTION CARRIED**

4. Information Items

4.1 Snow and Ice Management Policy

Moved By Councillor Furlong

Seconded By Councillor Wells

That staff be directed to proceed with Option 1 and maintain the status quo with the priority route salted first with residential streets only being salted on an as-needed basis, that staff define "as needed" in the policy, and that Option 2, expanding the salting after priority route be added to budget discussions to capture any implicated costs for next year's winter season.

MOTION CARRIED

4.2 Graffiti

Moved By Councillor Davidson

Seconded By Councillor Wells

That staff be directed to investigate drafting a procedure, policy or by-law regarding graffiti and bring a recommendation back to Council at the April Committee of the Whole meeting.

MOTION CARRIED

4.3 Citizens on Patrol

Information item only; approved as part of the consent agenda.

4.4 Photo Opportunity Location

Information item only; approved as part of the consent agenda.

4.5 Tourism Strategy Update

Mayor Small asked the Economic Development Officer to include in his monthly report for March a more detailed update on the renewed MOU with the County for regional tourism, as well as the Tourism Sector Strategic Plan for Nova Scotia, the Bannikin Report and Industry Training.

Moved By Councillor Davidson

Seconded By Councillor Wells

That Council continue the meeting past 6:00 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED

4.6 By-law / Policy Review

Information item only; approved as part of the consent agenda.

4.7 CAO Task Report

Information item only; approved as part of the consent agenda.

5. Monthly Reports

The following monthly reports were approved as part of the consent agenda:

5.1 Community Living

5.2 Corporate

5.3 Cumberland Business Connector

5.4 Financial Services

5.5 Fire Services

5.6 Human Resources

5.7 Operations

5.8 Planning & Economic Development

5.9 Police Services

6. **Closed Session**
Moved By Councillor Furlong
Seconded By Councillor Ripley
That the Committee move to a closed session.

MOTION CARRIED

7. **Adjournment**
There being no further business, Mayor Small adjourned the meeting.

Natalie LeBlanc
Municipal Clerk

Rob Small
Mayor