



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MR# 2020083

DATE: 17 November 2020

RE: **Committee recommends changing December meeting dates**

AMHERST, Nova Scotia – Amherst town council's committee of the whole is recommending the December meeting dates for the committee of the whole and regular council sessions be changed in order to avoid being in conflict with the Christmas holiday.

The committee approved the recommendation at its Nov. 16, 2020, meeting, and forwarded it to council for approval during council's Nov. 23, 2020 session.

If adopted then, the December committee of the whole meeting will be held on Dec. 14, 2020, and the regular council session on Dec. 21, 2020.

Normally, the committee meets on the third Monday of each month and council on the fourth Monday, which would have seen the meetings held on Dec. 21 and Dec. 28 respectively.

Amendments to Council proceedings policy

The committee is also recommending that council approve amendments to its Proceedings of Council policy at its Nov. 23, 2020, session.

One of the amendments, if approved, would see councillors receive their agenda packages for the committee of the whole and council sessions a day earlier than is currently required.

As the policy now stands, council members must receive their agendas by the close of day on the Friday preceding a meeting, which are usually held on Mondays. The amendment would require the packages to be ready for council members by the end of the day on the Thursday preceding the meeting.

A second amendment would see the start of the regular council sessions moved to 6 p.m., instead of the current start time of 7 p.m.

The last amendment would see the use of a consent agenda during committee of the whole meetings. A consent agenda allows for streamlining meetings by grouping routine business into one motion.

Amendments to town's signing authority

The committee is recommending that town council update the town's signing authority during its upcoming council session on Nov., 23, 2020.

The updates would see the removal of the words town clerk from the policy and have the words chief financial officer replace the words treasurer/deputy clerk in the document as a signing officer for the town.

The changes reflect recent adjustments made to the titles of staff members.





The signing policy requires that town cheques have two signatures, one an elected official (the mayor, deputy-mayor or a designated councillor) and one administrative official (the chief administrative officer or the chief financial officer).

The committee also recommended council approve the appointment of Coun. Sheila Christie as designated councillor when it meets on Nov. 23, 2020.

Fluoridation

The committee received the results of the non-binding plebiscite on putting fluoride in the town's water supply, with 2,296 voting no and 1,480 voting yes.

In addition, a survey sent to 380 Cumberland County water customers resulted in 63 saying no and 34 saying yes.

The committee voted to send the matter to the Nov. 23, 2020, council meeting for a decision. In doing so, many of the councillors indicated they would be following the wishes of the people and voting to keep fluoride out of the water supply.

They also directed the town's poverty committee to investigate other ways of supplying fluoride to people who want access to it in order to help their children's dental health, such as supplying them with toothpaste. The committee is to bring a report on their finds to the committee at a future date.

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Direct enquiries to:
Tom McCoag,
Corporate Communications Officer
902-694-6265
tmccoag@amherst.ca

