

# Province Antes Up \$5.3-Million



Upon signing a letter of intent between Town of Parrsboro and Municipality of Cumberland for amalgamation by November 1, 2016, the Province of Nova Scotia provided \$5.3-Million for transitional costs over 5 years. Participating in the signing were (L-R): Mayor Lois Smith, Town of Parrsboro; Mark Peck, Executive Director of Policy, Planning and Advisory Services, Department of Municipal Affairs; Municipal Affairs Minister, Zach Churchill and Warden Keith Hunter, Municipality of the County of Cumberland. (Communications Nova Scotia Photo)

By Maurice Rees

The province will provide \$5.3-Million over a five year period if amalgamation of Parrsboro into the Municipality of Cumberland providing the merger becomes effective on November 1st. The town applied to the Utility and Review Board for dissolution in August and in late fall, after considerable discussion the province appointed John Leefe as the transition coordinate.

Leefe is a former MLA, Mayor of Liverpool and the Municipality of Queens following the merger of Liverpool and County of Queens.

On March 17th following ongoing negotiations, the province reached an agreement with the Town of

Parrsboro and the Municipality of the County of Cumberland to support a new governance structure. The agreement provides \$5.3 million over five years to help with costs if the town dissolves and merges with the county.

Municipal Affairs Minister Zach Churchill said, "A new governance structure is one way that Nova Scotia municipalities can ensure strong, sustainable communities for their citizens. This funding will help ensure Parrsboro residents continue to receive important services and enjoy their vibrant community."

The details are in a letter of intent that will be presented as evidence at the March 30 hearing with the Nova Scotia

Utility and Review Board. March 30th is the first of two public meetings which the Utility and Review Board will be holding.

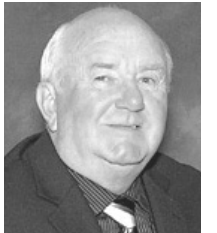
Although the questions and concerns have been addressed, many Parrsboro residents were initially concerned about the level of local services which would remain following the merger. "We've worked collaboratively with Cumberland to come to this agreement which will make our community and the county stronger," said Parrsboro Mayor Lois Smith. "It means we will continue to build Parrsboro as a healthy, vibrant and sustainable community for many years to come."

If amalgamation goes ahead effective Nov. 1, more than \$3.4 million will support infrastructure, operating and capital investments for roads and transitional costs associated with dissolution. Parrsboro's equalization funding will be frozen for five years at its current level, totalling more than \$1.8 million.

"This agreement puts us in a strong position to welcome Parrsboro into the county," said Keith Hunter, warden of the Municipality of the County of Cumberland. "It will allow us to provide important services and infrastructure for Parrsboro, including a new waste water treatment plant."

More information is available at [www.town.parrsboro.ns.ca](http://www.town.parrsboro.ns.ca) and [www.cumberlandcounty.ns.ca](http://www.cumberlandcounty.ns.ca)

## Don Fletcher's Councillor's Corner



Don Fletcher

On March 2nd, we began council at 1 pm, in camera with the first half hour, with councillors only discussion and then 7 items covered, two deferred. Prior to the meeting some councillors met at the Leicester Fire Hall for a tour of their fire hall. We met with the chief, deputy chief and a young firemen.

I believe councillors were impressed with the voluntarism shown and their need for a new hall. I am sure there will be discussion at budget time.

Public council began at approx 3:45 with the first item a follow up presentation on the algae problem in Mattatall lake. The group has started a stewardship committee to address the on-going problem. The feeling is that most lakes are vulnerable.

Next were 2 community grants, 1 approved and 1 deferred for more info. Next a discussion on a generator at the Wallace Rite Stop that serves the community in emergencies. Motion approved to help with funding. A short discussion followed on a special public council next Wednesday, March 9th at 1pm.

Next item was approval to award a tender for the Springhill Solid Waste Contract to Miller

Waste for the next 6 years to coincide with the end date of the current contract within the county. Motion approved. We next gave approval to purchase two properties in the Pugwash well field. Ongoing.

Funding for the community enterprise network (CEN) was next and council approved in principle funding for participation in CEN subject to final approval of a funding agreement between the four municipal units. Motion approved.

Next was approval to add funding for the Ann Murray Center in next year's budget. Motion approved. A motion was approved to extend bridge funding to CNTA for the upcoming year while they are in transition. Motion approved.

Next regular council meeting is March 6th at 2:30 pm. If you are interested in municipal affairs contact your Municipal Councillor.

Donald Fletcher is councillor for District 10, Municipality of Cumberland.

## Cumberland Council Favours Energy East Pipeline

By Maurice Rees

(With this being the first issue of South Cumberland News, we wish to advise readers our coverage of Cumberland Council will be confined to items that affect either the entire municipality, or the South Cumberland area).

Warden Keith Hunter called the February 17th meeting to order noting that all councillors were present except Councillor Rector, who was absent due to illness.

A presentation by Ottawa House was rescheduled as the group was unable to attend the February 17th meeting, while

the S.T.E.P Program was rescheduled to a future meeting.

Council was advised by the Director of Social Capital, Steve Ferguson, a proposal was received from CCL (Cumberland County Life) to form a new Community Economic Network (CEN) to support

Economic Development in Cumberland County, based on the structure proposed for the Provincially supported REN, which is not going forward in Cumberland. The proposed preliminary budget for the CEN organization is \$200,000 for the first year of operation. The CEN would be an incorporated society and would have a volunteer Board made up of business operators. Staff have had meetings with representatives from CCL and the Towns of Amherst and Oxford and recommended a contribution of \$80,000, plus \$10,000 worth of in-kind services.

Council approved the staff recommendation conditional upon Amherst matches the municipalities contribution and the Towns of Oxford and Parrsboro each contribution \$10,000.00 each. An additional condition included the four municipalities and the CEN enter into a funding agreement, which also includes a non-competition, competition clause preventing the municipal units from hiring current and former members of the CEN and similarly prevents the CEN from hiring current and former employees of the municipalities.

Council approved a request from the Anne Murray Centre for \$8,000 to assist with costs during the winter months until they are ready to open for the summer season. Cumberland African Nova Scotian Association (CANSAs) requested council to have space in the municipal building in Springhill, but the application was denied because there is no space available.

On motion by Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor Fletcher a community development grant was approved, in the amount of \$500 to the Roy Maltby Fundy Hockey School with the funds coming from District 1 funds.

International Women's Day Committee for Amherst, Cumberland County & Area received a \$100 contribution towards the cost of hosting a luncheon on March 11th. Admission to the luncheon is by way of a free-will donation.

The 2016 Woodland Conference to be held in

Oxford on April 2nd were approved for a \$500.00 contribution with funds being split between District 3 and 4. The conference will provide a series of informative speakers and networking opportunities for woodland owners and others interested in woodlands. There will be three locations for these conferences: Lunenburg County, Antigonish County and Cumberland County.

Brenda Moore, Municipal Clerk/Records Manager advised Council that members of Council have expressed a desire to have a tourism brochure display rack in the lobby for the public. It was suggested if Councillors provide brochures from their districts a decision will be made on what size and style rack will be needed. Council agreed to direct staff to proceed with the purchase of brochure displays.

The property tax collection analysis for January 31, 2016 shows an outstanding balance of \$4,223,753 as compared to December 31, 2015 balance of \$4,330,136. A total of \$106,383 was collected during the month of January 2016. A review of the miscellaneous accounts will be completed in the near future. Districts 11 & 12 have been added to the 2016 Assessment Roll for Cumberland, which includes all accounts that were in the former boundaries of the Town of Springhill.

Council allotted an amount of \$2,500 to be split between Districts 7, 11 & 12 to the Springhill Centennial Golf Club to construct a new tee box at hole #7 to improve the design of this area of the course to improve the safety of the players on the adjacent fairway.

Mike Carter, Fire Protection Services Coordinator, provided a written and verbal report to Council regarding the Fire Service and Facilities update. Councillor Fletcher asked to have a future discussion regarding funding requirements of fire departments. A financial update will be provided at one of the March meetings.

Council decided to write Bill Casey, MP, requesting to express council's support for the Energy East Pipeline Project as it could keep our residents working in close proximity to their families and provide gainful employment opportunities for those workers that are being laid off in other provinces and may, in fact, assist in reversing our aging demographics.

<p>Welcome to the first issue of the South Cumberland News, designed to serve the areas of Advocate-Southampton-Parrsboro.</p> <p>Each month we will continue to serve your needs and ensure all communities continue to maintain their identity.</p>	<p>We are mailing this introductory issue and next month's to all homes in the South Cumberland area.</p> <p>After that you will need to purchase at your local store, or if you wish, we will mail directly to you at the end of each month.</p>	<p>As an introductory offer, GET 2 YEARS – For the price of 1. If you purchase a one year subscription we will mail a second year, FREE OF CHARGE.</p> <p>If you have relatives or friends who have moved away, but enjoy keeping in touch, this is an excellent opportunity for you to purchase a Gift Subscription on their behalf, while you are ordering your own.</p>
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