

Municipal Fees Become "Policy" Decision



A large crowd occupied council chamber gallery on at the January meeting awaiting council's decision regarding a new by-law to protect the French River Water Supply area. (Rees Photo)

By Maurice Rees

On January 30th, Colchester Council meeting started with a public meeting for the second reading for amendments for various by-laws necessary as council moved various municipal fees to a "policy status" and consolidated the fees into one package. The action required several by-laws to be amended to reflect current situations.

The council package for January 30th meeting included some catch-up from what seems like eons ago. Recommendations from the committee meeting of December 12th had not been back to council for final approval, as the normal monthly meeting, was not held over the Christmas holidays and minutes from the committee meeting of January 16th needed ratification by full council meeting.

In approval of previous meetings, recommendations from December 12th committee included three recommendations:

Code of Conduct:

Council adopt the Code of Conduct, as put forth by NSFM, and that it be amended, if necessary, once the Department of Municipal Affairs has completed their review.

Carrobie Road Streetlight:

Council approved staff be directed to install a streetlight at the intersection of Carrobie Road and Station Road.

French River Protected Water Supply Regulations:

Council adopt the French River Water Supply Regulation as recommended by the Source Water Protection Committee, and once approved, the regulations be forwarded to the Minister of Environment for adoption as a provincial regulation, along with an



application to Designate the French River, as defined, as a Protected Water Supply Area under the Environment Act.

The public gallery in council chambers was almost half full with citizens in attendance watching to ensure council followed through on the French River Water Supply recommendations and request for designation as a Protected Water Supply Area.

Report and Recommendation of Council Committee Meeting held on January 16, 2019 included:

2020-21 Schedule of Meetings:

That Council approves the Schedule of Presentation, Council Committee and Council Meetings for Fiscal Year 2020-21 as amended; and, approved the following dates for 2020-21 budget related meetings: February 25th and March 5th for Grant Presentations; April 2nd for Maintenance Budget; April 23rd and 27th for Additions and Deletions.

2020 FCM Conference – Toronto, ON:

Council approved Councillors Cavanaugh, Pash and Masters, be approved to attend the 2020 FCM Conference, in addition to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Councillor Taggart (as an FCM Board Member) and the CAO. Councillor Boutilier serve as an alternate in the event that any of those selected are unable to attend.

Expense Policy for CAO and Members of Council:

That Council approved the amendments to the Expense Policy for CAO and Members of Council as presented.

Sewer – Meeting House Road, Onslow:

Council not proceed with further exploring the possibility of sewer on Meeting House Road and Matlyn Drive.

Tatamagouche Sewer Boundary Update:

Council approved the Sewer Service Boundary for Tatamagouche be expanded to include PID 20470456 and the Sewer Area Rate be applied to this PID going forward.

Base Level Insurance for Volunteer Firefighters:

Council approves that insurance benefit coverage for

Volunteer Firefighters be provided at \$200,000 and \$750/week.

Electronic Voting:

Council approved maintaining status quo and continue with paper ballots only for the 2020 Municipal Election.

Code of Conduct:

Council adopted the Code of Conduct for Members of Council based on the draft NSFM template, with possible amendments coming forward at a later date.

1st Annual NS Department of Agriculture Minister's Conference:

Council approved a booth at the 1st Annual NS Department of Agriculture Minister's Conference being held March 3-4, 2020.

Renewable Energy Forum:

Council approved the Municipality take part in the Municipal Renewable Energy Forum and Sustainability Fair scheduled for May 9, 2020.



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Policy for Allowable Expenses Approved

By Maurice Rees

During approval of a revised expense policy at the January 30th council meeting discussion centered on what events within their constituency would be questionable or not covered. Not wanting to cause confusion, councillors will submit a suggested list to the CAO, which would include incidental events within their area such as Remembrance Day, Community meetings and other events which benefit the entire municipality, not just the councillors interest or responsibility. Local events such as birthdays, anniversaries and community suppers would not automatically be included.

If an event is beneficial to the entire county, it can be claimed, but not things benefiting an individual councillor. The Municipality will reimburse Council members and the CAO or designate for customary expenses directly related to approved business travel and training expenses upon submission of an Expense Voucher.

The following expenses will be eligible for re-

imbursement by the Municipality: Personal vehicle kilometrage at the rates equal to the current Provincially prescribed amount for: travelling to and from any meeting of Council, or any Committee or Board to which the Council member has been appointed by Council, or when called upon by the Mayor to represent the Municipality.

Other allowable expenses include: travelling to and from a conference, training or meeting preapproved by resolution of Council or approved by the CAO or designate. Council Members travelling for work on behalf of the Municipality in response to a concern or opportunity expressed within the County, or to a meeting or event that directly benefits the Municipality by having a Member representative present, may be reimbursed by approval of the CAO or designate. Travel to elective or optional community events, gatherings or meetings will not be eligible for reimbursement.

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Truro
40 Inglis Place
Truro, Nova Scotia
B2N 4B4
Telephone: 902-895-2863
Fax: 902-895-9544

Amherst
35 Church Street
Amherst, Nova Scotia
B4H 3A7
Telephone: 902-667-8679
Fax: 902-667-0742

