

WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

Committee of the Whole - Meeting Agenda Amended December 18, 2024

December 3, 2024 - 6:00 p.m.

In-person Sanford Council Chambers, 76 Morison Dr, Windsor, NS

Virtual via Zoom (also FB Livestream)

Agenda is subject to change due to additions that may not be able to be reflected until after the meeting.



West Hants
something inspiring awaits

1. Call to Order
2. Attendance
3. Approval of the Agenda, including additions or deletions
 - a) Dashboard Action Items – Information Log
 - b) Dashboard Action Items – Dangerous or Unsightly Premises
4. Declaration(s) of Conflict of Interest
5. Announcements
6. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes
 - a) 2024-11-12 Committee of the Whole Minutes
7. Presentations
 - a) Annapolis Valley Regional Library – Julia Merritt
8. Unfinished Business/Postponed Motions
 - a) Commercial Kitchen Equipment Tender Award WHRMCD24-10 Recommendation Report – Manager Bennett (moved up on the agenda)
 - b) **One ½ Ton 4x4 Crew Cab Truck RFP Award for By-law Enforcement – By-Law Officer Levy**
 - c) **Climate Action Committee 2025 Work Plan – Coordinator Ogilvie**
 - d) Home Flood Protection Pilot Program Participants Recommendation Report - Coordinator Ogilvie
 - e) Avon View High School Fence – Mayor Zebian
 - f) Council Renumeration Policy – CAO Phillips
 - g) Draft Buyout Program Policy - CAO Phillips
 - h) PVSC PVSC Correspondence - Capped Assessment Option in Property Buyout Policy Discussion - Councillor Ivey
9. Reports
 - a) CAO Activity Update - Information Report
10. Correspondence

- a) Information
 - 1. Avon Causeway Activity Log as of December 2nd, 2024 – None
 - 2. Correspondence Received Ledger as of December 2nd, 2024 - None
- b. Request(s) - None
- c. Out-going Correspondence Ledger as of December 2nd, 2024 - None
- 11. New Business
 - ~~a) Climate Action Committee 2025 Work Plan – Coordinator Ogilvie~~
 - b) Public Participation Policy Amendments – Manager Fougere
 - ~~c) One ½ Ton 4x4 Crew Cab Truck RFP Award for By-law Enforcement – By-Law Officer Levy~~
 - d) Code of Conduct for Elected Officials - Clerk Snair
 - e) Correspondence Request for Decision/Direction Report – Clerk Snair
- 12. Public Participation Period
- 13. In-Camera
 - a) 2024-11-12 Committee of the Whole In-Camera Minutes
 - b) MGA 22(2)(a) Land Matter
 - c) MGA 22(2)(a) Land Matter
 - d) MGA 22(2)(a) Land Matter
- 14. Next Meeting Date / Adjournment – December 10, 2024 Council Meeting at 6 p.m.

1. **Call to Order** – Deputy Mayor Francis called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. **Attendance** (6:00 p.m.)

Council

Abraham Zebian, Mayor

Rupert Jannasch, Councillor Dist. 1

Scott McLean, Councillor Dist. 2

Chrystal Remme, Councillor Dist. 3

Paul Wheadon, Councillor Dist. 4

Bob Morton, Councillor Dist. 6

Debbie Francis, Deputy Mayor, Dist. 5

Kayla Leary-Pinch, Councillor Dist. 7

Paul Morton, Councillor, Dist. 8

John Smith, Councillor Dist. 9

Bonnie Smith, Councillor Dist. 10

Jim Ivey, Councillor Dist. 11

Staff

Mark Phillips, CAO

Carlee Rochon, Dir. Financial Services

John Ogilvie, Climate Action Coordinator

Deanna Snair, Exec. Asst/ Clerk

Kevin Bennett, Manager, Parks & Facilities

Kari Fougere, Manager Planning & Development

Deanna Snair, Exec. Asst/ Clerk

Regrets:

Shelleena Thornton, Municipal Operations Supervisor

Kathy Kehoe, Dir. Community Development

Presenters:

Annapolis Valley Regional Library – Julia Merritt

Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia – Hugh MacKay

One (1) resident in the Gallery

3. **Approval of the Agenda, including additions or deletions** (6:01p.m.)

Item 11 (c) One ½ Ton 4x4 Crew Cab Truck RFP Award for By-law Enforcement was moved up to 8 (b).

Item 11 (a) Climate Action Committee 2025 Work Plan Recommendation Report to 8(c).

The original item 8 (b) would become 8(d) and the remaining items would follow that sequence.

Voting occurred by a show of hands.

**MOVED BY MAYOR ZEBIAN AND COUNCILLOR P. MORTON
THAT THE 2024-12-03 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
AGENDA BE APPROVED AS AMENDED.**

a) Dashboard Action Items – Information Log

b) Dashboard – Dangerous or Unsightly Premises – Information log

The bulk water filling station at the Brooklyn Fire Station 2 arrived on Monday. Staff are working to get the pad poured and have it installed immediately.

4. Declaration(s) of Conflict of Interest (6:03 p.m.)

Councillor P. Morton declared conflict on Item 8(b) due to family involvement.

5. Announcements (6:04 p.m.)

Deputy Mayor Francis acknowledged that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People and this land is governed by the treaties of Peace and Friendship signed in 1726. West Hants Regional Municipality also recognizes that we are all treaty people and have responsibilities to this land and each other. West Hants Regional Municipality also recognizes African Nova Scotians are a distinct people whose history, legacies, and contributions have enriched that part of Mi'kma'ki known as Nova Scotia for over 400 years.

Victory Credit Union provided \$5,000 to twelve (12) schools in West Hants for their breakfast programs.

Appreciation was expressed to the volunteers on hosting another successful Christmas Angels event, which raised over \$95,000.

The Newport Station Community Hall breakfast with Santa was relocated to the St. Croix Community Hall on December 14th from 8-11:30 a.m. There will be a craft table and 50/50 tickets available.

Festoon in Hantsport was scheduled for Thursday, December 5th from 5- 8 p.m. Santa and Chilly Willy will be there along with prizes and hot chocolate.

The Belmont Hall breakfast was scheduled for December 7th for 7:30 a.m.

A reminder was shared to anyone able to donate to the local food banks, to please consider doing so. All the donations received were appreciated.

The tree lighting for the Little Red School House was scheduled for December 14th. The Southwest Vaughan Fire Hall has scheduled a craft fair for December 7th. There is a free Christmas dinner scheduled for December 22 at the Fire Hall in Vaughan.

The Avon View Girls Birthplace of Hockey Tournament was scheduled for this coming weekend at the GFL Newport Rink in Brooklyn.

Ardoise Hall was hosting a photoshoot with Santa and his elves this coming Saturday.

6. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes (6:12 p.m.)

a) 2024-11-12 Committee of the Whole Minutes

**MOVED BY COUNCILLORS P. MORTON AND LEARY-PINCH THAT
COUNCIL APPROVE THE 2024-11-12 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
~~AGENDA AS AMENDED MINUTES.~~ MOTION CARRIED**

7. Presentations

a) Annapolis Valley Regional Library (6:08 p.m.)

Julia Merritt provided a brief overview of the Annapolis Valley Regional Library, who uses the library services, branch locations and programs, services and events provided by libraries across

Annapolis Valley, board structure, mandated funding investments and the Annapolis Valley funding formula.

The presentation provided a review of the 2023/24; same page usage grew over 20%, there were over 4000 new memberships and a total overall increase in library usage of 5%.

The presentation ended at 6:19 p.m. Appreciation was expressed as libraries across West Hants were well used.

Discussion Points:

- The financials presented were what libraries operate on annually.
- Library materials can be returned to any location.

Ms. Merritt left the meeting.

b) Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia Dave Gunner Zero Hunger (6:21 p.m.)

Hugh MacKay introduced himself and provided a brief overview of who the committee was, what they do, current projects and information about the Dave Gunning Zero Hunger Fund – a campaign to stock free food pantries in rural NS schools. The free stores/pantries provide food for students to take home for their families who are struggling to provide adequate nutrition.

In December 2024 the foundation will distribute \$100,000 in grants to Free Stores in schools across Nova Scotia, including West Hants. Their 2025 goal was to raise \$200,000 to provide grants to additional schools across the province. Any funds raised locally are granted to local schools and to date the foundation has already raised 10% of the 2025 goal through public and corporate donations. As part of our 2025 fundraising, we are applying for Community Grants from NS municipalities.

The request made to Council was to make people aware of the foundation and their work to help address food insecurity. Provide individual and corporate awareness and support for the campaign, consider providing a donation to the campaign or a community grant or support a Dave Gunning Zero Hunger fundraiser in West Hants.

Discussion Points:

- Appreciation was expressed in receiving the presentation. Mayor Zebian will be in touch to see about arranging a concert in West Hants.
- The Rural Health program looks to support health care practitioners with accommodations (physical space) in Rural Areas (Richmond County is being used as a trial for this program).

Mr. MacKay left the meeting.

8. Unfinished Business/Postponed Motions

a) Commercial Kitchen Equipment Tender Award WHRMCD24-10 Recommendation Report (6:32 p.m.)

Manager Bennett reviewed the report. \$250,000 was approved for building upgrades to the Windsor Community Centre in the 2024-25 West Hants Regional Municipality Capital Budget. Within that budgeted amount \$53,435.28 was being requested to allocate to purchase kitchen equipment to strengthen community resources and significant upgrades to better meet the needs of the community. The equipment would be used to support addressing food insecurity in the

community, improve food safety, increase capacity for events, enhance cooking efficiency, support community need, attract more bookings and boost community pride.

Discussion Points:

- Warranty was 90 days but was dependant on the piece of equipment.
- The building was perceived to be in good operational standing and any assets purchased were transferrable to anything done in the future or a new location if needed.

MOVED BY MAYOR ZEBIAN AND COUNCILLOR P. MORTON THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL APPROVES THE AWARD OF TENDER WWRMCD24-10 TO RH FOOD SERVICE EQUIPMENT TO PURCHASE COMMERCIAL KITCHEN EQUIPMENT AS LISTED IN RFQ IN THE AMOUNT OF \$53,435.28 PLUS APPLICABLE TAXES TO BE TAKEN FROM THE CANADA COMMUNITY BUILDING FUND. FURTHER COUNCIL APPROVE THE INSTALLATION OF THE KITCHEN EQUIPMENT ALSO BE FUNDED THROUGH THE CANADA COMMUNITY BUILDING FUND. MOTION CARRIED

Manager Bennett left the meeting after the presentation.

b) One ½ Ton 4x4 Crew Cab Truck RFP Award Recommendation Report for By-law Enforcement (6:36 p.m.)

By-Law Officer Levy reviewed the report. During the 2024-25 Capital Budget \$52,500 was included for the By-law truck replacement to be funded 50% through Vehicle Reserves and 50% through Operating Reserves. A Request for Proposals was posted to the Provincial procurement website on October 10, 2024, and closed on November 7, 2024. Four (4) submissions were received resulting in the truck being over budget by a total of (\$7,651.34) including non-recoverable taxes.

Discussion Points:

- The deficit was funded 50% through Vehicle Reserves and 50% through Operating Reserves due to capacity when budgeting the Capital budget. The same funding model was used as presented in the Capital budget.
- The projected vehicle reserve balance included this year's contributions.
- The vehicle was replacing a current vehicle used by By-Law enforcement.

MOVED BY MAYOR ZEBIAN AND COUNCILLOR P. MORTON THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL APPROVE THE AWARD OF THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS # WHRMPD24-01 TO O'REGAN CHEVROLET BUICK GMC CADILLAC LIMITED TO PURCHASE ONE (1) ½ TON 4X4 CREW CAB TRUCK FOR BY-LAW ENFORCEMENT AT A PURCHASE PRICE OF \$57,677 PLUS APPLICABLE TAXES. MOTION CARRIED. Nays: Ivey

c) Climate Action Committee 2025 Work Plan Recommendation Report (6:40 p.m.)

Coordinator Ogilvie reviewed the report. The Climate Action Committee Terms of Reference must provide an annual work plan to Council. It was noted numerous items from the CAC 2024 Work

Plan have been completed, while some items remain in the “To Complete” section, along with major ongoing projects. These work items on the 2025 Work Plan, in addition to the Local Action Plan, will help the Municipality continue to make progress to reduce corporate and community GHG emissions and adapt to the negative effects of climate change.

Discussion Points:

- There was no requirement for WHRM to transition fully to electric vehicles. The procurement policy lists this option where it is feasible. The fleet transition study completed in the Fall of 2022, noted that at this time pick up trucks were not cost effective to transition to an electric version. Although they reduce emissions, over the life span of the vehicle they significantly increase costs to the municipality and taxpayers. It was noted cars and SUVs were feasible and over their life span saves costs associated to fuel and maintenance costs compared to a gas-powered car or SUV.
- Preliminary calculations for solar fields on municipal properties was completed by inhouse staff. CBCL completed a solar feasibility study in September, that was funded through a grant that WHRM was successful in receiving back in 2022. Information from that draft report will be presented as a recommendation report to Council with respect to building any type of solar fields. Six (6) facilities were requested to be investigated/explored, one (1) was removed immediately as it was determined there was not enough space to host a solar panel resulting in five sites remaining on the short list to consider.
- The action plan focused on reducing gas emissions. If the focus and goal of the committee was on the protection of people and property, there was value in looking at this more in depth in the coming year and having an increased focus in these areas specifically as it relates to flooding and such that has occurred in the region.

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS J. SMITH AND P. MORTON THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL PLACE THE CLIMATE ACTION COMMITTEE 2025 WORK PLAN ON FILE, IN A MANNER SUBSTANTIVELY THE SAME AS ATTACHMENT A TO THE STAFF REPORT TITLED “CAC 2025 WORK PLAN” DATED NOVEMBER 13, 2024. MOTION CARRIED

Councillor P. Morton declared an interest and left the discussion at 6:47 p.m.

d) Home Flood Protection Pilot Program Applicants Recommendation Report (6:47 p.m.)

Coordinator Ogilvie reviewed the report and provided a brief history for the newly elected Councillors. A total of 35 applications were submitted by October 11 for a maximum funding request of \$430,000. Applications were reviewed and evaluated based on the criteria outlined in the Home Flood Protection Pilot Program Policy including flooding severity, frequency, desired upgrades, and existing flood mapping.

Scores were averaged to create the final score per applicant and further categorized into, HIGH (28-41 pts), MEDIUM (14-27pts) and LOW (0-13pts) indicators reflecting eligibility levels. Staff have maximized the number of applicants within the budget of \$350,000, to assist a total of 27 applicants. The remaining \$50,000 will be utilized to complete the Home Flood Risk Assessments.

Discussion Points:

- Scoring was based on flooding frequency, severity, and if the home was the primary residence vs secondary residence.
- Scoring did not differentiate between homeowners or renters. Renters were equally considered as long as the premises was a single unit residence (defined in the policy) and the application also contained a signed authorization form from the landlord.
- Secondary residences were also considered; however, they received a lower score. Multi-unit properties were not eligible for the program.
- The program was open to all residents in West Hants that met the criteria identified in the policy.
- \$50,000 was set aside so the Clean Foundation could perform up to forty (40) Home Flood Risk Assessments for participants in the Home Flood Protection Pilot Program in WHRM. Any funds not used would be put back into the program for additional applications to be considered and for Council to approve.
- If the desire was to continue the program for another year, unsuccessful applications would likely be scored higher (if they reapplied), additional points were allocated for anyone not successful with a previous application.

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS JANNASCH AND LEARY-PINCH THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL APPROVE THE LIST OF PARTICIPANTS FOR THE HOME FLOOD PROTECTION PILOT PROGRAM AS SHOWN IN ATTACHMENT B TO THE REPORT “HOME FLOOD PROTECTION PILOT PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS”, FILE 24-18, TO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, DATED DECEMBER 3, 2024. MOTION CARRIED.

Councillor P. Morton returned to the meeting at 6:58 p.m. Coordinator Ogilvie left the meeting at 6:58 p.m.

e) Avon View High School Fence (6:58 p.m.)

Mayor Zebian reviewed the report. Recently, there has been reoccurring phone calls regarding students at Avon View High School and their safety. Students have been accessing the school through private property, construction zones, and “short cuts” through both private property and areas where heavy construction are taking place. The owners of these properties have, on numerous occasions, installed private property signs and have informed students to not enter the school property through the areas due to safety issues. While some students have respectfully listened, many have not; leading to numerous confrontations and some “close calls”. RCMP have been called on multiple occasions, but the situation seems to be getting worse.

Discussion Points:

- Council supported the initiative as this has been a long-standing issue the area.
- There may be provincial land that runs between the school and the development that could be used as an easement.

- A suggestion was made to send the letter to the local MLA. It was noted the Centre of Education was separate from the political side of things and may complicate matters.

MOVED BY MAYOR ZEBIAN AND COUNCILLOR P. MORTON THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL DIRECT STAFF TO DRAFT A LETTER TO THE ANNAPOLIS VALLEY REGIONAL CENTER OF EDUCATION REGARDING INSTALLATION OF A FENCE AROUND THE SCHOOL PROPERTY TO ADDRESS SAFETY CONCERNS FOR STUDENTS. MOTION CARRIED

f) Regional Council Remuneration Review (7:04 p.m.)

CAO Phillips provided a brief overview of the report that was previously presented to the former Council for consideration. There were five (5) core pieces to the recommendation report (core remuneration amounts for Council, change that impacts the expense policy, pension related changes and a change to add parental or dependant care leave and support with respect to any dependant or parental care expenses).

Discussion Points:

- Interest in seeing citizen members sitting on advisory committees per diem increased to \$100.
- Attachments were included the report.

MOVED BY MAYOR ZEBIAN AND COUNCILLOR P. MORTON THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL DIRECTS THE REMUNERATION POLICY BE UPDATED TO INCLUDE THE ANNUAL REMUNERATION LEVELS FOR MAYOR, DEPUTY MAYOR AND COUNCILOR INCREASE, AS PER THE DECEMBER 2024 REPORT, ON APRIL 1ST OF EACH FISCAL YEAR AS PER THE ANNUAL STATISTICS CANADA CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (CPI – ALL ITEMS) FOR THE PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA FOR THE PRECEDING CALENDAR YEAR UNTIL THE 2028 NS MUNICIPAL ELECTION. MOTION CARRIED. Nays: McLean and J. Smith

MOVED BY MAYOR ZEBIAN AND COUNCILLOR P. MORTON THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL DIRECTS THE WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY EXPENSE POLICY BE REVISED TO REFLECT THE UPDATED MEAL ALLOWANCE VALUES NOTED IN THE REPORT. Nays: Zebian

MOVED BY MAYOR ZEBIAN AND COUNCILLOR P. MORTON THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL DIRECTS WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY CONTINUE TO EXTEND THE DEFINED CONTRIBUTION GROUP PENSION PLAN TO ELECTED OFFICIALS WITH MATCHING FUNDS FROM THE MUNICIPAL AND COUNCIL MEMBER OF 8%. MOTION CARRIED. Nays: Jannasch, Zebian and McLean

MOVED BY MAYOR ZEBIAN AND COUNCILLOR P. MORTON THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL DIRECTS THE REMUNERATION POLICY BE UPDATED TO INCLUDE A PARENTAL/DEPENDENT CARE LEAVE POLICY FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS, ALLOWING ELECTED OFFICIALS TO TAKE UP TO 52 WEEKS LEAVE WITHOUT PAY. MOTION CARRIED. Nays: Jannasch and Francis

MOVED BY MAYOR ZEBIAN AND COUNCILLOR P. MORTON THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL DIRECTS THE REMUNERATION POLICY BE UPDATED TO INCLUDE THE PROVISION FOR UP TO \$1,500/YEAR FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS & \$750.00/YEAR FOR NONELECTED COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO SUPPORT DEPENDENT CARE EXPENSES. MOTION CARRIED. Nays: McLean, Francis, B. Morton, Leary-Pinch

MOVED BY MAYOR ZEBIAN AND COUNCILLOR P. MORTON THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL DIRECTS THE REMUNERATION POLICY BE UPDATED TO INCLUDE AN INCREASE TO THE RESIDENT MEMBERS PER MEETING ALLOWANCE TO \$100 FOR ALL COMMITTEES. MOTION CARRIED. Nays: J. Smith

g) Draft Buy Out Program Policy (7:12 p.m.)

CAO Phillips provided a brief overview of the draft policy as reflected from comments received from the previous Council. This was being presented for the newly elected Council for their consideration and comments. It was noted the formatting was off; however, it was hoped the intent of the policy was captured.

Discussion Points:

- The policy did not have costing, or dollar amounts for a total cost for the program, although a change was made in the value of the property (market assessment plus 10%).
- Potential financial impacts of the policy were discussed in-camera, not in the public forum.
- The draft policy reflected a lump sum value in an effort to capture some level of accommodations vs looking at individual accommodation amounts.
- A concern was noted that market value plus 10% did not cover the cost of needing to move or leave the area and purchase a new home, it was felt the amount was closer to 20%.
- It would be difficult to calculate a cost for the program unless a policy was created and approved. A missing piece was what would be done with the properties if they were purchased and any costs associated with this and finding a funding source.

h) PVSC Correspondence - Capped Assessment Option in Property Buyout Policy Discussion (7:24 p.m.)

Councillor Ivey reviewed the report noting the CAP program was a complex issue. If a residence is sold, it would lose the original CAP placed on it and falls prey to a new capped assessment value.

The properties located on Stannus Street have been properties held by the same person(s) for a number of years and all have a CAP placed on them. Concern was raised that should a property be sold and an owner need to relocate, the new property would not have the benefit of having the previous CAP amount (likely lower) and the property will fall prey to being taxed at a higher value. The report reference two (2) potential options/models in an attempt to address the matter of the lost benefit associated with the capped assessment and deal with the CAP.

Discussion Points:

- Lobbying for an amendment to the existing legislation for the Capped Assessment program was preferred as it would be beneficial to all residents affected by flooding or wildfires in Nova Scotia as a whole vs a specific group of people/properties.
- Utilizing FCM or NSFAM through an advocacy piece was seen as beneficial. They have a strong presence; advocacy or correspondence from them was seen as a combined unified collective voice for all 49 Municipalities. It would be more beneficial to go through NSFAM to make a meaningful change on the Assessment Act and potentially get legislation changed.
- ~~FCM and NSFAM were~~
- Although no formal motion was made to move away from allocating a specific amount to address the Cap in the potential draft buy out program, the direction previously provided by Council based on the conversations had led to the policy reflecting a 10% lump sum vs a specified amount to help offset CAP amounts and other accommodations.

i) Avon View High School Fence – Discussed earlier on the agenda.

9. Reports

a) CAO's Report (7:35 p.m.)

CAO Phillips provided a verbal report of the past month's activities.

Governance: COTW (November 12th), Council Meeting (November 26th) and Council Orientation (November 19th and 21st). WHRM Staff Appreciation on November 16th.

Appreciation was expressed for Council their time and patience with attending the three (3) orientation sessions. Next steps included facility and site tours and a strategic planning session in the new year. Several other training opportunities will be available from NSFAM and AMA, staff will continue to promote these professional development opportunities and assist with registration.

Administration: Participated as an Urban Development Institute (UDI) Panelist on November 13th. Attended Unhoused Discussion on November 20th, Hants County Exhibition Meeting with Sherri Donovan, ED Introduction on November 25th and also attended the NSFAM Fall Conference held November 26th – 29th. Conference highlights included the keynote speaker, Jon Montgomery, Trade Show and Exhibitors, Shaping Nova Scotia's Energy Future, Exploring Policing Roles and Municipal Roles in Nova Scotia, Conversation Series: Networking Tables and Governance Training. The Comfort Centre was operating out of the Hants Aquatic Centre / Pool on Stannus Street and opened December 1st.

Finance: Attended the Canada Community Building Fund (CCBF) Tutorial held on November 25th. The CCBF has been renewed with a broader expansion within some categories. To compare, the

WHRM 2023/24 allocation was \$1,090,413 and the 2024/25 allocation as indicated \$1,084,389 a decrease of \$6,044. The decrease was minor and reflective of a provincial formula.

Discussion Points:

- The reason the CCBF funding was decreased was unknown. Staff will look into further and inform Council of the reason during the budget process.
- An internal telecommunications tower meeting was held to ensure that WHRM was and remained within their jurisdiction on the matter. Updates will be provided should anything change on the matter. At present, the staff's position remains unchanged.

Councillor Remme attended the annual Brooklyn Fire Department banquet. Congratulations were extended to Phillip Barker for 40 years of service and Garnet Davison for 55 years of service.

10. Correspondence (7:41 p.m.)

a) Information

1. Avon Causeway Activity Log received as of December 2nd, 2024
2. Correspondence Received Log as of December 2nd, 2024
 - i. Rick Smith Re Committee of the Whole Minutes

Mr. Smith noted comments he made at the September Committee of the Whole meeting were not accurately reflected in the minutes. Minutes are amended and corrected when Council notes a misrepresentation or mistake, it was felt the practice should be no different when a resident notes corrections were needed. There was value in looking at having a way to make a correction to ensure information/minutes were accurate and not misleading. Follow up will occur on the matter.

b) Requests – None

c) Outgoing as of December 2nd, 2024 – None

11. New Business

a) Climate Action Committee 2025 Work Plan Recommendation Report – discussed earlier on the agenda.

b) Public Participation Policy Amendments Recommendation Report (7:44 p.m.)

Manager Fougere reviewed the report. With the current Canada Post strike, staff are recommending amendments to the Public Participation Program Policy to provide some flexibility in notification requirements for planning applications. Manager Fougere reviewed the current notification processes which included mailing notices to adjacent property owners (due to the strike this was unable to be done, and other courier options were costly). At present staff were unable to begin the notification processes for public information meetings for three (3) applications that have been received. With legislative timelines for rezoning applications, there were concerns with the current planning process. If the regular planning process is not followed for these applications and a Public Hearing is not scheduled and advertised within 120 days of the

application being received the application has been deemed to be refused by Council and the applicant has the right to appeal to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board.

To avoid any planning appeals, staff were recommending changes to the Public Participation Program Policy to provide staff the choice of advertising a Public Information Meeting or Public Hearing regarding any proposed development agreement or site-specific amendment through a minimum of two methods:

- (1) placing a notice in a newspaper circulating in the local area;
- (2) posting a notice on the Municipal website and bulletin board at the Municipal office; or
- (3) notifying by mail the owners of all lots within 300' of the sites of both the public information meeting and any public hearing. Within a Land Use By-law Council may specify a greater distance for notification.

Discussion Points:

- There was value in including wording that did not limit how notice was provided, so that when the strike ended, there was no need to amend the policy again. It was suggested that wording be included that notice would not be limited to the two (2) methods and that whenever possible/as available, all three (3) methods of notice would be used.
- Concern was raised that the changes would remain in effect once the strike was over. Placing an ad in the newspaper only would reach a limited number of people compared to a mailout option.
- An updated report with the suggested amendments to better reflect Councils intent will be presented for consideration at the next meeting noting that when the three (3) options are available, they will be used at all times.
- Residents have become accustomed to hearing about potential developments via the mail. It may be beneficial to cover courier costs vs not having residents aware of a potential development. These additional costs should not fall on the developer and not everyone will check the website for potential developments in their area.
- It was suggested when a strike was in effect, a notice could be posted on a community board in a centrally located space (gas station, post office, etc.) in impacted communities to inform residents in that area.
- A person could also be hired to deliver the notices as well.
- Signage is also placed on the property advising there is a public information meeting

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS J. SMITH P. MORTON AND THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS THAT COUNCIL APPROVE AMENDMENTS TO THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAM POLICY WHICH ARE SUBSTANTIVELY THE SAME AS SHOWN IN ATTACHMENT A TO THE REPORT ENTITLED "PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAM POLICY" TO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, DATED DECEMBER 3, 2024. MOTION CARRIED. Nays:

Remme

- c) One ½ Ton 4x4 Crew Cab Truck RFP Award for By-law Enforcement – discussed earlier on the agenda.

d) Code of Conduct for Elected Officials (8:01 p.m.)

Clerk Snair provided a brief overview of the report. In October of 2024, the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing (DMAH)/Province of Nova Scotia published the Code of Conduct Regulations for Municipal Elected Officials which required municipalities to adopt the code as prescribed on or before December 19, 2024.

Discussion Points:

- The code applied to elected officials and citizen members on advisory committees of Council.
- The policy applied to debate of Council.
- Staff will confirm if provincial funding will be affected if the code of conduct was not adopted by December 19, 2025.
- It was anticipated an investigated would be on retainer. The Association of Municipal Administration has an RFQ out for investigators and municipalities will piggyback off of this to secure an investigator.
- Training for the new code of conduct was scheduled for January 2025. The new Council orientation held in November in Halifax did have an extensive session reviewing the code of conduct for anyone who attended the session.
- The province vetted the Code of Conduct through their solicitor. With respect to compliance, it was felt the proposed code of conduct was subjective in nature, how it was interpreted, the culture of the group and how people spoke to each other.
- The new code of conduct was generated by the province based on feedback and at the request of all 49 municipalities. There was a desire to see a code of conduct with more teeth to it and a standardized code for everyone. Updates regarding the work being done to the code of conduct and progress were shared weekly.

MOVED BY MAYOR ZEBIAN AND COUNCILLOR P. MORTON THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL REPEAL AND REPLACE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ELECTED MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS POLICY, RCOHR-002.00 AND ADOPT THE CODE OF CONDUCT AS PROVIDED IN THE MGA WITH THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION WHEREAS THE MINISTER OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS AND HOUSING FOR THE PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA HAS MADE THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MUNICIPAL ELECTED OFFICIALS REGULATIONS, N.S. REG. 220/2024 (“THE REGULATIONS”); AND, WHEREAS MUNICIPALITIES ARE REQUIRED TO ADOPT THE MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT PRESCRIBED BY THE REGULATIONS ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 19, 2024, PURSUANT TO SECTION 4(1) OF THE REGULATIONS AND SECTION 23A OF THE MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT ACT; THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE REGION OF WEST HANTS HEREBY ADOPT THE MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT AS SET FORTH IN SCHEDULE “A” TO THE REGULATIONS, WHICH

SHALL BE TITLED THE “CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS OF THE WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY. MOTION CARRIED.

Nays: McLean, Leary-Pinch, B. Smith and Ivey

e) Correspondence Request for Decision/Direction Report (8:20 p.m.)

Clerk Snair reviewed the report. Public correspondence has been a topic of discussion at several meetings. Currently WHRM does not have a policy pertaining to correspondence and how it should be handled, although the past practice has been to include all correspondence on an agenda and a response advising receipt of the correspondence has been provided by the mayor. Many municipalities have different approaches with respect to handling correspondence. The request was to receive clear direction on how Council would like to proceed with respect to receiving correspondence.

Discussion Points:

- There was support for the process to remain status quo. Very few instances have occurred where correspondence was not included on an agenda and those instances were easily rectified as the correspondence was added to the next agenda.
- Correspondence was viewed as the most efficient way for residents to get a message through to all members of Council. It was important to receive this feedback from residents.
- The intent of the auto response was to provide a generic message advising that the email/correspondence was received and would be passed on to Council for consideration, which was seen as very similar to what was currently being done by the mayor.
- All members of Council see correspondence on agendas and receive correspondence that has been emailed to the all councillor email, if the desire was to move away from correspondence being included on an agenda, all members of Council would still receive it via an email and then it would be at their discretion to bring it forward as a report if they warrant it to be important enough to address in a public forum.
- Consensus was for the process to remain the same with some improvements. Correspondence will remain on the agenda and Council will speak to it as it warrants.
- It was agreed there would be a level of respectfulness when it comes to correspondence and not surprise or bring forward a motion out of the blue. If there was a piece of correspondence that warranted a decision, advance notice would be provided.

Councillor Ivey called Point of Order at 8:44 p.m. Question was supposed to be called by the chair by asking if Council was ready for the question. It was felt Council were unclear as to what the motion meant. The chair called for the question and the vote resumed.

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS P. MORTON AND J. SMITH THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL DIRECTS THE CAO TO IMPLEMENT AN AUTO-RESPONSE FOR ALL INCOMING EMAILS PERTAINING TO WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY AND FURTHER SHOULD A MEMBER OF COUNCIL DETERMINE A PIECE OF CORRESPONDENCE WARRANTS FURTHER DISCUSSION, IT WILL BE AT THE DISCRETION OF THAT COUNCIL MEMBER TO BRING

FORWARD CORRESPONDENCE THEY WOULD LIKE PUBLICLY ADDRESSED IN A WRITTEN REPORT FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER. MOTION DEFEATED. Nays: McLean, Remme, Wheadon, B. Morton, Leary-Pinch, J. Smith, B. Smith and Ivey

12. Public Participation (8:46 p.m.)

Ms. Amanada Dunfield, a resident of Windsor, spoke of multipurpose communications platforms, such as Alertable, and wondered if this would be a useful communication tool that WHRM could use to get information out to residents.

Ms. Dunfield spoke of the residential property buyout, recognizing that although it was still in draft form, section 1.19 (application and approval) still read the application deadline still read as December 31, 2025, and would be reviewed by staff which resulted in no completion of the program until sometime in 2026. Ms. Dunfield noted this was not consistent with the urgency for the program.

Ms. Dunfield read a statement from Health Canada regarding the danger associated with infection from breathing air in an area contaminated by sewage and from handling water and materials contaminated by sewage. The statement also advised children, pregnant women and people with respiratory problems should not handle water or materials contaminated by sewage. Ms. Dunfield spoke of this entering the homes, properties and play areas for their children of those living on Stannus Street and advised she would likely have some follow-up comments on the last statement.

13. In-Camera (8:51 p.m.)

- a) 2024-11-12 Committee of the Whole In-Camera Minutes
- b) MGA 22(2)(a) Land Matter
- c) MGA 22(2)(a) Land Matter
- d) MGA 22(2)(a) Land Matter

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS J. SMITH AND B. SMITH THAT THE MEETING MOVE IN-CAMERA AT 8:51 P.M. MOTION CARRIED

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS P. MORTON AND J. SMITH THAT THE MEETING MOVE OUT OF THE IN-CAMERA AT 9:23 P.M. MOTION CARRIED

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS P. MORTON AND B. MORTON THAT THE MEETING ADJOURN AT 9:23 P.M. MOTION CARRIED

14. Next Meeting Date / Adjournment – December 10, 2024 Council meeting.

Deputy Mayor Francis

Deanna Snair, Municipal Clerk