

1. **CALL TO ORDER**1.1 O' Canada

Warden Hunter called the May 26, 2015 Council session of the Municipality of the County of Cumberland to Order. The meeting was held at the E. D. Fullerton Municipal Building. O'Canada was sung.

1.2 Roll Call

Executive Assistant to the CAO, Shelley Hoeg, called the roll with the following Councillors being present:
Councillor Smith, Councillor Kellegrew, Warden Hunter, Councillor Gillis, Councillor Welton, Councillor Rector, Deputy Warden Gilbert, Councillor McLellan, Councillor Fletcher and Councillor Snow.

Councillor Baker was absent due to serious illness.

2. **ADMINISTRATIVE AND PROCEDURAL ISSUES**2.1 Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved with the addition of 6.6 – June Council Meetings.

2.2 Approval of Minutes of May 20, 2015

The minutes of May 20, 2015 were approved as circulated.

2.3 Business Arising from the May 20, 2015 Council Session

The amount for the Wallace Slip Way must be amended to reflect funding approved in the amount of \$1,500 and Mr. MacDonald, Director of Finance advised that the Lease with Irving for Southampton will be signed this afternoon.

2.4 Delegations, Presentations, Petitions, Proclamations

There were no delegations, presentation, petitions, or proclamations for today's meeting.

2.5 Public Hearings

There were no public hearings for today's meeting.

3. **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES ISSUES**3.1 Tidal Power Development

This item was circulated for perusal.

4. **MAJOR ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES**4.1 2015/2016

IT WAS MOVED by Councillor Fletcher, seconded by Councillor McLellan to provide funding in the amount of \$8341 to the River Hebert, Joggins and Area Development Association for assistance with the Ball Field.

MOTION CARRIED #15-103

It was agreed via consensus to increase the grant amount for the Cumberland County Blues to \$10,000.

IT WAS MOVED by Councillor Fletcher, seconded by Councillor Kellegrew to allow the Tidnish Crossroads Community Association to use surplus funds from their kitchen renovations for the hiring of summer students.

MOTION CARRIED #15-104

It was agreed to fund the Parrsboro Food Bank in the amount of \$1,000.

It was agreed to provide \$500 to Town of Parrsboro and \$500 to Advocate District Development Association for July 1st fireworks.

IT WAS MOVED by Councillor Gillis, seconded by Deputy Warden Gilbert to accept recommendations on the grants to organizations as discussed and amended.

MOTION CARRIED #15-105

IT WAS MOVED by Councillor McLellan, seconded by Councillor Welton to approve a tax exemption for the Northport Harbour Authority.

MOTION CARRIED #15-106

IT WAS MOVED by Councillor Welton, seconded by Councillor Snow to advise County residents that the County rate for taxes is \$1.04 and Springhill rate is \$1.90 and list both commercial rates.

MOTION CARRIED #15-107

Estimates of Revenues and Expenditures

IT WAS MOVED by Deputy Warden Gilbert, seconded by Councillor Smith that Council accept the following estimates of sums required by the Municipality of Cumberland for the Fiscal period ending March 31, 2016, prepared in accordance to Section 72 of the Municipal Government Act:

Revenues	
Assessable property taxes	\$ 19,102,583
Grants in lieu of taxes	2,221,847
Services provided to other governments	51,798
Other revenue from own sources	839,216
Unconditional transfers	1,479,786
Conditional transfers	257,120
Other Transfers from own funds	1,069,222
Total Revenues	\$ 25,021,572

Expenditures	
General Government Services	\$ 3,947,065
Protective Services	7,892,596
Transportation Services	1,531,977
Environmental Health Services	3,439,944
Public Health & Welfare Services	603,140
Environmental Development Services	1,001,744
Recreational & Culture Services	1,565,754
Education	4,172,605
Deficit Amortization	715,627
Post Transitional	151,120
Total Expenditures	\$ 25,021,572

MOTION CARRIED #15-107

Tax Rates

IT WAS MOVED by Councillor Kellegrew, seconded by Councillor McLellan that the tax rates for the Municipality of Cumberland for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2016 are as follows:

General tax rates

Residential	\$1.04 per \$100 of assessment
Commercial	\$2.63 per \$100 of assessment

Area rates on properties in the former Town of Springhill

Residential	\$0.86 per \$100 of assessment
Commercial	\$2.18 per \$100 of assessment

MOTION CARRIED #15-108

Sewer Rates

IT WAS MOVED by Councillor Kellegrew, seconded by Councillor Fletcher that the unit rates for each of the sewage collection and treatment systems for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2016 are as follows:

Springhill	\$265
Amherst Marsh	\$415
Biggs Drive	\$415
Joggins	\$415
Joggins Extension	\$535
Maccan	\$415
Pugwash	\$415
River Hebert	\$415
Wallace	\$415

MOTION CARRIED #15-109

Street Lights – County Systems

IT WAS MOVED by Councillor Gillis, seconded by Councillor Rector that the flat rates per assessment account for Street Light Systems of the former Municipality of Cumberland for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016 are as follows:

System	Rate	System	Rate
Advocate	42.54	Maccan	88.92
Apple River	61.05	New Salem 1	77.42
Athol Road	35.69	New Salem 2	88.97
Biggs Drive	50.62	Oxford Junction	55.23
Brookdale	68.63	Port Greville	68.00
Cochrane Road	48.86	Port Howe	51.82
Collingwood	56.91	Pugwash Centre	41.19
Crossroads	56.88	River Hebert	75.45
Dorsay Road	52.38	River Philip	57.97
Fort Lawrence	89.79	South Pugwash	54.55
Fox River	48.60	Spencer's Island	81.00
Greenville Station	76.25	Wallace	47.66
Hastings Road	65.78	Ward's Brook	54.09
Hunter Road	45.46	West Advocate	48.46
Joggins	73.46	West Amherst	88.46
Leamington	82.80	Westchester	65.15

MOTION CARRIED #15-110

Village Rates

IT WAS MOVED by Councillor Gillis, seconded by Councillor Rector that the following village rates be billed and collected at the same time and in the same manner as municipal taxes:

River Hebert	\$0.05 per \$100 of assessment
Pugwash	
Residential	\$0.30 per \$100 of assessment
Commercial	\$0.37 per \$100 of assessment

MOTION CARRIED #15-111

Maintenance and Improvement of Private Road By-law

IT WAS MOVED by Councillor Kellegrew, seconded by Councillor Fletcher, that the following rates for the maintenance and improvement of private roads be billed and collected at the same time and in the same manner as municipal taxes:

Jackson's Point Road Association	\$32.60 per assessment account
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MOTION CARRIED #15-112

Due Date

IT WAS MOVED by Councillor Fletcher, seconded by Councillor Smith that the due date for the 2015/16 tax levy be June 30, 2015 with interest to be charged on outstanding tax accounts on or after July 1, 2015 at the rate of 1.25% per month, 15% per annum.

MOTION CARRIED #15-113

2015/16 Budget – Water Utility

IT WAS MOVED by Councillor Gillis, seconded by Councillor Rector that Council approve the 2015/16 Water Utility Operating Budget of \$1,350,635 as presented.

MOTION CARRIED #15-114

2015/16 Capital Budget

IT WAS MOVED by Councillor Snow, seconded by Councillor Gillis that Council approved the 2015/16 Capital Budget totaling \$6,846,854 as presented.

MOTION CARRIED #15-115

Tax Reduction and Exemption Policy

IT WAS MOVED by Councillor Kellegrew, seconded by Councillor Fletcher that Council approve the amended tax reduction and exemption policy which has been updated to include the property owned by the Northport Harbour Authority and eligible properties within the boundaries of the former Town of Springhill.

MOTION CARRIED #15-116

Low Income Exemption Policy

IT WAS MOVED by Councillor Rector, seconded by Councillor Welton that Council approve the amended low income tax exemption policy, to increase the income thresholds and exemption amounts as follows:

- Household income less than \$17,885 exemption amount \$305.
- Household income is between \$17,886 and \$20,250 exemption amount \$210.

MOTION CARRIED #15-117

Warden Hunter expressed his congratulations to Mr. MacDonald and his staff for their hard work on the budget preparations.

4.2 **Governance and Electoral Boundary Review**

John Heseltine of Stantec was on hand to provide this presentation to Council.

Key Findings

Views on Council size are mixed:

- No support for a Council larger than 12 but clear support from some for at least 12
- Substantial support for a Council of 10
- Moderate bias to a Council of less than 10

Clear public support for a mayor but Council opposition

Little concern with boundary specifics

Public preference was for a smaller Council

Recommendation

A Council of ten with boundaries as configured in Scenario A

Or

If a Mayor is to be considered, a Council of eight

Via consensus it was agreed to have a Warden.

Via consensus it was agreed to have 12 Councillors

For a Council of 10 – 4 were in favour

For a Council of 12 – 5 were in favour

Councillor Kellegrew abstained from the poll

Council agreed via consensus to go with Scenario 12 A.

IT WAS MOVED by Councillor Fletcher, seconded by Councillor Welton to approve Scenario 12 A and a Warden for submission to the NSUARB.

MOTION NOT IN ORDER DUE TO VOTE ABOVE #15-122

IT WAS MOVED by Councillor Fletcher, seconded by Councillor Welton to approve Scenario 12 A and a Warden for submission to the NSUARB.

MOTION DEFEATED #15-123

IT WAS MOVED by Councillor Gillis, seconded by Councillor Smith, for Scenario 10 A and a Warden for submission to the NSUARB.

MOTION DEFEATED #15-124

IT WAS MOVED by Councillor Smith, to submit Scenario 10B and a Warden to the NSUARB.

MOTION DIED FOR LACK OF SECONDER #15-125

IT WAS MOVED BY Councillor Gillis, seconded by Councillor Smith, to submit Scenario 10A, plus a Warden, to the NSUARB.

MOTION DEFEATED #15-126

The scenarios of 12 A and 10 A were then put into a hat and one selection was made.

The successful submission to the NSUARB will be 12 A with a Warden.

5. ORGANIZATIONAL POLICY/BY-LAW ISSUES

There were no organizational Policy/By-Law Issues so this item was deleted.

6. BUSINESS ISSUES

6.1 Tour of Springhill Facilities

Information regarding the tour was provided. The date is Friday, June 19th, 2015.

**6.2 Community Development Grants
Maccan Ball Association**

The grass is growing and is in need of care. This request is for \$1,500 and will be for mowing and upkeep of the ball field, children's playground, cenotaph, community centre, and cemetery. Funds are for gas, annual maintenance, light bill.

IT WAS MOVED by Councillor Kellegrew, seconded by Councillor Smith to approve a community development grant in the amount of \$1500 from District 2 funds for the Maccan Ball Association.

MOTION CARRIED /15-118

6.3 Community Use of Community Centre

Mrs. Weaver advised of the following:

Through our Grants to Organizations process we had several applications submitted that were requesting use of the Community Centre. Springhill had a forgiveness policy. I have requested the details. I did not receive the actual policy, but it is essentially as follows (as per Scott Munro):

1. There were quarterly deadlines for groups to submit a request for room rental forgiveness.
2. The requests were submitted to the former Director(s) and Facility Manager via an official letter outlining the specifics of the event.
3. The requests were included in council reports for approval or not.

Ms. Weaver advised that she has the following requests to put forward to council.

55+ Celebration Event:

This event will be a joint venture by the RCMP and our Senior Safety Coordinator. The Community Centre is already booked for June 12th. Seniors from Springhill, Amherst Lions, Springhill Lions, 55+ Club in Amherst and the Tidnish Seniors Association have all been invited. The goal is for 100 attendees.

To help with the event, Constable Dow will be having some football, softball and Springhill SADD students (Students against drunk driving) there to help with inter-generational sessions. They will also have the MADD Kart.

They have also requested \$250 to help with food costs, but have also said that in lieu of funding that perhaps we could offer coffee, tea and cake on site at the arena. They have \$625 for the day, but with 100 people they could certainly use some more. Official invitations to Council will be arriving shortly.

West End Memorial & Junction Road Home & School

These two Home & School groups want to put on a number of events and they are as follows:

Event	Description	Room requested	Event Date
Princess Tea	Fun evening for elementary girls (snacks, face painting, nail painting & hair styling fit for a princess)	CIBC room	June 4th

22ns Annual Thanksgiving Dinner	Thanksgiving dinner for elementary school students. Organized and supported by community volunteers.	CIBC room and kitchen facilities	October 8 th
Blues Night	Hockey Game – Cumberland Blues vs CCMHA players	Arena	February 2016
Home & School Fun Fair	Brings both elementary schools together for a fun evening fundraiser	Community Centre	May 23, 2015

Imperial Order of the Daughter of the Empire (IODE) Cobequid Chapter

Requesting rent value for the Community Centre for 10 three hour Wednesday afternoon meetings and two full day special events. This is the equivalent of \$2,000.

This is an active chapter and finding another appropriate location in the Springhill area would be difficult with their aging population. One member is in a motorized wheelchair and is in need of an accessible facility.

IT WAS MOVED by Councillor Gillis, seconded by Councillor Snow to approve gratis use of the Community Centre for the following events:

Event	Description	Room requested	Event Date
Princess Tea	Fun evening for elementary girls (snacks, face painting, nail painting & hair styling fit for a princess)	CIBC room	June 4th
22ns Annual Thanksgiving Dinner	Thanksgiving dinner for elementary school students. Organized and supported by community volunteers.	CIBC room and kitchen facilities	October 8 th
Blues Night	Hockey Game – Cumberland Blues vs CCMHA players	Arena	February 2016
Home & School Fun Fair	Brings both elementary schools together for a fun evening fundraiser	Community Centre	May 23, 2015

AND the Imperial Order of the Daughter of the Empire (IODE) Cobequid Chapter

MOTION CARRIED 15-119

IT WAS MOVED by Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor Welton to provide \$250 to the 55+ Celebration Event (divided equally between the 12 districts) and request our sponsorship be noted.

MOTION CARRIED 15-120

6.4 **Credit Card Payments**

Mr. MacDonald, Director of Finance, advised that there is an issue regarding discontinuing acceptance of credit card payments for taxes and water for the former Town of Springhill or begin accepting credit card payments for tax and water for the combined municipality.

Background

The Town of Springhill historically has accepted credit card payments for tax and water and there is an expectation from residents that this form of payment should continue. In the last twelve months, the Town of Springhill processed \$534,000 in credit card payments at a total cost of \$9,000. In terms of tax rate this represented 2/3rds of a cent on Springhill's tax rate.

The Municipality of the County of Cumberland stopped accepting credit card payments for taxes in 2008. The main reason for this decision was cost. In the 2007/08 fiscal year the cost of the merchant discount fees were approximately \$60,000, which represented 2/3rds of a cent on the tax rate at that time. Over the past several years the Municipality has been using a third party service to allow taxpayers the option of paying taxes with their credit card. This service requires the transaction to be done via the internet with the taxpayer bearing the discount costs directly.

Analysis

There are advantages and disadvantages to accepting credit card payments. Municipalities need to evaluate whether acceptance of credit cards as a payment option is

reasonable and appropriate for the type of charge or fee being paid and the customer service level desired. It is suggested that the following should be considered:

- type of payments
- merchant discount fees
- benefits to the Municipality and the taxpayer
- other payment options available

Type of Payments

Municipalities should consider whether they want to utilize credit cards for mandatory charges for which citizens must pay (such as taxes, utility bills), or for discretionary charges which citizens elect to pay (such as recreation fees, ice rentals, licenses, permits, etc.). Acceptance of credit cards as a method of payment for mandatory charges may not significantly increase the amount of revenue received by the Municipality, and may actually reduce net expected revenues as a result of paying the merchant discount fee. Acceptance of credit cards as a method of payment for discretionary charges and absorption or payment of the related merchant discount fees may facilitate collection of such charges.

Merchant Discount Fees

The costs charged by the credit card issuer per transaction typically vary between one and three percent of the value of the transaction. Based on our current agreement with Global Payments, the discount rates for Visa and MasterCard are 1.5% and 1.6% respectively. Since these costs are tied to the dollar value of transactions, the following table illustrates a range of costs dependant on the percentage of the total tax levy paid by credit card.

Total estimated tax levy \$16 million

% Paid by Credit Card	Cost of Merchant Discount	Cost Expressed as cents on tax rate
10%	\$25,760	0.2 cents
25%	\$64,400	0.5 cents
50%	\$128,800	1 cent

While it is difficult to estimate the volumes of credit card payments, there is the potential for the associated cost to be quite significant. Based on past experience it is likely that credit payments would represent 20-25% of the tax levy which would cost \$50,000 to \$60,000 per year.

Benefits to the Municipality and the taxpayer

Benefits to the municipality include potential for increased collections, reduced nsf cheque processing cost and improved cash flow. For the taxpayer, acceptance of credit cards provides enhanced customer convenience, especially those who are from abroad.

Other Available Payment Options

The Municipality provides for the following methods of payment:

- Cash, cheque or debit payments at Upper Nappan or Springhill - Mon-Friday 8:30 to 4:30
- Cheque payment via mail
- Post-dated cheques for payment plans
- Electronic payments via internet or telephone banking
- Payments accepted at most banks and credit unions
- On-line credit card payment through “Paymentus” a third party provider.

Recommendation

Based on the above analysis, Staff recommends the following:

- that credit card payments for property taxes and water bills no longer be accepted, and that this decision be effective June 1, 2015
- that credit cards be accepted as a method of payment for rentals, licenses, permits, and recreational fees
- that the Municipality continue to utilize a third party on-line service to provide residents the option of using credit cards for tax and water payments at their own cost

- that the attached notice be included with the 2015/16 tax bills and quarterly water bills
- that the attached notice be posted immediately at the Springhill Service Centre, ED Fullerton Building, Springhill Post Office and Community Centre in order to provide notice to residents of the town of Springhill in advance of the change.

IT WAS MOVED by Deputy Warden Gilbert, seconded by Councillor Rector to abolish credit card payments at the Springhill Service Centre.

MOTION CARRIED 15-121

6.5 Accessible Natural Playground

Staff advised that this letter of support has been written and forwarded.

6.6 June Council Meetings

The June Council session will be June 17th, 2015 and July will be July 8th, 2015 and July 22, 2015. An extra session can be held in June, if necessary. There will be no Council sessions in August, and September's sessions will be September 2nd and 16th.

7. **INFORMATION ITEMS**

7.1 PVSC Board Positions

Provided as information.

The meeting recessed at 11:50 and re-adjourned at 12:30 for the presentation by Stantec.

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

8.1 The Queen

The meeting was adjourned at 1:39 p.m. and The Queen was sung.

Warden Keith Hunter

Municipal Clerk Brenda Moore