

Annual Public Meeting
In-Person at St. Stephen's Community Centre – 54 Regent Street, Chester
Wednesday, June 22, 2022 – 6:30 pm

Attendance: Nancy Hatch, Commission Chair; Michael Heisler, Vice Chair; Martin Hiltz, Commissioner; Lawrence Lake, Auditor; Greg Conron, Deputy Chief, CVFD; Jared MacDonald, Deputy Chief, CVFD; Jeff Conrad, Interim Clerk Treasurer; Maxine Veinot, Recording Secretary

Public Gallery: Marilyn Hay, Brenda Mulrooney, Paul Mulrooney, Laura Mulrooney

1.0 Call to Order

Chair Hatch called the June 22, 2022, Annual Public Meeting of the Village of Chester Commission to order at 6:31 pm.

3.0 Chair's Report

Annual Public Meeting - Wednesday, June 22, 2022 - Chair's Report

Welcome and thank you for joining us this evening. For those who don't know who we are, let me introduce you.

Maxine Veinot, Administrative Assistant, and our recording secretary.

Lawrence Lake, CPA, CA, of Morse, Brewster, Lake – our auditor.

Cody Stevens, Chief of the Chester Volunteer Fire Department.

Jeff Conrad, Interim Clerk/Treasurer.

Commissioner Michael Heisler; Commissioner Martin Hiltz; and I am Nancy Hatch, Chair.

I would like to begin my report by paying tribute to our friend and colleague, Bill Nauss. Bill was the Chair of the Village Commission at the time of his passing in January. He epitomized what it meant to be a Villager; was known, and respected, for his commitment to fair treatment and concern for all in everyday life and in every aspect of Village governance. He will forever be remembered as a man with great dreams for the Village, the Lido, the Chester Volunteer Fire Department, and the best-ever Santa. Thank you, Bill.

Since our last Annual Public Meeting, the Commission has faced a few, extraordinary challenges: the ever-present Covid-19 and the continuance of a provincial state of emergency hampered our ability to meet in the most optimal way – in person; a request for a judicial review of the July election resulted in no decision; we lost one voice at the table when Commissioner Grant resigned her seat on the Commission at the end of the October meeting to run for the District 3 Council vacancy; we gained valuable expertise with the acclamation of Mike Dockrill, CPA, CA, in December. Due to illness, plus complications of Covid-19, Mike made the decision to resign from the Commission in April 2022.

Undaunted by these challenges, the Commission moved forward with day-to-day governance. In March, we separated the Operating Reserve Fund into two distinct reserves based on the original sources of funding. Based on non-consolidated budget surpluses, it was determined 37% of the total amount would be deposited into a General Government Reserve Fund and 63% of the total amount deposited into a Fire Reserve Fund. Our auditor will prepare a multi-year review to confirm what the actual amounts should be.

The Windjammer Motel is being demolished to make way for a new, centrally located Fire Station. This new building will be as green and energy efficient as funding will allow; reduce the costs for replacement apparatus; improve health and safety conditions for the firefighters; and lessen the response time for firefighters to get to the station. All stakeholders will be given opportunities for input and will be kept informed regarding plans, costs, funding, construction dates, etc., when that information becomes available.

In addition to some capital improvements and routine maintenance of the Lido pool and public washroom, preparing for this summer's use; tending to some broken decorative streetlights along Water Street (still a work in progress); replacing those lights in the Village which were non-operational; providing for flower baskets and Christmas wreaths; the Village Commission participated in long-range Strategic Planning workshops with Municipal Affairs, organised by our municipal advisor, Marilyn Hay. We had planned to co-ordinate Village strategic planning with the 2019 EDM Village of Chester Priority Planning Report this past spring but we opted to wait until we had five Commissioners at the table. As the title of the report suggests, this is, and should be, a priority for the new Commission.

Perhaps the most significant accomplishment this year was the signing of a 20-year Joint Fire Services Agreement between the Village and the Municipality. Among other things, the agreement provides for: a committee to oversee operating and capital budgeting; joint ownership of all capital assets, with the exception of the current fire hall; and guarantees the right of ratepayers, inside and outside the Village, to provide input as well as receive accountability regarding the delivery of fire service by the CVFD. While there may be some initial hiccups adapting to the new format, I am confident the in-coming Commission will continue to maintain the same spirit of collaboration, co-operation, and communication with MODC, the CVFD, and those who receive the service, as has been established these last few years.

As this year comes to a close, we thank Jo-Ann Grant, Mike Dockrill, and Dennis Egyedy for their contributions to the Commission and wish them, all, the best for good health and happiness in their futures. Thank you to our handyman, Paul Mulrooney, who knows practically everything about all aspects of maintenance, and then some. Thank you, Maxine Veinot, for keeping the ship afloat in all types of weather. Thank you, Darcy Stevens for ensuring all children have an opportunity to learn how to swim. Charlotte Butler and Sherri Rhodenizer ensured our school children crossed Duke Street safely - rain and shine. Thanks to MODC Councillors Church, Veinotte, Wells, and the Chester Volunteer Fire Department for your willingness to listen to our concerns and collaborate with us on issues of importance to all of us. Thank you, Jeff Conrad, who came to us at our time of need.

And finally, thank you Michael Heisler and Martin Hiltz, for serving the Village over the last three years. The value of your perspectives and contributions to Commission governance has been immeasurable.

A new year will begin in less than a week. I wish those elected to the Commission the strength to withstand the negativity of a few; the courage to stand for that which provides for the greater good of the Village, the Municipality and the CVFD; and the conviction to lead our great Village towards a positive future.

Respectfully,

Nancy E Hatch, Chair.

2.0 Review/Approval of Agenda

MOTION #22-078: Commissioner Hiltz moved; Commissioner Heisler seconded:
The approval of the agenda as presented.

Unanimously Carried

4.0 Clerk Treasurer's Report

Report of the Clerk/Treasurer Annual Public Meeting June 22, 2022

This annual report is primarily based on work done by the previous Clerk/Treasurer, Dennis Egyedy, who left the Village on April 27, 2022.

Overall, the Village had a very good year, and continued to advance the priorities of the Commission and of Residents.

Due to Covid, 2021/22 was again a challenging year for staff, with periods that the office was closed and work and meetings had to take place virtually.

The report of the Chair included many of the **significant accomplishments**, and in addition I would add that in 2021/2022 the Commission.

- Operated the public washrooms adjacent to the Lido, which were open June to Labour Day in 2021, with daily cleaning through the week and twice daily on weekends. In 2021 the season was impacted by closures due to Covid.
- Contracted for on-site security at the pool overnight during Chester Race week, a response to some issues that had happened in previous years
- Operated the Emergency Health Services building, next to the fire hall.
- Provided school crossing guards for the crossing area on Duke Street
- Provided rodent control services in public areas of the Village
- Contracted for weekly green-bin collection services during the period June to September

With regard to **Fire Services**, staff at the Village Office continue to provide administrative support to the Chester Volunteer Fire Department and their operations. In addition to the daily work of administering accounts payable and receivable, significant in 2021/2022 has been work related to the property for a new Firehall building. Acquisition of the new property at the site of the former Windjammer motel was finalized, an Asbestos assessment was completed, and a Request for Proposal for Asbestos Abatement and Building demolition was completed.

As you know, the Village is in its annual election cycle at the moment.

There are four Commissioner appointments available at the moment, two due to the end of terms, one due to a resignation, and one due to an unfortunate death. There are 2 positions with end dates in 2025, 1 with an end date in 2024, and 1 with an end date in 2023.

The Village has had tremendous interest in the election, with 8 candidates vying for the 4 available seats.

The Advance Poll will be June 25 at the Village Office, 11:00am to 7:00pm. Election Day is Tuesday June 28, 9:00am to 7:00pm, also at the Village Office. Voters may vote for no more than 4 candidates, and only once for each candidate. Ballots with less than 4 votes are valid ballots.

Following the closing of the poll on Election Day, Commissioner positions will be awarded to the 4 candidates receiving the most votes in the election. The candidates with the greatest and second greatest numbers of votes shall be appointed to positions with an end date in 2025, the third greatest number the position with an end date in 2024, and the fourth greatest number the position with an end date in 2023. Any tie votes that would influence candidate placement will be broken by the drawing of lots.

On the financial side, the Village is also in very good shape.

The Village finished the year in good fiscal health, with a surplus of \$68,044, based on total revenue of \$988,103 against expenses of \$920,058

- Revenue came in slightly higher than forecast, \$7,961, primarily due to modest increases in the final year-end payment that were due to the payment of grants in lieu of taxes
 - Expenditures were down \$57,766 overall, including \$15,437 in General Government and \$43,044 in the Chester Volunteer Fire Department.
- Many of these reduced expenses were driven by ongoing issues with COVID (such as community events not taking place, the cost of crossing guards, and the availability of training) and associated supply chain issues (inability of Fire Department to buy certain products such as bunker gear and specialized PPE)
- Although there was a surplus in 21/22, many of those costs will come back to the 22/23 budget as the impacts of Covid decrease and materials again become available

Significant financial activities in 2021/22 included moving \$45,000 from the Lido Pool Reserve to pay for major renovations at the pool, repaying \$50,000 on the Fire Apparatus loan, and investing \$150,000 in the Fire Apparatus Reserve towards future equipment purchase.

The Village's reserves are in good shape, with more than \$1.3M invested across 6 reserve areas, with Fire Apparatus being the largest reserve at \$969,236.

Due to delays caused by replacing the previous Clerk/Treasurer, the 2022/2023 budget was not completed prior to the annual meeting. That said, the Village is in good fiscal shape for the year, and the Village Tax Rate is expected to remain at the same rate as it has been for the past five years, \$0.1517/\$100 assessment.

The Fire Tax Rate for the outside fire area and fireboat is \$0.0740/\$100 of assessment.

The Village total residential and commercial assessment for 2022 is \$424,996,300, while the Outside Fire and Fire Boat areas combine for \$467,008,800.

Projected combined general and fire tax revenues have increased by \$77,603 for a total tax of \$980,029.

Last year, the village offered exemptions for low-income residents and eligible non-profit agencies which amounted to \$1996.

		Budget	Actuals
		21/22	21/22
Revenue	General Government	355,450.46	358,802.54
by	Emergency Services	20,993.00	21,255.70
Category	Fire Boat	10,000.00	9,232.00
	Fire Capital	224,642.46	221,560.86
	Fire Services	369,055.47	377,252.24
subtotal		980,141.39	988,103.34
Expenses	General Government	321,186.55	305,749.45
by	Emergency Services	10,500.00	11,578.68
Category	Fire Boat	9,650.00	9,286.80
	Fire Capital	266,388.47	260,881.41
	Fire Services	370,100.00	332,562.20
subtotal		977,825.02	920,058.54
Total		2,316.37	68,044.80

Jeff Conrad
Interim Clerk/Treasurer
June 22/2022

5.0 Auditor's Report

Auditor, Lawrence Lake, reviewed the year-ending March 31, 2022 Audited Financial Statements. Mr. Lake stated the Financial Statements presented fairly. Revenue was down and expenses were up from the projected numbers, and overall, there was a surplus of \$131,990.00. Consolidated Financial position at the end of the fiscal year was \$225,000.00 in cash and 1.3 million in investments, which is mostly in the reserve accounts.

MOTION # 22-279: Commissioner Heisler moved; Commissioner Hiltz seconded:
To accept the Auditor's Report.

Unanimously Carried

6.0 Fire Chief's Report

Chief Cody Stevens was unable to attend so Deputy Chief Conron read his report.

Report on Fire and Emergency Service to the Village of Chester Annual General Meeting of 2022

The Chester Volunteer Fire Department (CVFD) has had a very busy 2021-2022.

Covid-19 has been an undeniable hurdle in the delivery of public services, and the CVFD was not immune. Covid tested the CVFD in many ways, including operationally, in training, and even the simple interaction of our members. It's nice that we are getting back to seeing people in person, again.

The CVFD responded to 155 incidents in this last fiscal year. January was especially busy, as we responded to 35 calls that month alone, including a structure fire after a howling blizzard. As a result of ongoing challenges with the Emergency Health Service (EHS), CVFD membership saw a need in January to help our community by upgrading our response status with EHS, making us more available to assist when ambulances were delayed in responding. As a result we have seen an increase in the number of Medical calls, but we have seen more fires - structure fires, vehicle fires, wildfires, and Mutual Aid calls to our neighbouring departments, and other municipalities along the South Shore. The CVFD has earned a reputation for professionalism, efficacy, efficiency, and safety.

Thankfully, we have had increased recruitment, which has not been the case in previous years, and is a pleasure to report. The CVFD accepted five new members to its ranks just this year. They are joining four other new members that signed the Active Member roll in the past two years. The entire group of Probationary Members will commence National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Curriculum Level 1 Firefighting training on June 25, 2022. As a result, the CVFD has achieved its maximum membership level, which it has not done in a number of years. Needless to say, we are very pleased that new residents to our community are choosing to volunteer with the CVFD as a means to contribute and give back to their new home. We recognized that very few other departments are attracting new members, as we have been able to do this past year and even during the Covid period of 2020-21. We are grateful.

Despite Covid, we have been able to adhere to a training schedule, which, at times, meant training online. All members agree, though, that in-person training remains our best way to develop and maintain our skills. We have been successful in meeting our seasonal training objectives this year. A number of members have successfully pursued individual training, through the Nova Scotia Firefighters School and other organisations. And we have also initiated the development of new skillsets, such as High-angle Rescue training, which 10 members took this past autumn.

The membership continues to take pride in the apparatus. They, like the human resources of the department, are admired and in demand for what they bring to an emergency scene. This recognition is especially true for 541, which is known for its pumping capacity. It remains strategically important to the fire plan of our community, and its maintenance is of paramount importance. There were mechanical issues with it this past year, solutions for which were successfully achieved through cooperation between the CVFD and the Commission.

The CVFD is happy to see the new fire hall project moving forward, with the demolition of the former Windjammer Motel underway.

On behalf of the entire membership, thank you to Maxine Veinotte for her cooperation and support as the CVFD transitioned to new leadership. It was greatly appreciated. Thank you also to Jeff Conrad, who recently joined the Village Commission as Clerk-Treasurer, for his assistance. And, thank you to the Commission. It was a difficult year for the Commissioners, including with the loss of their colleague Bill Nauss, but the CVFD recognizes the service you provide and the sacrifices you make for your community.

In closing, the CVFD looks ahead with optimism to the coming years, as we all move forward guided by the new 20-year Agreement between the Village and the Municipality of the District of Chester, and the new structure that comes with it.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Officers and Firefighters of the Chester Volunteer Fire Department,

Cody Stevens,
Chief

7.0 Lido Report

Lido Pool Report 2022 Annual Public Meeting June 22, 2022

During 2021/22 The Village of Chester:

- ◆ Operated the LIDO Pool
- ◆ Undertook \$45,000 in major repair work to the concrete of the pool
- ◆ Maintained the public areas at the Lido and at the Jib Lot as open space for Village residents and visitors
- ◆ Ensured that litter was picked up in the area around the Lido and Parade Square daily
- ◆ The flower gardens in the are weeded, top-dressed, and maintained through the summer

The summer of 2022 is proving to be more of a challenge with regard to staffing levels for Lifeguards. Pools and beaches across the Province are struggling to find enough Lifeguards, as the impact of reduced training during the pandemic has led to an overall shortage. At this point not enough Lifeguards have been located to allow full-time operation of the pool in 2022.

Clerk Treasurer Conrad asked if anyone knew of any Lifeguards or individuals with Bronze Cross and First Aid (they could be junior Lifeguards under the direction of a certified Lifeguard which would increase the number of swimmers allowed in the pool), to please tell them to contact the office.

0 Report from Swim Program

**Chester District Swim Program - Chester Lido, PO Box 147, Chester, NS BOJ IJO
(902) 275-2429 June 2022**

Good evening Commissioners, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Another year has flown by and we are getting ready for another summer of swim lessons at the Lido.

Summer 2021 was a good one, even with COVID around. We were so pleased to have Brianna MacDonald as our instructor and she will be returning this summer.

We are now offering the Lifesaving Swim Program this summer as Red Cross will be discontinuing the Red Cross Swim program at the end of 2022. Brianna has completed the update to teach Lifesaving Program.

We only have one instructor as they are in short supply. Lifesaving Society expects next summer to have a lot more instructors and they have increased the number of courses available.

We were able to do one barbecue fundraiser last summer. This year, we are hoping to do another barbecue as well as a swim-a-thon. As some of you may know, the swim program is going to be one of the beneficiaries from the Golf-4-Charity in memory of Viola Hiltz.

The support for the program has been great as everyone sees the program as a very important part of the community and would like to see it keep going. The funds raised help cover the program overhead and enable us to keep the fees reasonable so all can participate.

Last summer we had approximately 35-50 kids each session. We will be offering 3-3 week sessions Monday Friday from 9am-12pm and 2pm — 5pm, with the exception of the first session being 13 days to due school classes being in June 27, 28. We will be doing the same this summer with lessons starting on June 29. There are two classes every hour. We try to limit the class sizes to 4- 6 children depending on the ages. This provides better learning, teaching and safety. We have younger children in the shallow area and old children in the deeper area. The cost will be \$50 for each child.

Looking forward to a great summer and many more to come.

Yours truly,

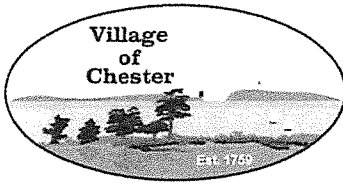
Darcy Stevens

Chairperson

I move the adoption of this report.

8.0 Review of Expense Policy

Clerk Treasurer Conrad stated that the Municipal Government Act (MGA) requires that the Commission review the Expense Claim policy and travel policy. In the Village it is a single policy – Reimbursement Policy. The policy is followed by the Commissioners, Fire Department, and staff. The revised policy sees one change – instead of quoting the actual Province of Nova Scotia's mileage rate, it refers to the rate as set by the Province. It is high-lighted in yellow in the policy, which follows:



REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

1.0 Mandate

The Village of Chester will provide for the reimbursement of travel expenses incurred by a Commissioner or Employee while conducting Village business away from the community.

2.0 Policy Statement

The Village of Chester shall reimburse commissioners and employees for all reasonable and appropriate expenses for travel, meals, and accommodations incurred in the course of carrying out their duties and responsibilities and attending meetings, courses, seminars, or conferences approved by the Commission.

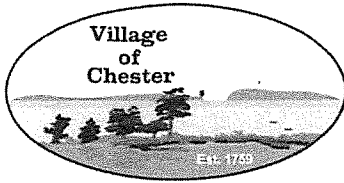
3.0 Guidelines

- 3.1 The Clerk/ Treasurer shall be responsible to implement and adhere to this policy.
- 3.2 Individuals must submit a Travel Expense Claim to receive reimbursement.
- 3.3 Travel Expense Claims including receipts must be submitted within 30 days of completion of the travel.
- 3.4 Alcohol purchases are deemed to be unreasonable and will not be reimbursed.
- 3.5 Entertainment/ Hospitality expenses are deemed to be unreasonable and will not be reimbursed.

4.0 Meal Allowances

- 4.1 A reasonable out-of-pocket costs will be reimbursed for personal meals while travelling on Village business attending meetings. Itemized receipts are not required when claiming the maximum meal rate.
- 4.2 The cost of breakfast may be claimed only when travelling for more than one hour before the recognized time for the start of the day's work.
- 4.3 The cost of dinner may be claimed only when traveller is not expected to return home before 6:30PM.
- 4.4 Per diem maximum without receipts rates:

Breakfast	\$10.00
Lunch	\$15.00
Dinner	\$25.00
<u>Incidentals</u>	<u>\$10.00</u>
Total	\$60.00 per day



REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

5.0 Eligible Vehicle Expenses

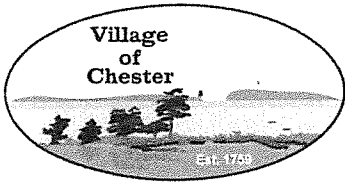
- 5.1 Where car travel is indicated as the most suitable mode of transportation, an employee may use their own vehicle and be reimbursed at the current Government of Nova Scotia Kilometrage and Transportation Allowance Rate ([kilometrage-and-transportation-allowance-rates-government-and-public-sector-bodvemplovees-en.pdf \(novascotia.ca\)](#))
- 5.2 Car rental reimbursement will be made for rental of economy type cars at destination.
- 5.3 All parking expenses and bridge, highways, or ferry tolls will be reimbursed as appropriate (receipts required).

6.0 Travel Advances

- 6.1 Estimates for travel, meals, and accommodations in excess of \$150.00 may require an advance paid to the traveller.
- 6.2 All travellers must complete and sign a Travel Advance Expense Claim prior to the issuing of a cheque.
- 6.3 Reconciliation of Travel Advance and actual Travel Expenses must be completed within 15 days on return.

Approved: January 15th, 2020

Motion # 20-159



REIMBURSEMENT POLICY Travel Expense Claim

Name: _____

Date of Function: _____

Function: _____

Travel: _____ KMs @ \$ _____ = \$ _____

Lodging: _____

Meals:

Breakfast (\$10.00 per day or receipt) _____

Lunch (\$15.00 per day or receipt) _____

Dinner (\$25.00 per day or receipt) _____

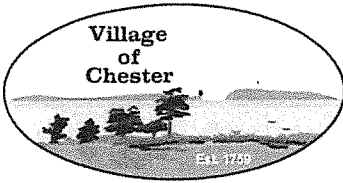
Incidentals (\$10.00 per day or receipt) _____

TOTAL EXPENSE CLAIM: _____

Date Claim Submitted: _____

Submitted by: _____

Approved by: _____



REIMBURSEMENT POLICY Travel Advance Expense Claim

Name: _____

Date of Function: _____

Function: _____

Travel: _____ KMs @ \$ _____ = \$ _____

Lodging _____

Meals:

Breakfast (\$10.00 per day or receipt) _____

Lunch (\$15.00 per day or receipt) _____

Dinner (\$25.00 per day or receipt) _____

Incidentals (\$10.00 per day or receipt) _____

TOTAL ADVANCE REQUESTED: _____

Date Advance Submitted: _____

Submitted by: _____

Approved by: _____

MOTION #22-280: Commissioner Hiltz moved; Commissioner Heisler seconded:
To approve the amended Reimbursement Policy.

Unanimously Carried

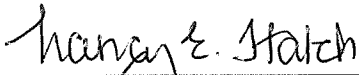
9.0 Public Forum

<> Laura Mulrooney asked if there was a shortage of staffing maybe the village residents should be accepted for the swimming lessons first. Chair Hatch stated the shortage of staff is for Lifeguards, not the Swim Program instruction.

<> Brenda Mulrooney questioned how the public swims will be affected?

Clerk Treasurer Conrad stated that as of now, Tuesdays and Wednesdays will be closed for public swims. Swimming lessons will still happen, and they are aware there will be no lifeguards during the lessons. Brenda Mulrooney asked if there is only a few students in the swimming lessons, can the pool be divided off in some way that the other end of the pool could be used for public swims? Chair Hatch said this will not happen for this year. More discussion is needed, and it is sometime difficult to teach lessons when others are in the pool making a lot of noise and disturbing the lessons.

10.0 Chair Hatch adjourned the June 22nd, 2022 meeting at 7:14 pm.



Commission Chair