

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE COUNCIL MEETING  
November 8, 2021**

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 7:06 p.m., in the Multi-purpose Room, in the Administrative Centre, in Barrington, N.S., with the following members present:

- Lindsay (Eddie) Nickerson, Chair
- Jody Crook
- Shaun Hatfield
- Andrea Mood-Nickerson
  
- George El-Jakl – Absent due to medical reasons.
  
- Chris Frotten, CAO
- Lesa Rossetti, Municipal Clerk

**ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

There were no additions to the agenda.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Being duly moved and seconded that the agenda be approved as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Being duly moved and seconded that minutes of the last meeting held October 18, 2021 be approved as circulated.

Motion carried unanimously.

**REPRESENTATIVES FROM DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

Kirk Reede, Maintenance Supervisor and Reid Lohnes, Operations Supervisor, of the Department of Transportation and Active Transit, appeared before the committee to discuss transportation matters.

Each member was given an opportunity to ask for updates and to present concerns relating to their district.

Mr. Reede and Mr. Lohnes were both thanked for taking time to meet with members to discuss matters of concern.

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Draft Virtual Meetings and Attendance Policy

It was reported that the draft Virtual Meetings and Attendance Policy has been redrafted to include participation in meetings through electronic means. Members were provided with a copy of the draft policy in advance to the meeting for review.

Notice is given tonight that Council will consider the draft Virtual Meetings and Attendance Policy at their meeting to be held on Monday, November 22, 2021.

LETTER OF SUPPORT – WESTERN REN RESIDENTIAL ENERGY RETROFITS PROJECT

By way of email, the Western REN provided an update on an upcoming residential retrofit funding application, for which they are requesting a Letter of Support. No financial contribution will be required from municipal units, but an in-kind amount of \$1,200.00 is requested for staff time allocated to any data requests. A copy of the update is attached and forms part of the minutes.

Resolution COW211101

Being duly moved and seconded that it be recommended to Council that a Letter of Support be provided to the Western REN in support of their application for funding for their Residential Energy Retrofits Project.

Motion carried unanimously.

COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT POLICY AMENDMENT

It is recommended that Personnel Policy No. 26 “Cost of Living Adjustment” be amended to change “National Consumer Price Index” to “Nova Scotia Consumer Price Index” in Section 2.1.

Notice is given tonight that Council will consider proposed amendments to the Cost of Living Adjustment Policy at their meeting to be held on Monday, November 22, 2021.

PORT LATOUR AND BARRINGTON EAST INTERNET PROJECTS

It was reported that constituents have questioned the status of the Port LaTour and Barrington East internet projects. It was suggested that a letter be written to Bell Aliant requesting an update on the status of these projects.

Resolution COW211102

Being duly moved and seconded that it be recommended to Council that a letter be written to Bell Aliant requesting them to provide more concrete project updates and public updates be issued on a regular basis to keep the public up-to-date on progress of the Port LaTour and Barrington East internet projects.

Motion carried unanimously.

The regular committee meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m. to go In-Camera.

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IN-CAMERA SESSION RE: DOCTOR RECRUITMENT OPPORTUNITY – MGA SECTION 22(2)(e)

An In-Camera Session was held in accordance with Section 22(2)(e) of the Municipal Government Act regarding contract negotiations pertaining to a doctor recruitment opportunity.

The regular meeting was called back to order at 9:14 p.m.

REPORT FROM IN-CAMERA SESSION

It was reported that the In-Camera Session was held to receive information from the CAO regarding options and cost analysis.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

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Chair

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Secretary for the Meeting

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**October 18, 2021, Briefing Note for Western Region CAOs:**

**Western REN Energy Project – Residential Retrofits**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this briefing is to notify the CAOs of the seven participating units of the Western Regional Enterprise Network (Western REN) about an upcoming residential retrofit funding application, for which a Letter of Support is requested. No financial contribution will be required of the municipalities. An in-kind amount of \$1,200 is requested for staff time allocated to any data requests.

**BACKGROUND**

In 2019, the Western REN hired consultants from Sustainability Solutions Group (SSG) to create the Western Region Energy Investment Plan (WREIP). The plan includes benchmarks of current energy consumption data across the Western Region, and outlines 28 energy actions that would reduce energy consumption through efficiency improvements, and increase local sustainable energy generation. If implemented, these energy efficiency and generation actions would decrease energy expenditures for businesses, institutions and residents, and increase energy revenue, thereby keeping more money in the local economy, all while lowering greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs).

The WREIP identified that average household energy expenditures in the region amounted to \$5,800 in 2016. With approximately 22,800 households in the region, that means households are spending a combined total of \$132 million annually on energy, and this amount is projected to increase with the federal carbon tax. The bulk of the energy consumed in the region is largely imported from other parts of the world (in the case of oil and gas) and the province (in the case of electricity). This means that the bulk of that \$132 million is leaving our local economy annually.

The Western Region has an aging housing stock, of which 37% of homes have been constructed prior to 1961, compared to 26% provincially. The Canadian Urban Sustainability Practitioners<sup>1</sup> defines energy poverty as homes spending greater than 6% of their after-tax household income on home heating and electricity. They identified that that 58% of households in Digby County, 52% of households in Shelburne County, and 51% of households in Yarmouth County meet this definition of being in energy poverty.

Nova Scotia Power's transmission system in some areas of the Western Region is nearing its capacity limits, which serves as a barrier to generating energy for the purpose of exporting it out of the region. The WREIP document identified that residential buildings account for 60% of energy use of all buildings within the Western Region, including commercial and industrial buildings. As such, widespread residential retrofits represent a significant opportunity to contribute towards creating space on the transmission grid, while also lowering energy poverty and keeping dollars in the hands of residents.

The Western Region is full of potential for green energy generation projects, such as wind, solar, biomass, and tidal energy. The electricity transmission lines that connect the region to the rest of the province and Atlantic Canada are meant to allow the region to both receive electricity and transmit it. Some of the transmission lines into the Western region have low capacity and are understood to be at or near the maximum. This capacity issue limits the potential to attract businesses with high energy demands, and to build larger green energy projects that could export power out of the region.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://energypoverty.ca/mappingtool/>

## CURRENT SITUATION

Consultants from MCC Energy Strategies Inc. (MCC) have been hired by the Western REN to identify the top 2-4 opportunities identified in the WREIP, and help bring them to implementation through securing funding. The residential retrofit opportunity was identified as one of those with the largest potential impact, in that residential buildings account for 60% of electricity use of all buildings within the Western Region. Deep Energy Retrofits (DER) therefore represent a significant opportunity to contribute towards creating space on the transmission grid by lowering energy needs, thereby lowering GHGs, energy expenditures, and keeping money in the hands of residents. Such retrofits will also result in increased assessed value of the homes, resulting in an increase in tax revenue back to the municipal units, while also extending the life of these homes. SSG estimated this would create roughly 75 jobs regionwide.

The path towards this goal begins with a funding request to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Community Energy Fund, with four outcomes. The first is to create an inventory of the existing housing stock. This will be used to identify the most effective upgrades for homes as groups. Second will be to create an innovative financing model, complementary to PACE, that residents will be able to borrow funds from toward making their home efficiency upgrades. This model will include the formation of a [CEDIF](#) and a non-profit Public-Purpose [Energy Service Company](#) (PPESCO), with the loan repayments cycled back into the funding pools through energy savings. The third outcome will be to identify the tools, training and processes required for retrofits on this scale to be implemented efficiently, and to guide the formation of up to six privately owned shops within the region to do the job. The fourth outcome will be the development of an Energy Concierge staff position at the Western REN who would serve as the navigator for interested home owners to access funds, and identify the best upgrades fit for their home.

With 22,800 households within the Western Region, this will be a large undertaking, but will have significant economic spinoffs. The goal of this work is to set the stage for batched home retrofit programs that will then scale up to leverage capital funds from FCM and other lenders, thereby accelerating the transition to lower energy use. A draft funding application has already been reviewed by FCM, and feedback has been provided on how to improve the application.

## NEXT STEPS

The FCM requires that 10% of the total project cost comes from the applicant, and the Western REN will allocate its own funds for this purpose leaving no financial ask to the municipal units at this time.

The Western REN requests Letters of Support from each of the municipalities for this project and asks that such letters include a \$1,200 in-kind contribution of staff hours to reflect any required data requests. Upon receipt of letters of support from the participating municipal units, the Western REN will submit the application to the FCM's Community Energy Fund. Additional funds have been requested from the province, amounting to roughly 16% of total costs.

When funds are secured, the work will begin in Winter of 2022, and be completed by Fall 2022. Upon completion, Western REN staff will request to present the outcomes to each of the participating municipal councils.