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## **Policy & Strategy Committee Meeting Agenda**

**Tuesday, January 16, 2024 – 9:00 a.m.**

**MODL Council Chambers, 10 Allée Champlain Drive Cookville NS**

**1. Call to Order**

1.1. Mi'kma'ki Territorial Acknowledgement

**2. Announcements, Acknowledgements, Recognition**

**3. Public Input (15 Minutes)**

**4. Changes/Approval of Agenda (as circulated)**

**5. Approval of Minutes – November 21, 2023 (as circulated)**

**6. Business Arising from Minutes – Nil**

**7. Presentations/Scheduled Times**

7.1 Old Growth Forests, Dr. Peter Bush, Old-Growth Forest Coordinator, 10:15a.m..... 1-6  
NS Dept. of Natural Resources and Renewables

**8. Referral from Council - Nil**

**9. Staff Reports**

**9.1. Finance Department**

9.1.1 Proposed Amendment to MODL Policy 076 Signing Authority ..... 7-10

9.2.2 Low Income Property Tax Rebate Budget Request ..... 11-12

**10. Mayor's/Deputy Mayor's/Councillors' Matters**

10.1 Two-year Deputy Mayor Term (Councillor Hubley)..... 13

**11. Added Items**

**12. In Camera**

**13. Adjournment**

## Old-Growth Forest Policy:

Presentation to Municipality of  
the District of Lunenburg

**Peter Bush**  
Old-Growth Forest Coordinator  
Department of Natural Resources and  
Renewables



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## How We Got Here:



- “Interim Old Forest Policy” 1999
- “Nova Scotia’s Old Forest Policy” in 2012
- Lawlor Lake/Loon Lake Harvest
- Review of Forestry Practices Recommendation 17
- Extensive public consultation 2021-2022



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# New Old-Growth Forest Policy

## Key Highlights

- Conserve **All Old-Growth Forests**
- Revised definition to follow an ecologically-based definition of late-successional forests and age
- Stronger language about any removal of policy lands and compensation for old-growth area removals
- Stronger language for supporting private land conservation of old growth



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# Old-Growth Forest Areas

- Simply defined as relatively old and relatively undisturbed
- The old-growth ages have been based on an estimate of the minimum age-of-onset of old-growth attributes (range from 100-140 yrs. old).
- A forest area is considered to be old-growth if no forest harvesting since 1990, is larger than 1.0 hectare in area, and 20% or more of the basal area of trees is greater than or equal to the reference age for that forest type

Table 1: Old-Growth Forest Area Definitions

EC Forest Group *	EC Vegetation Type *	Old-Growth Minimum Tree Age †
Deciduous hardwood	101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108	100
Spice-moss (red spruce-dominated)	301, 304, 305, 306, 307	120
Spice-moss (black spruce-dominated)	301, 302	120
Mixed conifer	401, 402, 403	120
Spice-moss	501, 502, 503, 504	120
Non-Characteristic	601, 602, 603, 604	100
Coastal Black spruce or Bark-beetle (deciduous)	701, 702	100
Coastal Black spruce or Bark-beetle (conifer)	703, 704	100
Highland Deciduous (red spruce-dominated)	801, 802	100
Highland Deciduous (black spruce-dominated)	803, 804	100
Coastal ‡	901	100
Non-Characteristic	1001, 1002, 1003, 1004	100
Parquet	1101, 1102, 1103	100
Barren	1201, 1202	100

\* Based on the 2010 Late Successional Vegetation Types  
 † Minimum age threshold based on published research on onset of old-growth attributes for each vegetation type. This document does not address areas with the same general vegetation type but different species composition.  
 ‡ Includes areas that are currently in the process of being designated as old-growth.



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## Old-Growth Forest Restoration Opportunity Areas

- Old-growth restoration opportunity areas are forests that have a good chance to become Old-growth in the near future or are likely Old-growth but have not been measured.
- Restoration opportunities are located both in protected areas and on Crown land to ensure that there will be good representation of old-growth forests across all ecodistricts in the future



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## Private land Old-Growth Forest Conservation

- Commits to working with organizations and groups to explore mechanisms of support and encouragement for the conservation of old-growth forests on private land;
- Will encourage forests to be set aside through 3<sup>rd</sup>-party forest certification standards that recognize old-growth forests of high conservation value;
- Will provide informative documentation and offer field-based workshops where landowners can learn to recognize old-growth forests and support its conservation and restoration;
- Will account for the conservation of known old-growth forest areas on private land in the reporting of old-growth forest conditions by ecodistrict across the province.



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## Other Information

- Policy layer commits to continued protection of 25,000 ha of old-growth restoration opportunity areas, and over 4,000 of old-growth forest areas on crown land (i.e. outside of protected areas)
- Includes forest area with oldest tree in Maritimes, 532 Hemlock, see <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/old-growth-forest-natural-resources-department-research-old-tree-1.6256885#:~:text=Nova%20Scotia%20only%20has%20a,Wilderness%20Area%2C%20northwest%20of%20Hubbards>
- Provides many co-op benefits for biodiversity including Species-At-Risk



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### Mature and Old Forest across Nova Scotia Age Class Based on Ecological Landscape Analysis, by Eco-district (2023 Report)

Serial No	Age Class*	Age category	Area (ha)	%
1	0-25	Forest Establishment	710,802	14.83
2	26-40	Young-Forest	227,313	4.74
3	41-80	Early Mature	2,560,008	53.43
4	81-120	Late Mature	1,138,710	23.76
5	>120	Multi-Aged	154,734	3.23**
1-5	All forests	---	4,791,568	100

\*Measured as height and estimated as age based on site class

\*\* Recent Journal paper by Maltman et al 2023. Estimating and mapping forest age across Canada's forested ecosystems. Remote Sens. of Env. V290 supports this # of approximately 4% over 120yrs.



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Old forest/OGF policy Protected Areas  
in Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

Category	Age Class	Area (ha)	% Crown*	% Total
OGF Policy	OGF and Restoration	791 ha**	4%	0.4
Protected Areas	All land	3,388 ha***	17%	1.8%
Late Mature	81-120	34,899 ha	23%	18.6%
Multi-Aged	>120	52,597 ha	35%	28%

\* Crown land 10.5% of MODL  
 \*\* 8.5 ha crown and 782.5 ha in Protected areas  
 \*\*\* 3,119 ha and 269 ha pending



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## Summary

- Nova Scotia Old-Growth Policy is a “best-in-class” policy or legislation for the conservation of OGF across Canada.
- This policy supports Nova Scotians’ strong desire to conserve this rare ecosystem.
- The policy will have an impact on forest management and land management decisions across the province, but does provide opportunities to improve OGF conservation through compensation for provincial level development projects



Information found here

<https://novascotia.ca/natr/forestry/programs/ecosystems/oldgrowth.asp>



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## Questions



Natural Resources & Renewables, Forestry Division, Forest Research & Planning Group





## Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

### Request for Decision

**Report to:** Policy & Strategy Committee  
**Submitted by:** Elana Wentzell, CPA, CMA  
**Date:** January 17, 2023  
**Re:** Amendments – MODL Policy 076, Signing Authority

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#### Recommendation

That Municipal Council approve the amendments to Policy MODL-076, Signing Authority and give 7 days' notice of the proposed changes.

#### Executive summary

The Municipality has a signing authority policy that was adopted by Council in 2017. This policy details what positions can act as Municipal Signatories. This policy is important for internal control purposes, segregation of duties, audit testing and fraud risk mitigation. The policy contains some outdated references that need to be updated and staff believe a change in the third "elected official signatory" should be made.

#### Discussion

**Section 3** of the policy discusses payments of HST and references the Assistant Treasurer; that position is now referred to as the Manager of Accounting and should be updated.

**Section 4** details what positions are signatories on Municipal Bank accounts. All payments require two signatures: one elected official and one senior staff member. The elected officials named in the policy are:

1. Mayor,
2. Deputy Mayor and
3. Chair of the Audit & Finance Committee or Vice Chair if the Chair is the Deputy Mayor.

This third signatory designate has not been updated with the bank since the COVID pandemic started and the name of the Committee was changed from Audit & Finance Committee to Finance Committee. Staff erred in not annually updating the third elected signatory. The third signatory is rarely called upon, however, it is still good practice to have a 3<sup>rd</sup> alternate.

**Alternatives**

Staff believe changing the 3<sup>rd</sup> elected official from the Chair of the Committee to the outgoing Deputy Mayor may make more sense; the outgoing Deputy Mayor has experience in being a signatory, and it would alleviate the issue if the Chair of the Finance Committee is also the Deputy Mayor.

However, if Council wants the Chair of the Finance Committee to be the alternate, then the policy needs to be updated to change the name of the Committee from the Audit and Finance Committee to the Finance Committee as the Audit and Finance Committee no longer exists.

**Conclusion**

Staff believe that continuing with a 3<sup>rd</sup> elected official as a named bank signatory is still a good practice. Changing that official from the Chair of a Committee to the outgoing Deputy Mayor is recommended.

Report Preparation	
Department	
Report Prepared by	
Report Approved by	
Date Reviewed by C.A.O.	

# Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

Policy Details	
Name	Signing Authority
Number	076
Legislative Authority	MGA s. 13(3), 48
Effective Date	January XX, 2024

## Purpose

- 1 The purpose of the Signing Authority Policy is to permit Council to authorize designated officials to sign cheques and other forms of payments as permitted in Section 13 (3) of the Municipal Government Act.

## Policy Statement

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- 1 The separation of duties is a powerful internal control. To increase the chance an error is caught before a transaction is complete, it is important to establish internal controls that prevent one person from controlling a process from start to finish. A clear policy around signing authority is one way to reduce the risk of error or fraud.
- 2 All cheques and other forms of payment, regardless of value, ~~shall~~ **will** be signed by two signing officers.
- 3 Payments based on HST returns prepared by the ~~Assistant Treasurer~~ **Accounting Manager** ~~shall~~ **will** be authorized by the Municipal Treasurer. If the payment is of an unusual nature, the Municipal Treasurer ~~shall~~ **will** immediately inform the ~~CAO~~ **Chief Administrative Officer** and Council.
- 4 For all Municipal bank accounts, one of the following three elected officials ~~shall~~ **will** have signing authority:
  - a) Mayor
  - b) Deputy Mayor
  - c) **Outgoing Deputy Mayor** ~~Chair of the Audit & Finance Committee, or Vice-Chair if the Chair is the Deputy Mayor~~
- 5 With one of the following three Senior Staff having co-signing authority:
  - a) Chief Administrative Officer
  - b) Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
  - c) Municipal Treasurer

<b>Policy Adoption</b>	
<b>Date of Original Passage</b>	December 12, 2017
<b>Date of Notice of Intent to Amend</b>	January 16, 2024
<b>Date of Council Approval</b>	January XX, 2024
<b>Date of Effective Date</b>	January XX, 2024
<b>I certify that this Policy 076 was adopted by Municipal Council as indicated above.</b>	
<b>Signature of Municipal Clerk</b>	<b>Date</b>

<b>Version</b>	<b>Amendment Description</b>	<b>Approval Date</b>
<b>Original V1</b>	076, Signing Authority	December 12, 2017
<b>V2</b>	Revise title of assistant treasurer and third elected signing authority and update for accessibility formatting and clear language.	January XX, 2024



## Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

### Request for Decision

**Report to:** Policy & Strategy Committee  
**Submitted by:** Elana Wentzell, Director of Finance  
**Date:** 2024-01-16  
**Re:** Low Income Property Tax Rebate Budget Request

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#### Recommendation

That the Policy & Strategy Committee recommend Council approve \$10,000 in additional funds for the low-income property tax rebate program and further, that these funds come out of the General Operating Reserves if required at year end.

#### Executive summary

On September 26, 2023, Council approved \$20,000 in additional budget funds for the low-income property tax rebate program. This additional budget has been almost fully utilized with 61 property owners benefiting from the rebate. This brings the total to 725 property owners who have received the rebate in this fiscal year.

#### Discussion

The property tax rebate program provides compassionate property tax relief for low-income property taxpayers residing in their own principal residences. We had a significant increase in qualifying applicants in this fiscal year and were able to approve more applicants based on Council's budget approvals. There is \$141 remaining in the \$254,740 approved budget. Staff are aware of more applicants who have verbally asked about the rebate however, no new applications have been received.

### **Budget implications**

The original 2023-24 budget was \$213,400. The Treasurer approved rebates in the amount of \$254,599 using the 10% budget overage allowance per policy and the \$20,000 additional budget amount approved by Council.

To continue processing applications, more budget is required. Staff estimate that an additional \$10,000 may be appropriate.

The additional budget monies could be taken from the Council approved contingency or General Operating reserve if required at year end.

### **Alternatives**

Council may approve additional funds to ensure staff can continue to process rebates for applicants or decide against approving any more funds for this program.

Staff believe a \$10,000 budget addition would ensure that new applications received can be processed or Council could approve a different amount.

### **Conclusion**

Staff recommend that Council approve \$10,000 in additional funds for the low-income property tax rebate program.

<b>Report Preparation</b>	
<b>Department</b>	Finance
<b>Report Prepared by</b>	Elana Wentzell, CPA, CMA
<b>Report Approved by</b>	
<b>Date Reviewed by C.A.O.</b>	

### Request for Agenda Items under Mayor's/Deputy Mayor's/Councillors' Matters

TO: Chief Administrative Officer  
FROM: Pam Hubley  
DATE: Nov 21, 2023

1. Agenda Item  
Deputy Mayor Term and Committee Appointments

2. On what agenda do you want the item placed?  
Policy & Strategy

3. Do you have written material to circulate with the agenda? Yes  No

If you do, please attach it to this form. If you do not, please explain.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What is its relevance to Council or the committee?  
I would like to discuss the Deputy Mayor position becoming a 2 year term. I would also like to discuss the possibility of alternates on committees being a former memeber of the committee.

5. What outcome(s) are you seeking?  
A motion updating terms of Deputy Mayor to a two year position and a policy stating that a former committee member will be the alternate on all committees that have an assigned an alternate.

  
Councillor's Signature

November 27, 2023  
Date

Approval for agenda: Yes  No

Reason for Denial:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor or Chair of Committee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date