



# Special Town Council Meeting

April 6, 2021

Directly Following Committee of the Whole

Via Hybrid

Council Chambers, Town Hall

359 Main Street

## Agenda

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### Call to Order

#### 1. Approval of Agenda

#### 2. Public Input / Question Period

PLEASE NOTE:

- Public Participation is limited to 30 minutes
- Each Person is limited to 3 minutes and may return to speak once, for 1 minute, if time permits within the total 30-minute period
- Questions or comments are to be directed to the Chair
- Comments and questions that relate to personnel, current or potential litigation issues, or planning issues for which a public hearing has already occurred, but no decision has been made by Council, will not be answered.

#### 3. Motions/Recommendations from Committee of the Whole, April 6, 2021

- a. RFD 025-2021: Welcome Centre Tender Results and Options
- b. RFD 018-2021: Acadia Pool Financial Request

#### 4. Regular Meeting Adjourned

## REQUEST FOR DECISION 023-2021

Title: Visitor Information Centre  
Date: 2021-03-21  
Department: Parks and Recreation

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## SUMMARY

### Welcome Centre

Tender results from March of this year, for construction of a new Welcome Centre (Visitor Information Centre - VIC) in Willow Park have been received. Although the design of the second version of the Welcome Centre was done to reduce costs and not sacrifice key elements, the lowest bid exceeds the approved budget of \$600,000. This notwithstanding the other associated costs required to finish and fully outfit the new Welcome Centre.

In consultation with staff and the management team there are alternative options. These include:

1. Increasing the budget to allow for construction of a new Welcome Centre, as tendered, from \$600,000 (\$400,000 town of Wolfville and \$200,000 partner funding from ACOA) to \$800,000.
2. Plan a major renovation to the current building, incorporating key components related to accessibility and technology. This, with an eye to improved aesthetics and an improved visitor experience.
3. Continue with current space and make marginal improvements without addressing key features such as accessibility, technology, or a significant improvement to the user experience.

Discussion section will detail options, but this draft motion is asking that staff begin the process of detailing and undertaking major renovations in the fall of 2021 to the current VIC building.

Staff will operate the current VIC for the summer of 2021 and plan to begin the actual renovations in October.

### DRAFT MOTION:

THAT COUNCIL AUTHORIZE STAFF TO START THE PROCESS OF DETAILING AND UNDERTAKING A MAJOR RENOVATION TO THE CURRENT VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE, WITHIN THE CURRENT APPROVED BUDGET OF \$600,000.

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### 1) CAO COMMENTS

The CAO supports the recommendations of staff.

### 2) LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Municipal Government Act Section 65A.

### 3) STAFF RECOMMENDATION

As per draft motion.

### 4) REFERENCES AND ATTACHMENTS

- 2021/22 Operations Plan/Budget
- Accessibility Plan – as it relates to major renovations.

### 5) DISCUSSION

Results have been received in response to the tender issued for construction of a new Welcome Centre. All bids were well over the budgeted amount. The lowest bid received came in close to \$675,000 (HST included). This equates to a net cost to Town (after HST rebate) of approximately \$613,000. This amount does not allow for additional dollars required to outfit the new space – including required technology, display and caseworks, and interpretive artwork and panels. The estimate for these additional items would be an additional \$100,000.

In consultation with our project architect, we focused on redesigning a building with attention to both good design and price; knowing it would be a smaller space but still provide a new Centre to anchor the East End Gateway.

This is the second time we have tendered this building and each time costs exceeded budget. Council has been both supportive of improving the current VIC but also committing staff to remain on budget.

It should be noted that current building pricing, under the shadow of a global pandemic, has made pricing erratic and in fairness to all - unpredictable.

That said, the space is tired and does not represent Wolfville, nor does it offer the amenities needed to support our Park users – access to washrooms outside normal hours as an example. The addition of the new splash pad and our commitment to accessibility make this all that more important. Staff understands this and are encouraged to lead a renovation that can achieve high marks in several areas. The East End Gateway will be anchored by this space and will build off current elements such as the Trailhead and the new green space on the north side of Main street.

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In terms of the options outlined in the summary:

First option – approved an increase to the budget and proceed with new build. This would require adding \$200,000 to the current budget and spending \$800,000 on a new building. This option has the Welcome Space setting up temporarily for most of the 2021 season off site and downtown at Waterfront park. Staff have discussed how best to make this work. This option will most likely delay the opening of the splashpad for this season.

Second option – renovate and add a small addition to the existing VIC to maximize the offering but keep within the current budget of \$600,000. Outfitting costs of this option would be reduced, as both the size and offering would not be the same as a new build. The addition would allow for two exterior public washrooms and room to accommodate mechanicals required for the splash pad.

Every effort would be made to maximize energy efficiencies, through improvements such as new windows, doors and increased insulation.

Option 2 would include a covered stage area, not included in option 1. The current size would not allow for as large a retail offering as was planned for the new building. Technology will be incorporated. This space would also allow for off season use but on a smaller scale. It will be outfitted to both support and educate our visitors and users as option will.

Option 2 would have staff operating out of the current building till October. This option will also allow for the opening of the splashpad this season.

Conversations with ACOA continue and remain very positive. They can and will support option 2. If that is Council's direction.

Staff are keen to seek direction from Council and recognize this has been a long process – with little to show. Staff are also keen to take the lead on outlining the design requirements to integrate the space within the larger context of the East End Gateway and improvements to the downtown core especially around the Robie Tuffs park.

## 6) FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As part of the 2021-22 capital plan, budgeted dollars in the amount of \$600,000 have been approved and allocated to support a new Welcome Centre. This budget would include all project costs some of which have already been incurred in design work for the initial tender scope.

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Currently, this amount is insufficient to allow for construction of a new Centre based on the current design and the tender responses.

If Council were to decide to move forward with the tender result and hence new build, an additional \$200,000 of funding would have to be established. The quick easy answer would be reserves, but as noted during the budget process there is not much flexibility in those reserves in the next 4 years. Staff believe there would be options, including discussions with ACOA and how that total grant is allocated between East End Gateway elements in the next three years. At the very least, allocating more than \$200,000 of ACOA grant to the VIC build would buy time to source funding for years 2 and 3 of the CIP East End Gateway elements planned. There are a number of funding options that would have to be pursued if new build is the decision.

If Council were to elect to move forward with a renovation of the current VIC, monies would be available as part of the approved capital investment plan – pending final pricing.

## 7) REFERENCES TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN AND TOWN REPORTS

Reference the appropriate strategic direction and sub-goal from the 2020-2024 Strategic plan:

- Improving quality of life for all
- Maximizing our infrastructure investments
- Leveraging our economic opportunities
- Accessibility impact
- Climate Change

### Council Strategic Principles:

1. **Affordability:** Project must be based on aligning with Town's Capital Investment plan.
2. **Transparency:** Tender results were opened in a public forum.
3. **Community Capacity Building:** East End Gateway improvements are at the forefront of capital projects with your Parks and Recreation Department.
4. **Discipline to Stay the Course:** Improvements to the East End Gateway have been part of the Town's operating plan for several years.
5. **United Front:** Recreational space and supporting active lifestyles are specific to the Town's Strategic Plan.
6. **Environmental Sustainability:** Every opportunity for energy efficiencies will be incorporated into the project.

## 8) COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS

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Staff have informed vendors that the project is currently on hold and staff are seeking direction from Council. Based on Council's direction, staff is committed to keeping Council updated on progress made with this project.

### 9) ALTERNATIVES

Council can choose not to accept the draft motion and defer to another option presented or choose to do nothing at this time.

## REQUEST FOR DECISION 018-2021

Title: Acadia Pool Financial Request

Date: 2021-03-23

Department: Office of the CAO

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# SUMMARY

## ACADIA POOL FINANCIAL REQUEST

The Town of Wolfville, along with other municipalities in Kings County, have been approached by Acadia University to provide support to 1) keep the pool open for community use during the non-academic term of May 1<sup>st</sup> – August 31<sup>st</sup> and 2) to provide support to help alleviate the anticipated deficit of operating the pool during the academic term of September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 – April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022. This RFD reviews both of these proposals and recommends that both proposals be supported based on:

- This will provide support to a strategic partner of the Town and allow an important service to the community to continue.
- This request aligns with Council's Strategic Priorities.
- This will provide increased opportunities for lane and open swims during a period when COVID-19 has limited opportunities for participation in scheduled swim times. This will also allow for improved community access during the academic term.
- This will allow continuity of access to a pool facility while the Regional Recreational Facility Feasibility Study is completed, and next steps are determined.
- This will leverage, as appropriate, the Safe Start Up COVID Relief funds that have been made available to the Town of Wolfville, lessening the direct burden on the Town and the Wolfville taxpayer.
- This is an opportunity for the Town to partner (should all Councils approve these proposals) with our surrounding communities on an initiative that will provide benefit to all our collective residents.

### DRAFT MOTION:

That Council approve participation in both the May 1, 2021 – August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021 and the September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 – April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022 proposals in support of the Acadia pool for a total maximum amount of \$84,162, which includes direct contributions to Acadia and required contributions towards summer-month programming.

If any of the other municipal partners decide not to contribute based on the proposed funding model, and it becomes anticipated that the Town's costs will exceed \$84,162 as a result, a report will come back to Council for review and further decision.

## REQUEST FOR DECISION 018-2021

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### 1) CAO COMMENTS

Refer to Section 3 for comments.

### 2) LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Section 65A of the *Municipal Government Act* allows for this expenditure.

### 3) STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff are recommending that Council approve participation in this request for both the May 1, 2021 – August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021 and the September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 – April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022 proposals in the total amount of \$84,162. This recommendation is being made for the following reasons:

- This will provide support to a strategic partner of the Town and allow an important service to the community to continue.
- This request aligns with Council's Strategic Priorities.
- This will provide increased opportunities for lane and open swims during a period when COVID-19 has limited opportunities for participation in scheduled swim times. This will also allow for improved community access during the academic term.
- This will allow continuity of access to a pool facility while the Regional Recreational Facility Feasibility Study is completed, and next steps are determined.
- This will leverage, as appropriate, the Safe Start Up COVID Relief funds that have been made available to the Town of Wolfville, lessening the direct burden on the Town and the Wolfville taxpayer.
- This is an opportunity for the Town to partner (should all Councils approve these proposals) with our surrounding communities on an initiative that will provide benefit to all our collective residents.

Despite the positive recommendation from staff, it should be noted that there are some concerns and challenges that should be considered before a decision is made:

- The number of Wolfville pool users, particularly in the summer months, may not warrant the magnitude of financial investment in the pool facility.
- All of the municipal partners may not approve the funding as proposed, which may mean that Wolfville would have to contribute additional money towards the request should there be a desire to move forward regardless.
- While the Safe Restart COVID Relief Fund may be used for part of this request, in particular for the summer proposal, it is unclear as to whether or not it would apply to the winter ask. As this is an unbudgeted expense, the Town would have to cover the difference, likely from reserves.

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- This will likely become an annual request and the Town would have to budget for its annual contributions as part of the annual budgeting process, as COVID Relief money would not be available or applicable.

### 4) REFERENCES AND ATTACHMENTS

1. Acadia University Athletic Complex Business Plan
2. 2021-02-24 Acadia Pool Financial Information provided by Chris Callbeck
3. 2021-02-25 Acadia Pool Financial Proposals provided by Chris Callbeck

### 5) DISCUSSION

Over the past year, COVID-19 has had an impact on Acadia University, and of great interest to the broader community, on the Acadia Athletics Complex. Due to both public health regulations and the financial impact COVID-19 has had on Acadia operations, the Athletics Complex, and its various amenities, have not been available to the general public as it typically has been in previous years. Since the fall, the Athletics Complex has staggered its re-opening to students, faculty/staff and community memberships for its various amenities, with limited access for these groups to the pool for lane and open swim times resuming on February 8, 2021. On March 31, 2021 Acadia indicated that drop-in swimmers would once again be welcomed to the facility.

#### May 1, 2021 – August 31, 2021

At this current time, Acadia has communicated with its municipal stakeholders that they intend to remove the water from the pool by mid-April until the students return in September. The cost savings Acadia will achieve by closing the pool and removing the water will be approximately \$65,000 over this period. These cost savings are strictly direct costs of not having the water in the pool to heat, treat and maintain. Any programming cost savings are not included in this amount.

Acadia has offered to keep the water in the pool, and to allow its municipal stakeholders control over programming until the students return for the summer, if a contribution of \$65,000 is provided to Acadia to cover the amount that would have been saved by taking the water out of the pool and closing it down for those four months. Pool staff would remain employees of Acadia, but the programming and scheduling would be directed and paid for by the municipal stakeholders. Any programming revenue collected during this period would offset programming costs incurred. More details are provided in the Financial Implications Section of this RFD.

#### September 1, 2021 – April 30, 2022

Acadia has requested that municipalities help support the cost of operating the pool for the 2021-22 academic year.

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It has been suggested that the net cost, including all sources of pool programming revenue, for the academic school year for 2021-22 is approximately \$160,000. Acadia has suggested several cost-sharing formulas with municipalities for this time period which range from usage, to a monthly fee based on summer costs, to various other cost-sharing options. The most economical option provided to the Town is that the same amount of \$65k used for May – August 2021 would be used for the September – April time period, with the University resuming responsibility for pool programming.

### Pool Usage by Community and Type

The Sierra Report provided a breakdown in terms of pool usage, by type, on an annual basis. In 2018-19, 60% of the pool schedule was reserved for community activities (such as open and lane swims), 16% for the Wolfville Tritons, and 25% for Acadia University/Varsity Swim Program (note – a rounding error has this at slightly more than 100% allocation). This usage breakdown may not be reflective of the current usage due to shifts in availability for varsity programming etc...

Additionally, as part of the Sierra Report, information was provided based on the geographic residence of community membership pass holders. Based on the most current year available (2017-18), Wolfville was 51%, County of Kings was 28% and Kentville was 13% of all community memberships. The remainder of memberships were from other municipalities (West Hants, Halifax, South Shore). The main limitation of this metric is that it does not account for any “drop in” or “pay-as-you-go” swimmers that would typically partake in open and lane swims. It also does not give any consideration to participants in camp and swim lesson programming. It does, however, give a general basis for which cost-sharing between municipalities for these proposals can be based on.

### Key Considerations

There are many considerations for the Town of Wolfville, and its municipal partners, to consider with this request:

- Currently, due to public health regulations, there are limits to the number of swimmers at any given time. Council has received some feedback that the current booking system may not allow for fair access to the facility. The number of times available for public lane and open swims, along with how swimmers can reserve a spot, will have to be examined and if possible, enhanced.
- Should the municipalities provide financial support to keep community pool access in the coming months, Acadia has communicated that access for the general public (“drop-in”) will be made available. Given the current COVID-19 public health restrictions, balancing general public “drop in” and the existing user groups, will need to be managed in an equitable manner.
- It is likely that for the May 1<sup>st</sup> – August 31<sup>st</sup> proposal, that the Town of Wolfville and Municipality of the County of Kings are the only two potential municipal partners. The Town of Kentville may participate in the September 1<sup>st</sup> – April 30<sup>th</sup> proposal, but as they operate their own pool facility

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in the summer months, the assumption has been made that they will not participate in the summer proposal.

- Any metrics to be used for cost-sharing purposes will be imperfect based on the limited usage data by geographic location that is available.
- For both the summer and academic year requests, there is a potential for utilizing the Safe Restart COVID Relief Funds that have been made available to the Town of Wolfville, although this seems less likely for the academic year request (please refer to the financial implications section). It should be cautioned that given the financial challenges facing Acadia both as a result of COVID-19 and other factors, that there is a strong possibility that this request will become an annual one. Should the Town wish to support any future requests, it will have to be given consideration as part of our annual operating budgeting process and will more than likely impact the tax rate.
- Council is considering participation with our surrounding municipalities to undertake a Regional Recreation Facility Feasibility Study. Even if the outcome of this study is to develop a regional facility, including a pool, we are still years away from that coming to fruition.
- Other options for pool access (or alternatives) for eastern Kings County using existing facilities are very limited, however have not yet been explored to date.

### Summer Programming Considerations

There are several key summer programming assumptions associated with this request should it be approved:

- We would anticipate maintaining the existing Pool Coordinator for the duration of the four-month period. Currently this coordinator works 17.5 hours per week and does hiring, scheduling, etc and is paid \$16/hour.
- We are assuming operating the pool at 50 available hours per week (compared to 32 hours currently) to improve offerings to the community for lane and open swims. 14 of these hours would be dedicated to the Tritons, who rent their time.
- We are assuming all hours require two lifeguards. In some situations, only one guard may be required and in others we may require more than two. Lifeguards make minimum wage.
- We would be implementing hour-long lane swims (currently at 45 min).
- We would continue to offer Aquafit (approximately six times per week).
- Day Camps may require dedicated pool time and this will be accommodated within the 50 hours if required.
- Swimming lessons will not be provided in the summer months, although private lessons may be offered as per past years.
- We have been told that approximately \$13,000 will be incurred for cleaning and COVID-related protocols

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- Limited drop-in swimming revenue, as well as a portion of new community passholder amounts will minimally help to offset costs incurred (along with revenue from Tritons rentals).

### Winter Programming Considerations

Municipalities have been asked for \$65,000 to help offset costs related to the pool operation for the academic school year. Acadia would assume all responsibility for the programming, and no revenue would offset this investment. It has been communicated that additional community times would be made available in exchange for this support. The details of this will be worked out in the coming months

## 6) FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This request is currently not in the draft 2021-22 Operating Budget. It has also been confirmed that the annual \$35,000 that is provided to Acadia in support of the Athletics Complex is in addition to the funding amounts being requested.

Acadia has provided the Town with financial information pertaining to the pool operation. On an annual basis, the pool operates at a loss of approximately \$201,000 as per the following budget:

### REVENUES

Pool Pass	11,500
Aquafit	5,500
Public Swim	15,500
Wolfville Tritons	44,500
Swim Lessons	40,000
	<b>\$117,000</b>

### EXPENSES

Direct Costs	
Administration and Lifeguards	93,000
Equipment and Supplies	6,000
	<b>\$99,000</b>
Indirect Costs	
Electricity	45,000
Heat/Steam	11,000
Physical Plant Labour and Materials	155,000
Water	8,000
	<b>\$219,000</b>
Total Expenses	<b>\$318,000</b>

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The contributions proposed in both the summer and academic year proposals would assist Acadia in reducing their expected deficit, through both direct financial contributions and in the municipalities assuming responsibility for summer month programming.

To assist Council in the decision related to the two proposals, a draft budget of potential summer operating expenses has been developed. As previously mentioned, the municipalities would be responsible for all operational costs from May 1<sup>st</sup> – August 31<sup>st</sup> in addition to the \$65,000 requested.

Funding formulas have been developed loosely based on the geographical location of facility membership holders. While CAO’s have had preliminary discussions, it is unclear at this stage 1) what each CAO will ultimately recommend to their respective Council and 2) if Councils are interested in participating in these proposals. The funding formulas would clearly have to change if either the County or Kentville opted not to participate in one or both of the proposals.

The draft proposed budget is summarized as:

<b>Summer Revenue</b>	
Tritons	\$14,833
New Facility Passes	\$1,000
Drop in Revenue	\$1,000
Aquafit	<u>\$1,833</u>
	\$18,666
<b>Summer Expenses</b>	
Summer Contribution	\$65,000
Cleaning	\$13,000
Summer Coordinator	\$4,480
Lifeguarding	\$21,600
Benefits	<u>\$2,608</u>
	\$106,688
<b>Profit/Deficit</b>	<b>\$88,022</b>

  

<b>Cost Sharing</b>			
Wolfville	55%		\$48,412
County of Kings	45%		<u>\$39,610</u>
			\$88,022

As previously noted, the contribution for the academic, or winter, season is limited to \$65,000, with Acadia providing all operational requirements. The municipalities would have an opportunity to improve

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the offerings for the community during this time frame in exchange for this investment. The details of the proposed academic term investment are as follows:

<b>Winter Revenue</b>	\$0	<b>Cost Sharing</b>		
<b>Winter Expenses</b>	\$65,000	Wolfville	55%	\$35,750
		County of Kings	30%	\$19,500
<b>Profit/Deficit</b>	<b>\$65,000</b>	Kentville	15%	<u>\$9,750</u>
				\$65,000

In total, under the above budget assumptions, the Town of Wolfville would be responsible for contributing \$84,162 to support both proposals. It is anticipated that the Safe Start Up COVID Relief Funds will be used to offset some of the proposed contributions, particularly towards the summer proposal. Circumstances would have to be reviewed in the fall to see if the proposal for the 2021-22 academic term meets the criteria to be used for this purpose. Otherwise, the Town will have to likely use its own reserves to fund this request.

**7) REFERENCES TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN AND TOWN REPORTS**

Reference the appropriate strategic directions from the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan:

- Economic Prosperity
- Social Equity – this proposal will provide enhanced access to all residents, including facility membership holders and the general public, to the Acadia pool.
- Climate Action
- Community Wellness – this proposal supports a recreational amenity within the Town and ensures that it remains open for community use.

Reference, if applicable, how the RFD links to a Council Priority Initiative:

- Multi-purpose regional complex (with an aquatics facility) – this proposal allows for continued access to a pool facility, for the next year, while further work and next steps are developed for a regional recreational facility.
- Revitalization and maintenance of road, sidewalk, crosswalk infrastructure and traffic management
- Economic sector growth and support for businesses (retention and attraction)
- Climate management related initiatives (reduce carbon emissions, support local transportation, food security, environmental protection)

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### 8) COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS

Due to the time limitations of this request, consultation with the public has not occurred. It is suggested that this proposal, with the use of some of the Town's Safe Restart COVID funds, will allow for the pool to remain open, with improved access to the community, with little direct impact to the tax payer for 2021-22. It is suggested that during the upcoming year, and as the results of the Regional Recreation Facility Feasibility Study are known, that community consultation be undertaken on what future contributions may look like and how they is best funded.

### 9) ALTERNATIVES

Council can choose not to support the recommendations of staff.

Council can choose to support only the May 1<sup>st</sup> -August 31<sup>st</sup> proposal or only the September 1<sup>st</sup> – April 30<sup>th</sup> proposal.