

STAFF REPORT

TO: Warden and Members of Shelburne Municipal Council

FROM: Val Kean, Director of Economic & Community Development

APPROVED BY: Warren MacLeod, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: March 11, 2026

SUBJECT: **Shelburne & Area Chamber of Commerce Support**

PURPOSE:

To provide Council with information regarding a request from the Shelburne Area Chamber of Commerce (SACC) for continued municipal support.

BACKGROUND:

The Shelburne Area Chamber of Commerce (SACC) recently presented to Council requesting continued municipal support to assist with hiring staff to support Chamber operations.

Over the past two years the Chamber has experienced staffing changes, including the resignation of its Executive Director and administrative staff. The organization currently relies primarily on volunteers and has indicated that additional staff support is needed to continue its work.

Previous discussions between the Municipality and the Chamber included a potential \$15,000 contribution, with conditions related to exploring a unified county chamber and confirmation of support from other municipal units.

The Chamber has reported that discussions with the Barrington Area Chamber regarding amalgamation took place, but the Barrington Chamber chose not to proceed at this time. At this time, no direct financial support has been secured from other Shelburne County units.

DISCUSSION:

The Chamber provides services intended to support local businesses including networking, training opportunities, advocacy, tourism promotion, and collaboration with community partners.

The Chamber has been working toward accreditation through the Canadian Accreditation Council and has developed policies, procedures, and governance documents as part of this process. Their initial application was not accepted but the organization intends to revise and reapply.

The Municipality has provided \$15,000 in funding to the Chamber in each of the past two fiscal years to support the organization as it works toward strengthening its governance and pursuing accreditation. If Council approves funding for the current fiscal year, it will represent the final year of a three-year funding commitment previously discussed with the Chamber.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:

The 2025-2026 budget does include a project amount of \$15,000, for Chamber support.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Presentation from Shelburne & Area Chamber of Commerce



Dear Warden & fellow Councilors

February 16, 2026

Thank you for this opportunity to discuss and update you on behalf of the Shelburne Area Chamber of Commerce. We have appreciated the Municipality's continued support for our organization. As you will read in our presentation we continue to work towards Accreditation with the Canadian Accreditation Council.

When we started this process we all knew it would take up to 3 years to organize, compile and apply for the designation. In discussions with staff of the MOS it was our understanding when we first started the process that financial support would be contributed for the 3 year period. The financial contribution was used towards staff to assist in preparation for the application and help the volunteer committee in their efforts of building a strong Chamber.

In an email from Val Kean on March 25th, 2025, she had included a \$15,000.00 contribution in the budget for the 3rd year and Council did attach some criteria for funding. Although Accreditation is not listed in this criteria it was a request from the Municipality for the Chamber to peruse Accreditation.

1. Unification of the 2 Chambers in the county
2. Support from other Municipal Units

In our presentation you will see that although we pursued unification, we have no control over the other Chambers decision not to proceed at this time. We will continue to work with the Barrington Chamber and maybe someday we will be one.

We have been meeting with the Town of Shelburne and have a good relationship with the Town of Lockeport so we feel support is there for the work the Chamber is doing and hope to continue and grow those relationships.

Our challenge now is to hire an Executive Director or an Administrative Assistant to assist the volunteers to continue the work of the Chamber. That is where the funding will be used that we are asking for. With your Economic Development Committee mandate and the GAP study being done we see the Chamber being a supporting partner in the future development. As a third party The Chamber can access possible funding from other sources that the Municipality may not have access to. Working together could prove to be beneficial for us all.

In closing, the Chamber does have a place in our community, I agree it may seem small but every voice counts and as volunteers our heart and soul supports our community's growth and prosperity. Thank you again for your support.

Sincerely on behalf of the Shelburne Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors



Warden and Council members:

Thank you for this opportunity to present to Council the Shelburne Area Chamber of Commerce (SACC)

The Chamber has been working towards sustainability and credibility. It has been a journey and at times a challenge. Our Chamber wants to thank the Municipality for supporting our journey. This presentation is to update you on our progress and some initiatives that the SACC has encountered and continue to pursue.

Accreditation – Last August (2025) we submitted our application to the Accreditation Council of Canada. The **Canadian Accreditation Council (CAC) has been operating for over 40 years, focusing on the accreditation of various health and human service organizations throughout Canada. It aims to enhance the quality of effectiveness of these organizations by providing a structured framework for evaluation and improvement.**

This application resulted in a 60+ page document being developed for the SACC that encompasses policy and procedures, Board structure and Chamber Board & members responsibilities, Financial responsibilities, strategic planning, just to highlight a few areas. We are aware that there are not that many chambers that are accredited. Only 8 of 91 in Atlantic Canada are accredited! Even Halifax with 1700 members are not. Many of the chambers who rely on funding are volunteer which makes them ineligible. Or just don't have the capacity which makes it unattainable.

We did not hear from our application until late December and were told that our application was not accepted but the Board would be willing to work with us to revise the areas that needed our attention. We would still like to become Accredited and will continue to pursue.

Forming one Shelburne County Chamber – We took the initiative to meet with the Barrington Area Chamber (BACC) Board to discuss joining forces to create a Shelburne County Chamber of Commerce. We had a discussion with Barrington Councilor Eddie Nickerson to discuss the many issues that face our county and the possibility of uniting the 2 Chambers. At the time of our discussions both Boards were having challenges with filling the directors seats, volunteers are continuity hard to secure in many organizations not just the Chambers. When we met with the Board to discuss the fear of one Chamber taking over the other was an issue. Our solution was a Board with interchanging Executive positions so that both areas would be represented common issues facing the Businesses would be the priority but events that were held in each area would still happen. We put the ask out to the BACC but their Board declined a union.

The SACC has had a few challenges over the last 2 years but our Board of Directors has increased in numbers and a sense of interest seems to be emerging. To date there is no President or Vice but we are working towards a full Board for our May 2026 AGM.

Staff - In 2024-2025 our Executive Director Sherry Doane resigned, Sherry was instrumental in preparing the document for the Accreditation process and assisted our Chamber with Administration procedures that were needed. Her decision to resign was from a quality of life, she could retire and enjoy her days....congrats to Her!!! In 2025- 2026 a new hire was done, Tracie Sands was hired. Tracie found the job to be much more than



anticipated, so her employment was short and ended in October 2025. We still had administrative staff, Angie Shand has held the position of Admin Assistant for at least 4 years, we will be losing her soon as well.... she will be joining the MOS. Congrats to her on her position as Councilor.

With the ups and down of Staffing and soon no administrative help it will put more pressure on the volunteers involved. Our volunteers are already at their max, we need a staff person.

Funding is always an issue and although we strive to be more self sufficient it is still a struggle. Membership is an on going initiative and will always be a priority for our funding. The Chamber Group plan is one of the best in Canada, by supporting this plan our Chamber becomes more financially stable.

Just as an example if the Municipality enlisted with the plan you would be supporting the Chamber as well. For each Chamber Group Plan we sign up 4% is earned by the Chamber. It is a win- win opportunity for all.

Recently, a Local representative works directly with us, Jen Goucher, who also lives in the Municipality. We would like to be able to have Jen give the council a comparative report based on your current plan and the Chamber plan to see if this could be a feasible alternative for your staff. Hopefully we can have a meeting with the person who handles your group plan to discuss this possibility.

The following are strong points to support a local Chamber of Commerce and initiatives we are working on:

- **Supports local businesses: Provides networking, training, and resources that help small rural businesses grow and stay competitive.**

The SACC are currently working on a series of specific training opportunities, regular speakers on topics that benefit members, and building the resource page on our web site.

Social Media – The Chamber is moving towards being a better voice for Business & members. We have redesigned our Web site to focus on Business and Opportunities and resources for business. Building networking links that are more directed to services and on going support for businesses so we can offer a one stop area that our businesses can tap into.

- * **Advocates for the community: Gives businesses a collective voice with municipal and provincial governments on issues like infrastructure and funding.**

The SACC have regular monthly meeting with the TOS, MOS and TOL municipal representatives to address concerns and gather information on issues of importance to keep our members informed. Our Coffee drop in sessions for anyone who wants to talk or ask questions have started back again in Lockeport and Shelburne. We also meet with our local MLA to discuss topics of concern that will affect Community Safety, such as the Coastal Protection Action Plan specific areas of concern - Coastal Hazard Map showing Shelburne County's vulnerability RE: rising sea level areas and bridges that could cut our area off. The completion of the 103 highway and Cell phone coverage were topics of concern.



- **Boosts the local economy: Encourages “shop local,” promotes tourism, and helps keep money circulating within the community.**

The SACC is currently working with Municipal government and business to develop a long term plan for the Opening our local Visitor Information Center, an issue that Business feel strongly about needing to be open to strengthen our Tourism industry. We always promote shop local and promote the Provincial Shop Local Program.

- **Builds partnerships: Connects businesses, nonprofits, and government to collaborate on local development projects.**

The SACC connects with local organizations & businesses such as the CBDC, the Economic Growth Development Committee, the Barrington Area Chamber and Nova Scotia Works and local businesses. Recently, on a plan for the VIC and the SC Business awards. Chambers have been recognized by the Province as a support to relay regular information from Provincial departments on Tariffs and CUSMA.

- **Improves visibility and credibility: Promotes member businesses through events, directories, and marketing.**

Our new website highlights a business of the month promoting our members and their contribution to our community. We had a winning float in the Mircle on Dock Street this year, plans for organizing the Local Street Dance in August, working on business tourism brochure for Shelburne and Lockeport, developed the local walking tour brochure for TOS. Also promoting the Beacon App, [Beacon to Shelburne - STQRY Apps Directory](#) that highlights our area. This App should be promoted on all tourism literature and used for tourism marketing. This was a project the Chamber started in 2023 and has many possibilities for development.

I could go on ...but our presentation has a time limit and we want to answer any questions the Council may have.

In closing the Shelburne Area Chamber of Commerce has a place for business in the community. We can work together with Councils & business to strengthen our economic future. We all want what is best for our community and it is not a game of who is in power, who has the most money or even who has the best ideas it is how we bring all those strengths together to form a collective group that empowers our community to be successful.

Present BOARD Members:

Charlene Harris – Past President Anita Telford- Director Andrew Locke – Director
Mary Scott – Director David Chute – Director Shara Mahaney- Director

Group Insurance Representative: Jen Goucher

What is a Chamber of Commerce?

A Chamber of Commerce is a federation of business, industrial and professional firms and interested individuals working together to enhance the economic health of their community. It is a non-profit mutual benefit corporation of voluntary membership that invests time and money to carry forward programs relevant to members' needs and that affect the orderly growth and development of the community.

It is the **catalytic agency** that brings together all of the forces, both public and private, through which common goals can be resolved.

The mission of the local chamber of commerce is to be an advocate on local affairs in the community. Issues such as taxation, regulation and red tape are prime examples. The chamber also promotes a favourable business climate for our membership and community: to work on issues of community interest and provide business leadership for improvement of the economic, political environment and quality of life. In order to achieve this mission, the chamber must develop the following:

- a sound organizational structure such as committees for each of the above
- a meaningful program to engage members for input and expertise
- responsible leadership from the Board and committees
- a sound financial basis —a must as any business organization must operate on a sound footing

The Chamber is not a social club but social activities are part of a successful organization. A Chamber is not a charity. Although it is not for profit, the chamber must be profitable or return a surplus each year.

The Chamber of Commerce Idea

The Chamber of Commerce idea is a concept found only where private initiative and free enterprise exist.

The Chamber of Commerce as a wholly volunteer organization except for paid professional staff to assist in carrying out the mission. Chambers have an active role in political affairs but in a clearly non-political way, realizing that problems facing them can best be dealt within the legislative arena and can leverage their power and influence through the factual information and considered opinion they provide. Internally, a chamber organization must keep chamber members motivated to communicate regularly with their legislators.

Cities and towns are what their citizens make them. The Chamber of Commerce is the vehicle through which the community understands that private enterprise is the basis for real growth and that growth benefits all. .

Your Chamber of Commerce

Your chamber is a voluntary group of business and professional people working together to raise business issues with the aim of helping policy makers build a healthy economy and to improve the quality of life in your community.

Chamber members are businesses, organizations and individuals concerned with the economic climate of your community. They have joined together because they know they stand a better chance of getting things done when they speak as one voice.

As it works to improve your community's economy and quality of life, your chamber keeps these broad objectives in mind:

- to help business prosper and grow
- to increase job opportunities
- to contribute to the overall economic stability of the community

- to encourage and promote the private enterprise system of competitive business
- Every year, successful Chambers of Commerce and business associations provide each board member with a notebook featuring most of the following information:

Board Member Agreement

The Board of Directors is the policy making body of the Chamber of Commerce and as such we are the major work force for the Chamber of Commerce.

Our Board Members represent a broad cross-section of the business and professional leadership of the community. Each Director is very important to the Board, so an understanding is in order about each Board Members responsibility upon election. These include:

- 1 . Attendance and participation at an annual Planning Conference to develop goals for the coming year.
2. Attendance at the Annual AGM Event.
3. Attendance at each regular or special Board meeting,
4. Attendance at fifty per cent of all Chamber sponsored events, such as Mixers, Lunch & Learn, General Membership meetings, new member breakfasts and ribbon-cuttings.
5. Attendance at special events to promote the Chamber or municipality.
6. Assisting in Chamber fund-raising activities to include the sale of tickets.
7. Commit yourself to bring into the Chamber a minimum of 2 new members per year.
8. Serve as Vice Chairperson on at least one committee of your choice, or as may be requested by the President. As Vice Chairperson, it will your responsibility to select a Chairperson for the committee. It will your responsibility to keep the Board informed of its progress and goals.
9. Perform such duties as may be requested from time to time by the President and/or Board of Directors.

Become familiar with the Chamber of Commerce policies, procedures and positions so that you can become an informed representative of the Chamber Board and support the organization, its programs and policies and to do all that you can to develop and maintain high standards set by previous Board of Directors.

Please review these items and let us know of your agreement to serve by signing below and returning this to the Chamber office,

2026 - 2027 Board of Directors

Signed: _____

Date: _____

charharris9611@gmail.com

From: Val Kean <Val.Kean@municipalityofshelburne.ca>
Sent: September 18, 2025 3:45 PM
To: Charlene Harris; Warren MacLeod
Subject: RE: Chamber Funding

Hi Char,

We have not yet established or signed an agreement for 2025 funding.

It was my understanding, after your last meeting from Warren, that the Chamber is working on providing information regarding amalgamation with Barrington status, funding partners from other Eastern Shelburne County units and accreditation status – I will then use this information in a staff report to Council for discussion on 2025 funding.

Thanks
Val

From: Charlene Harris <[REDACTED]>
Sent: September 18, 2025 1:18 PM
To: Val Kean <Val.Kean@municipalityofshelburne.ca>; Warren MacLeod <Warren.MacLeod@municipalityofshelburne.ca>
Subject: Chamber Funding

CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender.

Good dayI was going through my emails to find the agreement for the Chamber 2025.....but could not find it could you please send a copy to me.

Thank you
Charlene
Past President

Charlene Harris

From: Val Kean <Val.Kean@municipalityofshelburne.ca>
Sent: March 25, 2025 8:57 AM
To: Charlene Harris
Cc: Warren MacLeod
Subject: Chamber Support

Hi Charlene,

I wanted to keep you updated on the Municipality's support to the Chamber. I have included our \$15,000 contribution in the Municipality's draft budget however based on direction from Council, like previous years, we do have some criteria that we would like to assurance on:

1. Unification of the Shelburne and Area Chamber with the Barrington Chamber – we feel that this is the most sustainable path forward for our Chamber and are supportive of this amalgamation.
2. Support from other Municipal Units – Given that Municipal business represents only a small percentage of your membership, we would like to have confirmation that other units are supporting the work of the Chamber.

We have a meeting with SACC tomorrow morning, let's discuss then.

Thanks
Val

**Shelburne and Area Chamber of Commerce
Balance Sheet As at Feb 28, 2026**

ASSET

Current assets

CIBC Bank Account	6,599.62	
Accounts Receivable	910.00	
Total Current Assets		<u>7,509.62</u>

Total Assets		<u><u>7,509.62</u></u>
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TOTAL ASSET		<u><u>7,509.62</u></u>
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LIABILITY

Current Liabilities

Deferred Revenue		150.00
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Total Liabilities		<u>150.00</u>
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TOTAL LIABILITY		<u>150.00</u>
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EQUITY

Retained Earnings

Current Earnings	404.34	
Surplus	6,955.28	

Total Retained Earnings		<u>7,359.62</u>
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TOTAL EQUITY		<u>7,359.62</u>
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LIABILITIES AND EQUITY		<u><u>7,509.62</u></u>
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Shelburne and Area Chamber of Commerce

Income Statement May 01, 2025 to Feb 28, 2026

REVENUE

Revenue		
Walking Tour Brochure	3,500.00	
Community Events	500.00	
Membership Dues	11,790.00	
Group Insurance	3,391.92	
REGULAR CHAMBER FUNDS RECEIVED		<u>19,181.92</u>
Total Income		<u>19,181.92</u>
TOTAL REVENUE		<u>19,181.92</u>

EXPENSE

Expenses		
HST paid on expenses	118.74	
Project Expenses	670.00	
Bad debt	290.00	
Administration & bookkeeping fees	1,346.25	
Meeting Expenses	340.64	
Christmas Events	89.99	
Insurance	660.00	
Memberships	34.78	
Website	464.98	
Computer Services	218.48	
Office Expense	474.81	
Wages and Salaries	13,000.02	
El Expense	298.14	
CPP Expense	669.36	
WCB expense	101.39	
TOTAL EXPENSES		<u>18,777.58</u>
Total Expenses		<u>18,777.58</u>
TOTAL EXPENSE		<u>18,777.58</u>
NET INCOME		<u><u>404.34</u></u>