



WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY REPORT

Information ☐	Recommendation X	Decision Request ☐	Councillor Activity ☐
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To: Committee of the Whole

Submitted by: _____
Kari Fougere, Acting Director of Planning & Development

Date: 2026-01-13

Subject: Appointment of Development Officers

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Nova Scotia Municipal Government Act, Section 243, Development Officer

DECISION REQUEST

It is recommended for Committee of the Whole recommend that:

...that Committee of the Whole recommends that Council appoint William Overholt and Derek Robertson as Development Officers effective January 28th, 2026 in accordance with Section 243 of the Municipal Government Act.

BACKGROUND

Property X	Public Opinion ☐	Environment ☐	Social ☐	Economic ☐	Councillor Activity ☐
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In September 2025, Council designated William Overholt as the Alternate Development Officer and since the departure of the fully appointed Development Officer in November 2025 he has been acting as the sole Development Officer appointed to administer the Land Use By-law's and Subdivision By-law's of the Municipality. Since taking over, William Overholt has maintained regular levels of service and has begun training the new Development Control Technician,

Melanie Kennedy. To fill the recent vacancy, the department has hired Derek Robertson as Manager of Development Control Services who will begin employment on January 21st, 2026.

In anticipation of the new Manager of Development Control Services starting in mid-January, both William Overholt and Derek Robertson should be appointed as Development Officers. At the September 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting, it was stated that that a request to fully appoint William Overholt as Development Officer would be submitted to Committee of the Whole at later date.

DISCUSSION

Development Officers administer the Land Use By-law's and Subdivision By-law's of the Municipality which includes responding to general property inquiries, writing zoning confirmation letters, issuing development permits for as-of-right development, and approving plans of subdivision. The authority to administer these by-laws is delegated by Council to ensure efficient, expert, consistent, and legally sound decision-making. It is reasonable to appoint all staff with training, education and experience to maintain a high level of service and to be prepared for any unexpected extended leave and vacations.

William Overholt was hired in April 2025 and had been training with the previous Development Officers up until November 2025 where he became the sole Development Officer, in an acting capacity. William is a qualified planner/development officer with over 2 years of experience in a municipal role. William also holds a Master of Environmental Studies, Planning and is currently working towards his designation with the Municipal Development Officers Association of Nova Scotia and as a License Planner with the Licensed Professional Planners of Nova Scotia. William is highly competent in his work and has shown a high degree of professionalism in his role with West Hants Regional Municipality.

Derek Robertson was recently hired as the Manager of Development Control Services to replace the recent vacancy. The manager position was created to strengthen leadership, consistency, and capacity within the development services unit following the departure of the previous Development Officer. The role provides experienced oversight of land use by-law administration, supports mentoring and training of junior staff, and ensures complex, or high-

impact development applications are managed effectively. In addition, the manager will serve as a key liaison with major developers and other stakeholders, helping to improve communication, coordination, and the overall quality and timeliness of development decisions. Derek Robertson comes to the municipality with a Bachelors of Community Design from Dalhousie University, and several years of experience in a leadership role in both the private and public sector. He has acted as a Development Officer in both of those capacities for municipalities in Nova Scotia.

Formal appointments of Derek Roberson and William Overholt as Development Officers are necessary to support the effective administration of the applicable by-laws and the duties assigned to their positions.

NEXT STEPS

Appointment by Council.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications related to the appointment as the salary is established within the budget.

ALTERNATIVES

COTW could recommend that Council not appoint Derek Robertson and William Overholt as Development Officers, resulting in an inability to administer and enforce the Land Use By-law's and Subdivision By-law's of the Region in a timely manner in the absence of a fully appointed Development Officer.

ATTACHMENTS

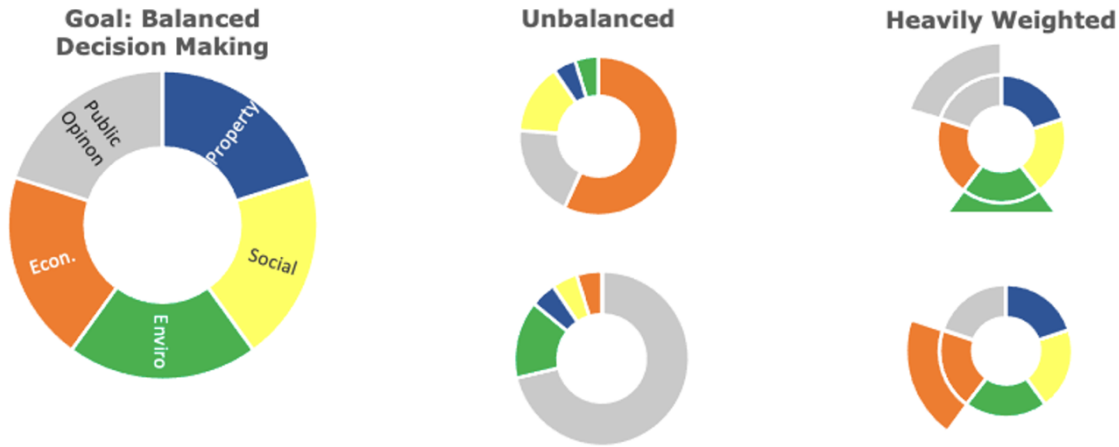
N/A

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REVIEW

The municipality has been fortunate to attract experienced and skilled employees such as William and Derek. Maintaining the development officer compliment as outlined in the report is required to service the current flow of enquiries, oversight and development applications.

I support the recommendation.

Council has been provided with a reference taken from the Meeting and Committee Procedural Policy , Appendix C “Decision Making by Council and Committee of the Whole” as a reminder of the principles highlighted for good decision making.



(For use if report is from a Councillor. CAO to provide additional comments on background, department/staff responsible and workload, budget, options, preferred strategy. State “Not Applicable” if report is from staff which already incorporates CAO review.)

Report Prepared by: _____

Kari Fougere, Acting Director of Planning and Development

Report Reviewed by: _____

William Overholt, Development Officer

Review Approved by:  _____

Mark Phillips, CAO