

**Region of Queens Municipality Regular Council  
Tuesday, February 28, 2023 6:00 p.m.**

**Minutes**

Present: Mayor Darlene Norman, Chair  
Deputy Mayor Jack Fancy  
Councillor David Brown  
Councillor Maddie Charlton  
Councillor Ralph Gidney  
Councillor Vicki Amirault  
Councillor Kevin Muise  
Councillor Carl Hawkes  
Chris McNeill, CAO  
Eric Levy, Municipal Clerk  
Christine Watson, Admin. Assistant – Planning & Development

**1.0 Call to Order**

Mayor Norman called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**2.0 Changes / Approval of Agenda**

**Councillor Amirault requested Item 8.6 Policy 23 – Request an Area Rate to be discussed prior to Item 8.2.**

**Councillor Charlton requested Item 8.8 Budget Meeting be added.**

**It was moved by Councillor Charlton and seconded by Councillor Hawkes that the Agenda be approved as amended.**

**MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

**3.0 Presentation**

There were no presentations to come before this meeting.

**4.0 Tabling of Petitions**

There were no petitions to come before this meeting.

## 5.0 Public Question / Comment Session

Robert Dexter, 79 Richardson Street, Brooklyn – Mr. Dexter stated he wished to discuss the proposed pool. He provided his background stating he was a member of Council before amalgamation. His daughter was involved in the Dambusters swim team. He was also involved with the QCCRS committee.

He further stated he is a regular user of pool at the LCLC and the Milton pool. He is in favour of a 6 lane pool or a 5 lane minimum. He commented that following his attendance at the January 24<sup>th</sup> Council meeting he felt Council was leaning toward an indoor pool, but after reading the agenda for the February 14<sup>th</sup> Council meeting, it indicated there would be an outdoor pool, but the recommendations did not indicate either way and wanted to know if the plans were for an indoor or outdoor pool.

He further enquired who the members of the Pool Committee are; do they include external members? He feels that the interest of the public was not consulted prior to moving forward with the project.

He suggested holding public meetings to engage residents on what they wish to have and how it is paid for. He would like to see preliminary costing on construction and operations and suggested using existing facilities within the province as a gauge.

He suggested the installation of a water slide and diving board which would be better revenue generator. He commented that he hoped the 0 entry proposal was not beach front style and suggested looking into the kiddy ramp used at the LCLC.

He questioned solar heat and enquired what happened to using heat from when ice is being made to heat the pool.

He further questioned where the money was coming from for operating costs and suggested investing in an offsite solar/wind farm, which would help to reduce operating costs.

He stated he is not interested in an outdoor pool.

Robin Anthony, 532 Brooklyn Shore Road, Brooklyn – Mrs. Anthony offered comments on the Brooklyn area rate stating following amalgamation when responsibilities of the Brooklyn Village Commission shifted to the Region. For the past 26 years, area rates set at amalgamation, 4.5 cents per \$100 of assessment for Brooklyn Recreation and 1.5 cents per \$100 of assessment for Brooklyn Cemetery which has been submitted to and approved by Council and Brooklyn rate payer meetings were no long held.

In the spring of 2022, the board of the Brooklyn Recreation Committee resigned, and no meeting had been held for some time prior. Volunteers took over, and an application for an area rate was submitted to the Region.

She further stated rate payers should approve area rates and hold meetings and not be to Council referred directly. This was recently done in Beach Meadows, why not for Brooklyn?

Many residents have modest incomes, some are on a fixed incomes, and should have a right to choose. She urged Council to consider holding meeting sessions and allowing residents to vote.

Terry Feener, 212 Beech Hill Road, Hunts Point – Mr. Feener enquired about a study being prepared for water and sewer extension for the proposed developments in Mount Pleasant, and why this is just being done now and not already done and feels that there should already be plans in place for the county.

He further enquired about the proposed library design and the cost. In addition, he enquired if there have been surveys done to see how many people visit the library, and if not, is there a way to find out?

Robert Dexter, 79 Richardson Street, Brooklyn – Mr. Dexter stated he is Chair of the Brooklyn Cemetery Committee and was previously on the Village Commission.

The Recreation Committee was a committee of the Village Commission, not a separate entity. The Brooklyn Cemetery committee was a separate entity that came to the Village Commission asking for money to help maintain the cemetery.

The Brooklyn Cemetery advertises for meetings two weeks in advance of them being held with newspaper ads and posters. The meetings are held annually for the rate payers to decide what they want. It is up to the residents of Brooklyn to decide if they want an area rate and at what rate for the cemetery.

Prior to the new Brooklyn Recreation Committee, Region staff told them they did not have to hold annual meetings.

He further stated he disagrees with a lot of what is in Policy 23. He stated the Committee has been established for 26 years. He disagrees with the wording around accountability and the dates that information is required by.

Noel Smale, 97 Brooklyn Shore Road – Mr. Smale stated he does not believe they should be held to what the previous Board has done and that they do wish to have accountability on how the money is being spent.

The Community Hall is very busy with lots of bookings. If the community loses the hall they will never get it back.

He stated they are an established group and have been since 1995 and have had the area rate since then and does not believe they need to go through the process of applying.

## **6.0 Approval of Minutes**

### **6.1 Regular Council – February 14, 2023**

**It was moved by Councillor Brown and seconded by Councillor Muise:**

**THAT the minutes of the Regular Council meeting held February 14, 2023 be approved as circulated.**

**MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**



## 7.0 Recommendations

- 7.1 Bylaw No. 4 – A Bylaw Respecting Emergency Management, first reading

**It was moved by Councillor Hawkes and seconded by Councillor Brown:**

**THAT Council of Region of Queens Municipality give first reading to Bylaw No. 4 – A Bylaw Respecting Emergency Management.**

Eric Levy, Municipal Clerk and Diversity Coordinator, stated Bylaw No. 4 was adopted in 2006 and was reviewed as part of the ongoing policy and bylaw review.

He noted the major changes included:

- Removal of definitions that are redundant and not necessary in the new document.
- Emergency Management Advisory Committee
- Emergency Management Planning Committee
- Duties of Council

**MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

- 7.2 Public Committee Appointments

**It was moved by Councillor Muise and seconded by Councillor Brown:**

**THAT Council of Region of Queens Municipality approve the following public member committee appointments:**

**Planning Advisory Committee:**

**Deanna Armstrong, District 7, for a term expiring October 31, 2024**

**Heritage Advisory Committee:**

**Michael Vandale, for a term expiring October 31, 2024**

**Norma Lenco, for a term expiring October 31, 2024**

**John Druzina, for a term expiring October, 2024**

**Tara Druzina, for a term expiring October, 2024**

**MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

7.3 Development Agreement – Beach Meadows Beach Road, Beach Meadows

**It was moved by Councillor Amirault and seconded by Councillor Charlton:**

**THAT Council of Region of Queens Municipality give notice of its intention to enter into a development agreement with Albert and Paula Doucet to allow for a three (3) unit fixed-roof overnight accommodation on property identified as PID #70260948;**

**AND THAT a public hearing be scheduled for Tuesday, March 28, 2023 in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building, 249 White Point Road in Liverpool, NS, at 6:00 pm.**

Mike MacLeod, Director of Planning & Development, stated an application was received to rezone property off Beach Meadows Road in Beach Meadows from Hamlet Residential (HR) zone to Hamlet Core (HC) zone. The applicant wishes to construct a triplex dwelling to use as either short term or long term rentals.

A triplex dwelling is a use permitted in the HR zone if used as a long term rental. Short term rentals are permitted with only one unit on a lot. The proposed use is for three units is not permitted under current regulations.

One option for consideration to meet the needs of the applicant is to amend the LUB to change the zoning of the property from Hamlet Residential (HR) to Hamlet Core (HC). Section 5.48 Rezoning in the MPS sets out boundaries of zones for consideration. Through Policy 6-21, Council can amend the LUB if all criteria have been met.

Changing the zoning for a parcel of land from Hamlet Residential to Hamlet Core, would open up the parcel of land for any other use permitted, so it's not just short term rentals permitted, and may be less compatible with the surrounding residential area.

Another option Council could consider to permit this use is through a development agreement. The MPS contains a policy for Council to consider specific uses.

The lot area is 1.64 acres is in a mix of residential, parkland, and open space. The proposal for a new build would not impact the existing housing supply. There are no Municipal sewer or water services in this area; they would utilize a private on-site system.

The property abuts Beach Meadows Beach Road which is a provincially owned and maintained public road with access approved by Department of Public Works. While the property does not abut the coast, it is located within the vertical elevation buffer area, and is subject to minimum elevation standards. The setbacks from the identified wetland and watercourse exceed minimum development setbacks.

Potential options for consideration are:

1. Maintain status quo (deny request);
2. Amend the LUB to rezone property from Hamlet Residential (HR) to Hamlet Core (HC); or
3. Enter into a development agreement with the owners to allow for a three unit fixed-roof overnight accommodation.

Staff have reviewed the application and are of the opinion that the proposal is consistent with policy and the planning strategy and would best be addressed through a development agreement to reduce potential impacts on surrounding areas.

The Planning Advisory Committee met and reviewed the application on February 15, 2023. They are in favour of entering into a development agreement for this use.

**MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

#### 7.4 Policy 77 – Tangible Capital Assets

**It was moved by Councillor Brown and seconded by Councillor Hawkes:**

**THAT the Council of Region of Queens Municipality adopt revised Policy 77 – Tangible Capital Assets be adopted as presented and recommended by the Audit and Internal Control Committee.**



Joanne Veinotte, Director of Corporate Services, stated she requested the Audit and Internal Control Committee prioritize review of Policy 77 where it involves over \$10 Million in assets.

The most significant change is the increase to the capitalization limit from \$25,000 to \$50,000 which is more in keeping with the financial conditions in the terms of what things cost. Minor changes were made to wording and references to professional organizations.

The AICC requested the Director of Engineering and Public Works review the useful life parameters being used. Changes were suggested, however, per Public Service Accounting Standard the criteria must be met in order to revise the useful life, and these criteria have not been met.

The purchased vehicles already will be amortized at 10 years from the date they were purchased but the new vehicles will be amortized at 5 years.

In terms of operational expenses, the increase is the short term assets before that cost \$25,000-\$50,000 would have been capitalized and expensed; now, they are going to be expensed in one year rather than amortized over their useful life.

**MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

7.5 Policy 42 – Economic Development and Tourism Loans

**It was moved by Councillor Brown and seconded by Councillor Charlton:**

**THAT the Council of Region of Queens Municipality repeal Policy 42 – Economic Development and Tourism Loans as recommended by the Audit and Internal Control Committee.**

Ms. Veinotte stated this policy was from 2004. She spoke with Richard Lane, Director of Economic Development for confirmation that this policy is no longer relevant as these items are no longer available for loan.

**MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**



7.6 Insurance and Risk Management Services RFP

**It was moved by Councillor Charlton and seconded by Councillor Brown:**

**THAT Council of Region of Queens Municipality contract the Municipality's full Insurance and Risk Management Services with AON Reed Stenhouse Inc. for the fiscal year from April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024 with an option to renew for each of four subsequent years.**

Ms. Veinotte stated our current policies have multiple providers and multiple renewal dates. The RFP was written so that each section of coverage required could be bid on separately or as a group.

Three submissions were received and scored. One submission bid on all of our insurance lines, and is our current insurance carrier. One bid on just our fire departments and one for just the Region of Queens.

By combining all the policies together, which include the Region of Queens (all municipally owned), ground search and rescue, and the first responders, and the fire departments all under one policy, there is a savings of \$60,000 in liability insurance.

She further stated currently we have a separate policy with BFL that covers our fire policy. We pay liability insurance for all fire departments so if we combine them, this will be covered under the existing policy. If we continue with the fire services through BFL, their insurance premiums will increase to \$83,387 versus the proposed provider for \$82,600.

The deductible is significantly more for the fire departments with the AON proposal than with the BFL proposal. The BFL proposal had a deductible of \$5,000 and AON of \$25,000 per incident. In reviewing the claims history there have been very few. The fire chiefs had inquired about replacement value. The BFL policy provides replacement value of the trucks. AON policy provides replacement value for twenty five years on trucks that are new and pay actual cash value for used trucks. This only happens if the truck is destroyed completely. There is also a provision provided that if there is a disagreement on the replacement value there is an arbitration system.

Councillor Amirault enquired if the fire chiefs were informed of the proposed changes. Mrs. Veinotte stated no they have not due to the

timing of the policies expiring March 31<sup>st</sup> and with the preparation of the budget, which was prepared to include the \$60,000 in savings.

Councillor Muise stated the fire departments should be informed of the proposed changes before Council votes on this motion.

Mayor Norman stated she feels the fire chiefs will accept the proposed changes.

Councillor Charlton suggested holding a special meeting with the fire chiefs to review this with them and agreed with Councillors Muise and Gidney. Councillor Brown agreed.

**It was moved by Councillor Charlton and seconded by Councillor Brown:**

**THAT the recommendation be withdrawn.**

**MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

## **8.0 Discussions**

### **8.1 Road Naming Serenity Now Lane**

Mike MacLeod, Director of Planning and Development, stated a request for the naming of a private road has been submitted which would name a new off Shore Road in Western Head as Serenity Now Lane.

This name is acceptable to the Planning Department as this named road currently does not exist in Queens County.

**It was moved by Councillor Charlton and seconded by Councillor Brown:**

**THAT this issue be referred to the next Council meeting for a recommendation.**

**MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

## 8.2 Policy 23 – Request for Area Rate – Councillor Vicki Amirault

Councillor Amirault stated in discussions with the Brooklyn Cemetery and Brooklyn Recreation committees there are issues with the policy. The date of January 15<sup>th</sup> to have statements completed and information for the application does not give them enough time, and suggested maybe changing to the middle or end of February.

She further stated the need for clarification on 'notice to reader level', which is not listed in the definitions. She discussed with a Chartered Professional Accountant, and was informed that notice to reader is no longer used and is now called compilation engagement report. It is costly to have a chartered accountant prepare the income statements and do the reconciliations, so he suggested have a financial statement which includes a statement of receipts and disbursements.

Mayor Norman stated there needs to be a policy as Council is responsible to all of our taxpayers to justify why we are setting a tax rate and what it is needed for. It is important that when groups apply for an area rate that the finance department of the Region has a full understanding of the financial status of an organization.

She suggested if Councillor Amirault needed clarification on the policy to speak to the Municipal Clerk or Director of Corporate Services.

Mrs. Veinotte stated the policy requests the most recent financial statements be independently reviewed to a notice of reader level. She explained the terminology, notice to reader, as a third party with no vested interest within the organization to review the statements. A copy of the budget is to be included, most recent bank statement, incorporation documentation, written statement for request, etc.

She further explained "the most recent financial statements" to be submitted with the application would be those ending December 31, 2021, not 2022 if they were not completed.

She suggested meeting with organizations to explain the policy who apply for an area rate.



Councillor Gidney enquired if a chartered accountant is required to review their documents. Mrs. Veinotte stated yes. Councillor Gidney voiced his concerns over the cost of having this done, which may be a burden to these organizations.

Chris McNeill, CAO, stated this came about from past experience for area rates when the information provided was lacking, so it was suggested asking for a notice of reader, so that someone independent from the organization reviews the financial statements. That is what we are asking for. The idea of statement of receipts and disbursements seems like an income statement with no balance sheet. It is not up to staff or Council to audit someone's financial situation.

He further stated if the date for submission is delayed until the end of February, the meetings and decisions would not be done in time for budget deliberations.

Mayor Norman asked for consensus to have the Municipal Clerk review the policy, with input from Councillors, and be brought back for further discussion at a future meeting. Council gave consensus.

### 8.3 Area Rate Requests – Brooklyn Cemetery Association and Brooklyn Recreation Association

Ms. Veinotte stated two applications were received for an area rate; one from the Brooklyn Cemetery Association for 1.5 cents and one from the Brooklyn Recreation Association for 4 cents. Their request was not in cents but a financial request for \$32,000. The financial reports that were submitted as part of the application were not prepared at the Notice to Reader level as prescribed by the policy by either organization.

Council can consider if they want to hold an area rate meeting public consultation or refer it directly to budget deliberations.

Councillor Amirault thanked the Brooklyn Cemetery Association and Brooklyn Recreation Association for their detailed financial statements. There was low attendance at their meetings; 15 – 20 in attendance. There are approximately 883 properties involved with

this area rate request. She asked to have an area rate meeting with both Brooklyn Recreation and Brooklyn Cemetery in attendance as well as the public and Council, as there hasn't been an area rate meeting in twenty five years. There are new residents to the area and they should be included to make a decision on how their money is spent. There needs to be a meeting and a vote. Councillors agreed.

Mayor Norman stated there are costs for advertising associated with to holding public session and voting. She noted that Council is not bound by the vote.

Councillor Amirault requested that the voting be held on a separate day. Mr. McNeill stated staff will reach out to the organizations to pick a date to hold the public meeting and will then advertise as we usually do. A facility will be booked to hold a day long vote.

Mayor Norman announced a 5 minute break at 8:06 p.m.

#### 8.4 Library Discussion

Councillor Muise stated he looked at the expense of the installation of new road for the library and does not believe the taxpayers should be paying for it.

He further stated he sees no benefit in having a separate building for the library and should be attached to QPEC.

Deputy Mayor Fancy stated the proposed library site is in a convenient spot. Since going forward with the construction of a pool, which was not part of the discussion, he enquired if it should be there or if it would be more cost effective having it combined.

Mayor Norman stated the discussion is not on the location of the library as there is already a motion on the floor. If Council wishes to have a discussion on the stand alone library and the location, the motion needs to be rescinded.

Councillor Charlton stated at the last meeting there was a discussion on the water, sewer and sidewalks. Mayor Norman stated this can be discussed but not the location as it has already been determined.

Mr. McNeill stated eight sites were looked at for the location with the Steering Committee's criteria. Having the library built at Queens Place was an option.

He further stated a past Council had set out that any money from a sale at the Queens Place site would be put into a reserve for future infrastructure on properties there. There have been several discussions on selling the lot next to Best Western to the Queens Care Building Society with the expectation that they want sewer and water extended, and a roadway. There would be no impact to the taxpayers because we would sell it to them at fair market value and part of that money would then be used to extend the infrastructure. The Society is working on their plans and is waiting on us to tell them our plans. The idea that it's going to cost an additional \$1 Million for the library is not a fair suggestion. Our Engineering department have come up with a preliminary budgetary number of the costs associated and will be discussed at the upcoming budget meeting; i.e. \$950,000 to extend the road to the end. The extra costs to hook the library into the lateral based on preliminary figures would be minimal. If Council chooses not to extend, the library would need to install an onsite septic and well, and incorporate that into the budget that has already been established.

Councillor Muise stated he does not remember there ever being any discussion on using the sale of the lands for infrastructure.

Councillor Charlton stated with the new information being brought forward she feels that it a valid reason to have these conversations.

Adam Grant, Director of Engineering & Public Works, stated as a member on the Queens Care Building Society, he has not met with them since June they provided preliminary layouts, showing going from the cul de sac to their facility with no intention to require any street or service extension in January.



Councillor Charlton gave notice to rescind the motion on the library site. Councillor Gidney supported the notice.

#### 8.5 Sidewalks – Councillor Maddie Charlton

Councillor Charlton distributed copies of a site plan to Councillors.

She stated a resident contacted her regarding the new apartment buildings being constructed on Cobbs Ridge. In addition to what is presently there, with the addition of two buildings, there will be 48 units in total. The residents are supportive of the developments but because of these developments traffic has increased. The sidewalk ends on Crowell Street and does not have a sidewalk until College Street. She is seeking input from other Councillors and perhaps looking at allocating money in the budget for sidewalks.

Mr. McNeill stated the Region presently has a sidewalk reserve of approximately \$50,000 and will come forth at the budget meeting this week.

Councillor Gidney enquired if sidewalks could be built in sections. Mr. Grant stated if looking at roads in Cobbs Ridge, you would have to identify and do it all at once otherwise doing in phases would accomplish nothing.

Councillor Muise enquired to cost. Mr. Grant stated the formulations takes into many factors, i.e. storm water in the street. Both Barss Street and College will be assessed in the coming years and before investing in sidewalks you would need to assess what's underneath the streets and suggested the cost would be substantial.

Mayor Norman stated this could be part of the discussions for our 5-year capital plan.

#### 8.6 Live Streaming – Councillor Maddie Charlton

Councillor Charlton stated we've had many challenges recording our meetings. Challenges for viewers and Councillors as well as staff who spends time after council meetings downloading and getting it ready for the public, which results in the public having to wait a few days to see it. At our last meeting we had to stop recording a few times and has not been the first time.

She further stated once the audio improvements are completed that our meetings could be livestreamed. It would allow residents at home to watch Council meetings in real time and create equal opportunity for everyone. Not everyone has the opportunity to attend where day or evening meetings. When investigating other municipalities there were very few that did not do livestreaming. Almost all of our neighbouring municipalities do. Several utilize different streaming i.e. Facebook and You Tube.

Councillor Brown stated he feels it should be taken to the Communications Committee for discussions to come up with some ideas before moving forward.

Mayor Norman enquired if this issue has been brought before the Communications Committee, as this is something that they should be involved in. The Committee was established to review all our communications and this is an important part of it. Councillor Charlton stated no and that she realizes it will take time so start with the basics. Deputy Mayor Fancy agreed that we do not need to make it something bigger than what it is.

Mayor Norman enquired if this issue should go to the Communications Committee for further discussion. The majority of Council agreed.

#### 8.7 Town Hall Arts and Cultural Center HVAC Study

Adam Grant, Director of Engineering and Public Works, stated he has been aware of the heating issues at the Astor Theater for quite some time and was made aware that Council is looking at a cooling unit system to be installed.

He further stated discussions were held with DUMAC Energy Limited with the intention of reducing heating costs and to undertake an assessment study of the facility.

Councillor Gidney stated this is a good first move and the fee is reasonable. Mr. Grant stated the fee is for preliminary work, to identify the existing conditions before moving forward with a more in-depth design.

Councillor Charlton stated in discussions with the Astor Theatre Society they have been working with an engineer to apply for a grant. She enquired if he had discussions with them. He stated yes, with Lynn Cochrane, and she confirmed they were in discussions to secure technical information for the grant and are potentially looking at the energy audit that would need to be undertaken as part of the grant process. Some of the work may overlap to a minor degree.

Councillor Charlton further enquired if DUMAC has experience in dealing with arts and cultural buildings especially with the aspect of the acoustics. Mr. Grant stated yes and have a good track record.

Councillor Charlton stated she understood the Society was undertaking a study as part of the grant process. She enquired if they could be consulted in this, as they have concerns about the acoustics. Mr. Grant stated any design DUMAC comes up with would be consistent within the arts.

**It was moved by Councillor Gidney and seconded by Councillor Charlton:**

**THAT this issue be referred to the next Council meeting for a recommendation.**

**MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

#### 8.8 Budget Meetings – Councillor Charlton

Councillor Charlton asked that the budget meetings be recorded as they are meetings of Council. Residents should have the opportunity to watch them. Councillors agreed.



## **9.0 In-Camera Items**

**It was moved by Councillor Gidney and seconded by Councillor Amirault that the proceedings go In-Camera at 9:08 p.m. to discuss the following:**

- 9.1 Contract Negotiations**
- 9.2 Lease of Municipal Property**
- 9.3 Personnel**

**MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

Mayor Norman announced a 5 minute break at 9:08 p.m.

**It was moved by Councillor Gidney and seconded by Councillor Hawkes that the proceedings exit In-Camera at 10:10 p.m.**

**MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

- 9.2 Lease of Municipal Property

**It was moved by Councillor Muise and seconded by Councillor Amirault:**

**THAT Council of Region of Queens Municipality enter into the proposed lease agreement with Nova Scotia Drag Racers Association for their continued use of South Shore Regional Airport.**

Mayor Norman stated negotiations with the NSDRA was successful and a mutual agreement was reached.

**MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

## 10.0 Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.



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Mayor Darlene Norman, Chair



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Eric Levy, Municipal Clerk



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Christine Watson, Administrative Assistant – Planning & Development

Date Approved: March 14, 2023