

**Municipality of the County of Inverness
Committee of the Whole Meeting
Thursday, November 24th, 2022
9:30 am
Council Chambers**

MINUTES

Council: Warden Bonny MacIsaac
 Deputy Warden Catherine Gillis
 Councillor John MacLennan
 Councillor Claude Poirier
 Councillor Blair Phillips
 Councillor Lynn Chisholm

Staff: Keith MacDonald, CAO
 Tanya Tibbo, Director of Finance
 Chestley Carr, Director of Public Works
 Debbie Nicholson, Administrative Assistant to Council/ CAO
 Erin Gillis, Manager of Operations
 Maura Beaton, Special Projects Facilitator

1. CALL TO ORDER

Warden MacIsaac called the meeting to order at 9:30 am and welcomed all in attendance. Roll call was taken. Warden MacIsaac acknowledged that the land on which we gather is located in the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: *That the agenda be approved as presented.*

MOVED BY: Councillor Poirier

SECONDED BY: Councillor Chisholm

MOTION CARRIED

3. STAFF REPORTS

(a) Chestley Carr, Director of Public Works

Municipal water & sewer installations have been completed for the 2022 season. A number of water shut off repairs were completed in Inverness, Port Hood and Whycocomagh. Public Works staff assisted Zutphen's on the Route 19 project flushing the new sewer main on Highway 19 in Strathlorne. Winter preparation is well underway with the installation of winter tires on the fleet,

preparing plows, stockpiling salt and prepping additional equipment. Building maintenance at the Strathlorne Municipal Building, the Port Hood Food Bank and the Recreation Building is underway. Municipal road maintenance has taken place at water reservoir roads in Judique and Mabou. Site assessment was completed in Margaree to determine locations for speed signs. A site visit is scheduled with the Nova Scotia Department of Public Works to finalize the process. Street light repairs continue to be on going in each community. New bulbs have been ordered by Hilltop electric and will be installed upon arrival. Some lights in Mabou had to be rebuilt and those parts are also on order. Extra attention will be given over the holiday season to ensure the lights are working.

Municipal fire hydrants have been winterized and a second check was also completed to ensure the hydrants remain dry and ice free over the winter months. Several lift station repairs have been completed in Port Hood below the Municipal building; 2 new rotating assemblies have been purchased for that lift station. Damage from debris entering the system required the purchase of new assemblies as they were in disrepair. A new exhaust fan was installed in the Whycomomagh Water Treatment Plant. Two new control valves are scheduled to be installed at the Judique Water Treatment Plant; the old valves can no longer be repaired given their age. New filter valves have arrived for the Inverness Water Treatment Plant, some plumbing will be completed by staff in preparation for the installation and programming.

Sampling based on the Approvals to Operate has been completed. Lead sampling was also conducted at homes and businesses throughout the Municipality. Guidelines for reducing or correcting the issue will be issued where required. No lead was detected in the Municipal distribution systems. On December 14th, five municipal staff members are writing exams in water and wastewater.

Multiple projects are underway including Cheticamp Lift Station Control Panels, Inverness Water Treatment Plant Filter Valve Replacement, Judique Water Treatment Plant Valve Replacements, Strathlorne land clearing, Port Hood Storage Tower Fencing, and tree removal near Municipal facilities.

(b) Erin Gillis, Operations and Occupational Health and Safety

Changes to Construction and Demolition regulations will come into effect in June 2023 with a graduated enforcement plan beginning with education and ending with a complete removal of treated timbers from the landfill. Site tours to share best practices and network within provincial waste haulers and receiving sites are ongoing. Battery boxes will be made available for residents wanting to properly dispose of batteries.

Repairs to ground water monitoring wells is complete at the Kenloch Waste Management facility. This will ensure the Municipality will remain compliant with water testing requirements. The initial ground work review for the construction of a storage building has begun. This initiative is a partnership with Special Projects engineering support.

The Strathlorne Recycling facility is fully operational once more. Staff continue to sort through the large volume of backlogged materials. The Municipal By-law officer will attend a Provincial enforcement meeting scheduled for Halifax later this month. Staff are working with schools in Whycomomagh and Mabou to develop a hot bin composter. This type of composter will work year-round. The project was launched at the NDA school in Cheticamp last year with success. Multiple

storage, repair and education initiatives are ongoing throughout the Municipality. Monthly and /or weekly meetings continue with department staff and external partners.

(c) Tanya Tibbo, Department of Finance

Over the past month the finance department continued to process multiple payments for property tax and water invoices, as well as many other general receipts. Additional activities in finance include water meter installs, inspections and disconnections, accounts payable processes, land issues, 2022 Boundary Review preparations, the water rate study review and the completion of all provincial reporting requirements. 15 cash receipt batches were reconciled. Multiple Requests for Proposals are under evaluation or were recently awarded. The Tax Sale was held on November 15th. 30 properties were placed for sale with arrears totaling \$99,969.75. 10 properties were removed prior to the sale, reducing the outstanding arrears by \$43,746.65. The auction collected \$349,000.00, adding \$298,640.20 to the Tax Sale Surplus account. Many meetings both internal, and with external partners continue.

(d) Charlotte MacDonald, Recreation and Wellness and the Department of Tourism

The Virtual Instructor Pilot Project Midpoint evaluations have been distributed. Winter Active Application Packages have gone out. The Seniors Safety Survey has closed. The Municipal Accessibility Plan was recently adopted by Council. The Accessibility Coordinator started the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification Training (RHFAC). The fall programming continues with 85% of registrations being completed online. The Municipal Physical Activity Coordinator is coordinating a geocaching program, a basketball development program, winter hike promotion and readying the ski inventory for the upcoming rental season. Tourism and Culture related activities include the Winter Active Funding Application, Winter Program Guide, weekly radio reports, commercial ads and social media promotions. Multiple meetings were held regarding ongoing initiatives, training sessions and funding opportunities.

(e) Melanie Beaton, Special Projects

A large amount of work continues to be advanced by the Special Projects Team. The Sanitary Sewer and Water Main Replacement Project in Inverness/Strathlorne has seen the completion of all new linear water and sewer piping within the project scope. As of November 15th, a total of approximately 2700 m of new 250 mm ductile iron water main and 200 mm PVC sanitary main, along with approximately 100 m of 100 mm HDPE force main was successfully installed and tested. This includes 19 fire hydrants, 63 water services, 39 manholes, and 66 sanitary services. Many internal complex infrastructure projects continue. Staff have responded to multiple funding opportunities. Municipal facility upgrade projects continue to advance in Strathlorne and Port Hood. Recreation facility and community projects are ongoing in various communities throughout the Municipality. Meetings continue with consultants, stakeholders and external partners.

4. COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATIONS

North Mountain Cultural & Recreation Centre Association – Community Building Improvements

The request of Council is over 50% of the total project cost. Fifty percent (50%) of the total project cost is \$4,606.25.

Recommendation to Council to fund this fifty percent (50%) of the total project cost from District 6's CDC budget.

5. NOVA SCOTIA ROAD NAMING POLICY

Information was provided to Council from the Provincial Department of Public Works regarding the road naming procedure for provincial roads. There are 2 roads within District # 2 that have the same name. This potentially could present some confusion for emergency responders, as well as in the delivery of mail and other goods and services. This item will be on an upcoming Council agenda for further discussion.

6. MUNICIPAL TAX SALE UPDATE

The November 15, 2022 Municipal Tax Sale was the most successful tax sale to date. 17 properties, with arrears totaling \$50,359.80 were publicly auctioned, and all sold. 83 people registered to place bids at the sale. The auction collected \$349,000.00, adding \$298,640.20 to the Tax Sale Surplus account. The next tax sale is tentatively scheduled for January 2022. Due to high interest, future sales may be held at an off-site location to accommodate the large volume of attendees.

7. PROPERTY VALUATION SERVICES CORPORATION UPDATE – 2023 ASSESSMENT ROLE

The 2023 Property Assessment Role is currently being finalized by Property Valuation Services Corporation (PVSC). The Capped Assessment Program (CAP) places a 'cap' on the amount that the taxable assessment for eligible residential property can increase year over year. The CAP rate is based on the Nova Scotia Consumer Price Index (CPI) for that year. For the purposes of assessment, PVSC uses the CPI received from the Nova Scotia Department of Finance in November of each year. For 2023 the CAP rate is 7.7%. CAP eligibility requirements are set by the [Nova Scotia Assessment Act](#) and cannot be amended by PVSC. Eligible properties are:

- At least 50% owned by a Nova Scotia resident.
- Residential property with less than four dwelling units or vacant resource property. For the CAP, residential properties include manufactured homes, manufactured home parks, cooperative housing, and the residential or resource portions of a commercial farm.
- Occupied by the owner, if the property is a condominium.
- Owned for at least a year, or ownership remained within the family.

Assessment notices will be mailed to residents in January. Property owners will have a period of time during which they can appeal their assessment, with a deadline usually in mid February.

8. AAN 03427269 - RECOMMENDATION TO WRITE-OFF HOUSE VALUE DUE TO FIRE

On January 26th, 2022 a house fire destroyed the house located at 5696 Cabot Trail in Lake O'Law. Section 69A of the Municipal Government Act (MGA) allows Council to provide a reduction or reimbursement of taxes payable in cases of property destroyed or damaged by fire.

Recommendation to Council to write-off of the residential rate of taxes and interest for the value of the house which was destroyed due to a fire on January 26th, 2022.

9. CORRESPONDENCE

- **Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM)** Short Term Accommodation Tourist Requirements

Correspondence was received from the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities regarding the proclamation of regulations requiring all short-term rentals in the province to register by April 1, 2023.

10. NEXT MEETING DATE

December 1, 2022 – 3:00 pm – Regular Council

Recess: 10:18 am – 11:00 am

11. PRESENTATION: NOVA SCOTIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS; Dwayne Cross, Andrew MacPherson, Mark Brace, Keith Boddy (via Zoom)

Representatives from the Provincial Public Works Department updated Council on the redesign of the Port Hastings Rotary. The scope of the project is to improve safety for the travelling public. A proposed option is to close off access at the Trans Canada Highway at Field Street, and improve access at New Victoria Rd (near the church). There will be an overpass where drivers coming onto Cape Breton will go over Route 19. Drivers will have single choices to make; rather than choose from a number of choices. There are some proposed sidewalk locations (to be determined). Sketches of the proposed redesign were provided by the Provincial Public Works Department.

A public information session hosted by the Provincial Public Works Department will be held in Port Hastings on December 5, 2022 for further discussion on the proposed roundabout redesign.

12. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: *That Council adjourn at 11:55 am*
Moved BY: Councillor Poirier
MOTION CARRIED