

**Municipality of the County of Inverness
Special Meeting of Council
Thursday, January 26th, 2023
Council Chambers
9:30 am**

MINUTES

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

Staff: Keith MacDonald, CAO
 Tanya Tibbo, Director of Finance
 Debbie Nicholson, Administrative Assistant to Council/CAO
 Joe Carew, Communications and Community Engagement Coordinator

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

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. COMMUNITY GROUPS PRESENTATIONS

WEST MABOU BEACH COMMITTEE (*Nadine Hunt*)

Nadine Hunt, chair of the West Mabou Beach Committee provided a history of the West Mabou Beach Provincial Park; a 532 acre piece of triangle shaped coastline property that includes a two kilometer sandy beach on one side, a sand dune system, an estuary, and trail network. Ms. Hunt described the values of the park from an ecological, personal, health and economic perspective, as well as the potential threats from a golf development such as habitat loss, future water quality and pesticide usage.

PORT HOOD DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (*Judy Watts*)

Judy Watts outlined recent initiatives by the Port Hood Development Association including Christmas activities, and the summer series of concerts. The Port Hood Park on Main Street is widely used during many of these activities. A permanent stage with a roof is a future goal for the park. Additional ongoing projects of the association include enhancements to the South entrance of the village, beach access improvements, addressing beach erosion, MOBI mats, lifeguard room improvements, interpretive signage, and implementing bicycle and walking trails throughout the village.

CHESTICO MUSEUM (*Cathy Gillies and Susan Mallette*)

The Chestico Museum and Historical Society was established in 1978. The Society manages the operations at the Chestico Museum located in Harbourview. Throughout the summer months the Society remains busy hosting concerts, ceilidhs, historical speakers, historical walking tours, and step dancing workshops. Larger scale projects include signage and interpretive panels on the trails, in-house exhibits, digital exhibits, as well as various genealogical projects. The Society has been working on evaluating the possibility of a new building in the community that would house a heritage centre and an Inverness County Archives.

MARGAREE AREA DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (*Eileen Coady*)

The Margaree Area Development Association (MADA) was established in 1972 and since then remains committed to celebrating local heritage and developing the area's environmental, social, cultural, and economic resources. MADA manages the upkeep of the building and grounds of the Drs. Coady Tompkins Memorial Library and Margaree Meeting place (MMP). Space is made available at the Library location for the Inverness County Literacy Council, the Cape Breton Food Hub, and the Visitor Information Centre. Numerous projects continue under the direction of MADA including summer and fall concerts, walking trails, branding/signage projects, roadway improvements, and advocacy for improved internet and cell service.

LA SOCIÉTÉ SAINTE-PIERRE (*Lisette Bourgeois*)

Established in 1947, La Société Saint-Pierre works to preserve and promote the language and culture of the Acadian community of Chéticamp. The Société owns Les Trois Pignons which houses a museum, hooked rug gallery and genealogy centre. Services offered include WiFi and public computers, space rental to CKJM Radio, the Eastern District Planning Commission, and Service Canada, as well as community tourism marketing. Annual events include Festival de l'Escaouette, Roots to Boots Festival, Canada Day celebrations and National Acadian Day on August 15th.

STRAIT AREA TRANSIT (*summary read by Warden MacIsaac*)

Strait Area Transit (SAT) is a non-profit community based transit system which has served the Strait region since 2007. The fare for one way travel on SAT was recently increased to \$7.50, up from \$5.00. This was the first such fare increase since the inception of SAT, due to fuel increases, operational supplies and vehicle maintenance. Finding qualified drivers remains an ongoing challenge for SAT resulting in limited and/or short staff at times. SAT was recently awarded \$399,849 from the federal government and just over \$99,000 from the provincial government, for a total of \$499,812 for the purchase of 3 new accessible vehicles to add to their fleet.

THE GAELIC COLLEGE (*Rodney MacDonald*)

The St. Ann's Gaelic College location has many events planned during 2023 including March Break sessions, summer programming, online courses, immersion courses, cultural demonstrations, food services, accommodations, meetings, conferences, as well as numerous live performances. The satellite location at Beinn Mhàbu will begin welcoming students in the fall of 2023. In partnership with Cape Breton University, they will offer a foundation year program meeting a first Year Arts program requirements. It will be delivered in English and focus on the history, literature, folklore, music, dance and language of the gael. CBFM is an internet based radio station owned and operated by the Gaelic College and broadcasts from the Beinn Mhàbu campus.

INVERNESS COUNTY CENTRE FOR THE ARTS (*Beth Ryan and Darlene Gillis*)

The Inverness County Centre for the Arts (ICCA) has been hosting a variety of exhibitions and events since 2003. ICCA has been working with a consultant to help develop a three year plan and are seeking new board members. Programming is at an all time high. Joel Plaskett, Matt Mays and Matt Anderson, among others performed at the Centre last year as well as youth workshops, ballet, concerts, and a number of film screenings. The Centre's work has been recognized by Arts Nova Scotia. In 2021 over \$70,000.00 was paid out to artists. Last year \$11,00.00 was paid in insurance and overhead costs remain high. Fundraising and grant funding remain key to the operations of the centre.

4. MUNICIPAL WATER UTILITY UPDATE (*Gerry (G.A.) Isenor and Blaine S. Rooney*)

Council agreed to undertake a review of the Municipal Water Utility. Consultants Gerry Isenor and Blaine Rooney provided Council with a detailed review of the study to date. A rate study is similar to a business plan for a water utility for the next three years. The last rate study for the Municipality was done in 2018. What was derived from that rate study is that this Municipality has quite a few challenges; 7 small systems with a relatively low customer base, none of which are connected. This leads to a high operating cost per capita. There were not sufficient funds in the water utility budgets to operate effectively, therefore an operating deficit has built up. There is also a significant infrastructure deficit; equipment needs to be upgraded and/or replaced. A comparative statement of operations was provided to Council as well as a comparison of current and proposed rates.

Recommendation that the Municipality of the County of Inverness apply to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board for changes in its rates for water and water service, fire protection to the Municipality and changes its rules and regulations for customers served by the Inverness County Water Utility, as set out in the water rate study prepared by G.A. Isenor Consulting Limited in association with Blaine S. Rooney Consulting Ltd.

5. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: *That Council adjourn at 2:15 pm*
MOVED BY: Councillor MacLennan
MOTION CARRIED