

Municipality of the County of Inverness
Committee of the Whole Meeting
Thursday, July 20th, 2023
1:00 pm
Council Chambers

MINUTES

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

Staff: Keith MacDonald, CAO
 Brian Luciano, Director of Finance
 Erin Gillis, Manager of Operations and Occupational Health and Safety
 Debbie Nicholson, Administrative Assistant to Council/ CAO
 Joe Carew, Communications and Community Engagement Lead
 Melanie Beaton, Special Projects Facilitator
 Jenna Beaton, Chief of Staff

1. CALL TO ORDER

Warden MacIsaac called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm 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 Phillips

MOTION CARRIED

3. STAFF REPORTS

(a) Chestley Carr, Director of Public Works

Public Works staff continue to address repair and maintenance issues as they arise including sewer lateral repairs at Port Hastings, distribution water repairs in Inverness, and water and sewer servicing. Air conditioning units at Municipal buildings were serviced in recent weeks. Hilltop

Electric has been contracted to repair streetlights in Mabou and Port Hood. Speed radar data collected from radar signs posted in Margaree has been forwarded to the RCMP. Staff participated in various training opportunities including Cues Software and First Aid Recertification.

Department staff assisted other municipal departments with the delivery of water and wastewater sample delivery to Sydney, water utility service connects and disconnects, traffic control, and bollard installation at the two electric vehicle charging stations.

Temporary repairs were done at the aeration tank at the Judique wastewater treatment plant. Maintenance at the Port Hastings booster station is planned for September when the demands on the system are lower. Flushable wipes in the system continue to be an issue for lift stations and aerators. Solutions to this issue are being sought.

Sampling to ensure the Municipality meets its approvals to operate have been completed with no exceedances to report.

Multiple projects are in various stages of completion including Chéticamp Lift Station Control Panel service replacements, filter additions at the Inverness Water Treatment Plant and the VFD installation in Judique.

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

Internet access is now complete at the Kenloch waste management site allowing for connectivity at the Scale House and onsite office space. Changes to Construction and Demolition (C & D) regulations are being received from the province – site staff is working through these changes. The Request for Proposals for scrap metal has been released.

The Strathlorne Recycling Facility continues to struggle with equipment failures. The bailer was recently inspected and repairs were done to the soft line and forklift. The rear loader has arrived on site which will help with the seasonal increase in recycling.

The formal site security assessment has been completed with the initial assessment and recommendations under review. Staff are following up regularly with EDPC on illegal dumping and dangerous and unsightly premises.

Solid waste education continues with a new residential sort guide, the Recycle Cape Breton app and the Mabou Farmers Market booth. Funding for trail head signs has been received. This is a partnership with the trails association to promote the reduction of waste on trails.

Multiple projects are at various stages of completion including the C&D cell development, storage building construction in Kenloch and Strathlorne and a community bin placement process. An historical waste chemical cleanup for the Strathlorne location is underway. The Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee continues to meet monthly. Meetings are held with regional and provincial waste educators to discuss solid waste management initiatives.

(c) Jason Calder, Recreation

Many initiatives and community activities are continuing through the Recreation Department including Age Well Academy sessions, the County cribbage tournament, an End of School Activity Day and the conclusion of the Ball Hockey program in Port Hood and Inverness.

Multiple projects are underway in Recreation and Community Wellness including the Physical Activity Recreation Master Plan, Book Kings Management, Seniors Safety programming, and Nova Scotia Walk Days. The Wellness and Accessibility Committees continue to meet regularly.

The department was awarded a Community Accessibility Grant, through Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage. This grant will allow for the purchase of mobility equipment such as a hippocampe chair and two hand crank bicycles as well as Mobi Chairs for beaches that will be part of the current recreation loan program.

Multiple in person and remote meetings were held with various groups and partners including the Inverness Courts Facility, Reaching Strides Equestrian and the Seniors Council. Internal staff meetings were held to discuss communications, long term planning as well as joint initiatives with the Special Projects Department.

(d) Melanie Beaton, Special Projects

This past month continues to see a significant amount of work advance. The focus continues to be the advancement of the work of cross functional, internal teams, in partnership with various consultant teams, community and business stakeholders and regulatory bodies, specific to each project.

The general capital and water capital budgets were approved by Municipal Council on July 6th. The Special Projects team is working cross functionally with internal departments to prioritize, mobilize and implement the capital budgets. The community of Inverness is currently under a water conservation advisory. The Special Projects Department has been working cross functionally with internal departments to support water conservation efforts.

Internal linear infrastructure projects are underway as well as many internal complex infrastructure projects throughout the Municipality. Community projects and initiatives include the Inverness outdoor multicourt facility, Seawall Trail development, Mi-Carême Centre upgrades, Gypsum Mine Trail parking lot upgrades, multiple branding and signage projects, electric vehicle charging stations, and Port Hood community plan and stage.

Meetings continue with consultants, stakeholders, external partners and community groups.

(e) Brian Luciano, Director of Finance

The annual property tax bills were completed and issued to property owners in early July. The first quarter water bills are calculated and are being sent to customers for the period ending June 30th. The Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (UARB) approved the water rate study as presented with rates being adjusted as of: July 1, 2023; April 1, 2024; and April 1, 2025.

The Water Utility has worked with Special Projects and Public Works to develop a template for addressing breaks on the customer side of the water connection. It has currently been deployed three times; twice in Inverness and once in Whycomagh. This has resulted in expediated correction of the leaks, helping to reduce further water losses.

Multiple meetings continue regularly such as the finance department team, employee benefits, land committee, RFP updates, high demand water supply, capital budget, municipal homes board, and department heads. Multiple Requests for proposals are either open, awarded, or currently under review.

4. PRESENTATION: ABO Wind Canada Ltd; Robin Reese, Sean Fleming

ABO Wind develops and builds wind and solar farms as well as battery and hydrogen projects worldwide. The Green Choice Program (www.novascotiagcp.com) was developed to allow participating customers to purchase up to 100% of their electricity use from local renewable energy sources. In partnership with Eskasoni First Nation, ABO is planning to submit the Rhodena Wind Project for the Green Choice program in late 2023. The Rhodena Wind Project proposes the construction of 15 wind turbines on the hills between Route 19 and the Trans-Canada Highway 105, on both Crown and privately owned land.

5. PRESENTATION: Cape Breton Food Hub; Alix Redden, Maire Neville

The Cape Breton Food Hub is a network of food producers and consumers. It serves as a distribution link for over 60 food producers and the restaurants and residents across Cape Breton they serve. Membership fees are annual and are \$55 for both consumer and producer members. Customers can place an order online between Friday and Monday which will be delivered or made available for pickup the following Thursday. The Food Hub supports the efforts of local businesses and helps to create a fair and sustainable food economy for Cape Breton Island.

Recess: 2:40 pm – 2:47 pm

6. 2023-2024 Capital Budget

The 2023-2024 Water Capital Budget was presented to Council at an amount of \$1,210,500.00. 73% of this budget is sourced from the Gas Tax Reserve, and 27% is from the Depreciation Fund.

The 2023-2024 General Capital Budget totals \$14,754,900.00. Funding sources include the Gas Tax Reserve (12%), Capital Reserve (7%), Operating Reserve (11%), Federal Funding (11%), Sustainable Services Growth Fund (5%), Provincial Funding (38%), Indigenous Services Canada (.2%), and Debenture (16%).

7. 2023 SUMMER STUDENTS

A total of 8 summer students joined the team in the Recreation and Community Wellness Department on July 4th, 2023. These students will be facilitating and supporting activities across the municipality for a period of 8 weeks. A big welcome goes out to each of them.

8. COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE

The schedule of remaining Regular and Committee of the Whole Council meetings for 2023 was provided to Council. Regular Council meetings will be held on the first Thursday of each month and shall begin at 3:00 pm. Committee of the Whole meetings will be held on the third Thursday of each month and shall begin at 9:30 am.

9. COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATIONS

a) Mabou and District Community Development Association – Streetscape and Beautification
The Request of Council is \$5,000.00
Recommendation to fund this initiative in full with funds coming from District 5 CDC funds.

b) Dr. John Waters Community Health Centre and Port Hood and Area Resting Place –
Accessibility Improvements
The Request of Council is \$4,353.30
Recommendation to fund this initiative in full with funds coming from District 5 CDC funds.

10. WIND TURBINE BY-LAW

MOTION: *(1) That the Public Hearing date re: amendments to the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law Concerning the Regulation of Wind Turbine Development that is currently scheduled for September 7, 2023 be cancelled; and*

(2) That staff are directed to:

(a) conduct an immediate review of the Cumberland County Wind Turbine By-Law model; and

(b) recommend on September 21, 2023, to the Planning Advisory Committee, amendments to the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law Concerning the Regulation of Wind Turbine Development in order to incorporate the model set out in the Cumberland County Wind Turbine By-Law (e.g. decommissioning of turbines, setback distances, property line setbacks, public consultations, health concerns); and

(c) conduct at least 3 community engagement sessions throughout the County in order to gain feedback on wind turbine projects.

MOVED BY: Deputy Warden Gillis

SECONDED BY: Councillor Chisholm

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: *That there is a moratorium on wind turbines until the current wind turbine by-law is finalized.*

MOVED BY: Councillor Chisholm

SECONDED BY: Councillor Poirier

MOTION CARRIED

11. CORRESPONDENCE

- Eastern District Planning Commission - Building Statistics for June 2023 were included in the Council package.

- Eastern District Planning Commission – Annual Report and Financial Statements for the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year were provided to Council.
- Highland Village – An invitation was extended to Council on the occasion of the Official Opening of the New Welcome House Cultural Centre in Iona on Tuesday, July 25th, 2023

12. NEXT MEETING DATE

September 7th, 2023; 3:00 pm; Regular Council

13. IN CAMERA

MOTION: *That Council move to “In Camera” at 3:15 pm to discuss matters related to land.*

MOVED BY: Deputy Warden Gillis

SECONDED BY: Councillor Poirier

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: *That Council move out of “In Camera” at 3:50 pm*

MOVED BY: Councillor MacLennan

SECONDED BY: Councillor Chisholm

MOTION CARRIED

14. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: *That Council adjourn at 3:50 pm*

MOVED BY: Councillor Poirier

MOTION CARRIED