

Municipality of the County of Inverness
Committee of the Whole Meeting
Thursday, February 1st, 2024
9:30 am
Council Chambers

MINUTES

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

Staff: Keith MacDonald, CAO
Brian Luciano, CFO
Melanie Beaton, Deputy CAO
Debbie Nicholson, Administrative Assistant to Council/ CAO
Jason Calder, Acting Manager of Recreation and Community Wellness
Erin Gillis, COO

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. Warden MacIsaac read the following acknowledgement:

On behalf of Council, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the passing of Charlotte MacDonald, our beloved Manager of Recreation and Community Wellness. It's evident from all you speak to that Charlotte made a significant impact in our communities, displaying dedication, loyalty, hard work, and enthusiasm in her role. She was an intelligent and compassionate soul who left an indelible mark on the lives of those around her. Such qualities leave a lasting legacy, and her contributions to the Municipality will be remembered and appreciated by those who had the privilege of working with her or benefitting from her efforts.

Our sincere condolences go out to her family, friends and colleagues during this difficult time. May her memory be a source of inspiration and comfort.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: *That the agenda be approved as amended: the EHS presentation has been rescheduled for a future meeting of Council. Conseil Économique de Chéticamp will be added to the agenda as a Community Grant Application.*

MOVED BY: Councillor Chisholm
SECONDED BY: Councillor Phillips
MOTION CARRIED

3. STAFF REPORTS

(a) Chestley Carr, Director of Public Works

In late December two significant service leaks developed in Mabou and the community was issued a water conservation notice to help reduce the impact on the system. Public works staff repaired the leaks, and the system has since recovered. Asbestos was identified on the transmission and distribution piping located within the buildings at the Cheticamp water treatment plant. A private contractor was hired to remedy the situation to provide a safe workplace for staff. Department staff completed necessary repairs at the Port Hood wastewater treatment plant to increase capacity and ensure compliance.

Municipal facilities continue to receive necessary repairs and maintenance such as the Strathlorne building, the Port Hood Food Bank building, the decorative streetlights in Cheticamp, Mabou and Port Hood, municipal hydrants and water and wastewater treatment plants throughout the municipality.

Speed radar reports were provided for both Margaree locations for the December 16th to January 18th time frame. Sampling to ensure the municipality meets its approvals to operate have been completed with no exceedances to report. Various municipal staff have completed signage, traffic control and WHIMIS training. Well exploration sites have been identified in the Inverness area; staff have started to build access roads to the selected sites so drilling equipment can reach the areas.

Department staff continue to address snow removal/salting issues as they arise at municipal facilities and sidewalks.

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

Current initiatives underway in solid waste management include the development of SOP (standard operating procedures) at the Kenloch and Strathlorne facilities, repairs to the sort line, determining what recyclable material can be processed within the province, and training with NSECC (Nova Scotia Department of the Environment and Climate Change) to further understand the impact of changes to construction and demolition landfilling, transport and stockpiling. Updating of the Solid Waste by-law is ongoing. Electronic waste collection was held in Cheticamp in December. The goal is to have similar community collection events throughout the municipality.

Solid waste education initiatives continue via social media, the Agewell sessions and in a partnership with the trail association. By-law enforcement continues with regular contact with provincial bodies, and locally with the Eastern District Planning Commission.

Multiple projects are at various stages of completion including the C&D cell development, storage building construction in Kenloch, and review and assessment of the Extended Producer Responsibilities (EPR). Meetings continue with JOHSC and provincial waste educators.

(c) Jason Calder, Recreation

U11 development is set to start in January 2024. There are 31 participants registered, from all skill levels in Cheticamp, Whycomagh and Judique. The program offers equity to players in a fun based environment. NHL Street is a partnership between the Municipality and the NHLPA to create a low cost, ball hockey program for youth. This program will be similar to was offered last year, with the hopes of expanding into Cheticamp. This initiative offers support and jerseys for the participants.

Community of Practice meetings have started for accessibility leads across the province, to share information and learning opportunities while implementing the Accessibility Plans. These meetings are organized by the Municipal Accessibility Support Coordinator with AMANS.

The Age Well Academy information sessions through the Seniors' Safety Program have finished for the year. The last 2 sessions were held in December. 13 communities in the municipality were visited, engaging over 200 seniors in the county. A final report is being created for the program and will be completed in January 2024.

Multiple additional projects are underway or in development in Recreation and Community Wellness including adult acrylic painting, kids arts and crafts, tot learn to skate, youth learn to skate, and girls at bat – blue jays.

Many in person and remote meetings were held with various groups and partners including media training, the recreation master plan review, the staff appreciation event, the Bamboo HR rollout, and future professional development initiatives.

(d) Melanie Beaton, Special Projects

The focus of the Special Projects department 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.

Linear infrastructure projects are underway as well as many complex infrastructure projects throughout the municipality. The linear sanitary and watermain replacement detailed design in Central Avenue Inverness is 90% complete. Other linear infrastructure projects include the Port Hastings Rotary water and sanitary sewer re-alignment, planning for Veteran's Memorial Court reinstatement and extension and Mabou Harbour Road sanitary sewer piping repair. Upgrades and improvements to municipal facilities, buildings and roads are ongoing. Complex infrastructure projects at various stages of completion are ongoing in Whycomagh, Cheticamp, Inverness, Judique and Port Hood.

Community projects and initiatives include the Mi-Carême Centre upgrades, electric vehicle charging stations, Meat Cove and Pleasant Bay branding and signage, Destination 252, healthcare welcome package, and the food assistance study. The planning and design of the Inverness Outdoor Multi-Court Recreation Facility continues. The Jajikteq Seawall Trail Steering Committee and reps from various stakeholder organizations are participating in an upcoming cross-cultural sharing workshop being facilitated by Robert Bernard in We'koqma'q.

Department staff members continue to participate in a Construction Law Program through the Construction Association of Nova Scotia (CANS).

(e) Brian Luciano, Director of Finance

The CAO and CFO along with various heads of department met to discuss planning for the Fiscal 2024-2025 year. The budget planning process will begin in the coming month. The final items for the 2022-23 financial audit were completed and statements were presented to the Audit Committee. The committee will be recommending that council approve the financial audit as presented.

Property Valuation Services Corporation delivered the 2024 tax roll with a projected increase in residential, commercial and resource taxable assessments. The water utility bills for the third quarter have been processed and mailed. A door knocker campaign has started in the new year to contact the remaining accounts still on a flat rate. The water utility is looking to move all customers to metered rates.

Multiple projects are at various stages of completion including provincial reporting, department head reporting, joint fire department insurance, Bamboo HR software implementation, network infrastructure upgrades, and grant claim support.

Multiple meetings continue regularly such as the finance department team, employee benefits, land committee, Municipal Housing Board of Directors, Strait IT Board of Directors, legal counsel, department heads and the public hearing regarding the sale of municipal property. Multiple requests for proposals, requests for quotations and tenders are either open, awarded, or currently under review. The CFO attended by-law training presented by the Department of Municipal Affairs and housing with other members of the by-law committee.

(f) Lynne MacLennan, Cape Breton Partnership

The Cape Breton Partnership provides economic development support to the Municipality under the Regional Enterprise Network (REN) model in partnership with the Province of Nova Scotia. Activities from November 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023 were outlined.

Highlights and Events:

- Partners for Progress REN Conference – November 2023
- Muiwatmnej Etuaptmumk Conference – November 2023
- Invest in Cape Breton Podcast – December 2023

Project Updates:

- Creative Economy – ongoing stakeholder meetings in the arts, culture, and heritage sector.
- Invest in Cape Breton – content for the Invest in Unama'ki-Cape Breton pages on the Welcome to Cape Breton website.
- Forward Together – The soon to be released Unama'ki-Cape Breton Economic Development and Population Growth Plan.

Upcoming Events:

- Offshore Wind Community Engagement Sessions – February 2024
- Spotlight on Cape Breton; webinar series – January 31, 2024

Metrics Overview

- 5 female entrepreneurs currently under the Micro-Loan program
- 64 client files and economic development projects currently open and in progress
- 38 individuals and businesses receiving immigration and human resources guidance.

4. **PRESENTATION: NOVA SCOTIA POWER;** Paul Dandurand, Director of Reliability; Jason Lyver, Manager of Vegetation Management; Keith O’Callaghan, Senior Manager of Reliability; Emily MacNeil, Senior Manager of Government Relations; Colin Walker, Reliability Advisor for Cape Breton

Nova Scotia Power is investing approximately \$230 million in its transmission and distribution system this year. Investments include the replacement of deteriorated equipment, vegetation management and upgrading equipment to storm harden the system in the face of climate change. Vegetation management (tree trimming) is an area of significant investment each year. This aligns with trees contacting power lines being the primary reason for outages.

Vegetation along 388 km of power lines in Inverness County has been trimmed as part of the vegetation management plan since 2015. Approximately \$8.2 million has been spent to complete this work. High risk circuits are identified through various inspection programs and prioritized. Approximately 139 km is planned to be trimmed in 2024.

5. **COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATIONS**

- North Mountain Cultural and Recreation Centre – heat pump and LED lighting

The request of Council is \$3278.75

Recommendation to fund this request in full with funds coming from the District 6 CDC funds.

- Port Hood and District Recreation Commission – roof repairs

The request of Council is \$31,803.00

Recommendation to fund this request in full with funds coming from the Recreation Facility Grant.

- Margaree and Area Development Association – stage development

The request of Council is \$4524.25

Recommendation to fund this request in full with funds coming from District 2 CDC funds.

- Creignish Recreation Centre – playground, tennis court resurfacing

The request of Council is \$35,000.00

Recommendation to fund this request in full with funds coming from the Recreation Facility Grant.

- North Inverness Recreation Centre Association – zamboni and submersible pump

The request of Council is \$24,048.13

Recommendation to fund this request in full with funds coming from the Recreation Facility Grant.

- Mabou & District Athletic Centre – condenser and panel replacement

The request of Council is \$27,478.50

Recommendation to fund this request in full with funds coming from the Recreation Facility Grant.

- Conseil Économique de Chéticamp – Gypsum Mine Trail

The request of Council is \$6750.00

Recommendation to fund this request in full with funds coming from the Recreation Facility Grant.

6. AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Council received the Draft 2022-23 Consolidated Financial Statements as part of their package from staff. On January 18th, 2024, Grant Thornton presented the draft Financial Statements to the Audit Committee for review. A recommendation was made by the Audit Committee to advance the Consolidated Financial States, as presented, to Council for approval.

Recommendation that council approve the Consolidated Financial Statements for the fiscal year ended March 31st, 2023, as prepared and presented by Grant Thornton.

7. ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Recommendation that the municipality advertise for two new members at large to participate in the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee.

8. VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS – GROUP INSURANCE

The Municipality is exploring the option obtaining a blanket insurance coverage for all volunteer fire departments operating within the municipality.

Direction to staff to continue to work with volunteer fire departments to obtain the required information to obtain blanket insurance coverage.

9. 2024 POLICING PRIORITIES

The Joint Police Advisory Committee met on January 16th, 2024. The RCMP will be developing their policing priorities for the upcoming year. Members of Council are asked to each bring three policing priorities to the February 15th Committee of the Whole meeting to be forwarded on to the RCMP.

10. 2024 HEAVY GARBAGE COLLECTION

Recommendation that the Municipality post a Request for Proposals for a Spring 2024 Heavy Garbage Collection.

The intended week for Heavy Garbage Collection is May 13th 2024.

11. CORRESPONDENCE:

Mabou & District Community Development Association

Correspondence was received from the Mabou & District Community Development Association thanking the Municipality for funding of \$5,000.00 for the beautification and streetscape project.

The Cape Breton Partnership and Net Zero Atlantic

Correspondence was received from the Cape Breton Partnership and Net Zero Atlantic regarding the second round of Offshore Wind Information Sessions slated for February 2024.

12. NEXT MEETING DATE

February 1st, 2024 1:00 pm, Regular Council

13. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: *That Council adjourn at 12:12 pm*
Moved BY: Councillor Poirier
MOTION CARRIED