

**Municipality of the County of Inverness
Committee of the Whole Meeting
Thursday, March 21st, 2024
9:30 am
Council Chambers**

MINUTES

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

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

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 Chisholm

SECONDED BY: Councillor Phillips

MOTION CARRIED

3. STAFF REPORTS

(a) Chestley Carr, Public Works

As spring approaches, the Public Works department is preparing for a busy season ahead with water and wastewater service installations, upkeep of municipal access roads, sidewalk cleaning, infrastructure inspections, assist with spring clean-up, and prepare for upcoming projects that are

scheduled in the warmer months. Over the past month, municipal staff have been diligently engaged in service repairs across various areas of the municipality such as curb valve replacement, sewer line flushing, and sewer line repairs. A contractor is responsible for conducting repairs on the streetlights in Cheticamp, Port Hood, and Mabou. Adverse weather conditions have resulted in some delays on this work. Department staff have assisted other departments with the following: water utility service connects/disconnects, also with identifying water shut off locations, constructing access roads to designated well exploration sites, review of water/wastewater service requests, and completing reports required by NSECC.

Multiple maintenance initiatives are ongoing at various municipal properties including hydrants, the Inverness water treatment plant, the Judique wastewater treatment plant, Port Hood lift stations, and the Cheticamp generator. Sampling activities aimed at ensuring the Municipality adheres to its operational approvals have been successfully carried out, and no instances of exceedances have been detected. Numerous staff members have become eligible to take their water/wastewater exams in the upcoming months.

Multiple projects are at various stages of completion including Cheticamp lift station control panels, Inverness filter installations, Port Hastings lift station control panel replacement, and improving the access road to the Judique wastewater treatment plant.

(b) Erin Gillis, Operations Department

Current initiatives underway in solid waste management include preparations for the annual Spring heavy garbage pickup, preparing an education campaign regarding medical waste that arrives at the recycling facility, and addressing repairs required on facility equipment. Funding approval has been received for two Clean Foundation summer interns. Their focus will be on festival waste and how summer festivals can be supported to ensure proper waste management with the transition to EPR (extended producer responsibilities).

Solid waste education initiatives continue with information sessions at the Bayview School grade 3 class, Margaree Seniors Club, and Cheticamp Cadets. Recognition is planned for the Bayview Green Club for their work to reduce waste and protect the environment.

Staff are in regular contact with provincial bodies; RCMP, DNRR, & SPCA to gain a better understanding of what services provincial organizations and enforcement agencies can offer residents and with EDPC on dangerous and unsightly properties and illegal dumping. Preparation is underway for a spring provincial EMO exercise. This will allow the team to review the emergency plan, identify gaps, practice provincial forms and request for assistance procedures.

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

(c) Jason Calder, Recreation

Following a very successful ball hockey pilot last year in Port Hood and Inverness, staff have partnered with the NHL Street Program to provide an even more robust and exciting program while looking to expand to more communities. A joint project has been completed with 4 county arenas to purchase sturdy assisted skate devices to improve access to skating programs and free

ice opportunities. The Blue Jays Foundation Girls at Bat program pilot project has begun with 18 girls aged 8-12 registered. The U11 development programming is continuing and staff are supporting community groups with securing gym time and new program roll out. As a follow up to our popular Aging Well program, staff partnered with the Mabou Community Hall to offer a session on Falls Prevention presented by Community Links, which was attended by 18 seniors from Mabou.

The Municipality is currently recruiting two public members to participate in the Accessibility Advisory Committee. Applications are available on the Municipal website and advertisements are posted in the Oran newspaper and on social media.

The Senior Safety Coordinator is working on research for Seniors' Council to develop an Age Friendly Action Plan for Inverness County.

Multiple projects are underway in Recreation and Community Wellness including Skatehelpers, Sensory Loan Brochure, Age Friendly Action Plan, KidSport, the NHL Street Hockey Program, U11 development, Allyship Foundations Course, girls at bat – blue jays, and the development of an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

Multiple in person and remote meetings were held with various groups and partners including the Wellness Committee, Seniors Council, Vulnerable Persons Registry, and planning for various Recreation 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, Veteran's Memorial Court street planning 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 Whycocomagh, 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, the Port Hood Food Bank roof replacement, Destination 252, and the healthcare welcome package. Joint committees are continuing to meet such as asset management and asset inventory, joint municipal standards, sewer by-laws and the water utility committee.

Compliance issues continue to be addressed such as water utility corrective action plans, collection system CCTV inspections, source water protection, water treatment raw water summaries and annual reports, Dunmore water treatment plant backwash pond decommissioning, and the Cheticamp PW1 decommissioning.

Department staff members continue to participate in a Construction Law Program through the Construction Association of Nova Scotia (CANS). Modules completed to date include Occupational Health & Safety, Delay Claims and Change Orders, Bidding and Tendering, Mediation

and Dispute Resolution, CCA (Canadian Construction Association) Documents, Labour Law and the Construction Industry, Avoid Litigation and Collect Unpaid Accounts, and Construction Claims.

(e) Brian Luciano, Director of Finance

The CFO and finance team's primary focus in the coming months will be on assembling the 2024-25 budget and year end review in preparation for the audit.

Multiple projects are at various stages of completion including provincial reporting, joint fire department insurance, Bamboo human resource software implementation, network infrastructure upgrades, grant claim support, large meter installs, water meter updates, a review of proposed changes to the intermunicipal agreement, returning officer selection, accounts collection and write-offs, and a payment method for the Kenloch facility. The property tax roll is loaded and balanced. Tax revenue for the 2024-25 budget can now be calculated.

Multiple meetings continue regularly such as the finance department team, employee benefits, land committee, bylaw committee, the Strait IT board, Municipal Homes board, solid waste, community grant review, and the water utility committee. Department staff met with infrastructure staff to discuss water extension requests. Staff attended the funding announcement for Active Transportation in Inverness. Multiple requests for proposals, requests for quotations and tenders are either open, awarded, or currently under review.

4. PRESENTATION: Aaron Allen, Margaree Salmon Association

The Margaree Salmon Association, established in 1982, is a volunteer, non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation, protection, enhancement and habitat of Atlantic salmon and trout. Since its founding, the Margaree Salmon Association has established itself as the voice for the salmon resource and salmon conservation on the Margaree River, including being a lobbying force on behalf of the Margaree Fish Hatchery.

The Swimming Hole Pool Restoration Project is a habitat rehabilitation project aimed at protecting an eroding bank on the Northeast Margaree River where the over-widening and erosion of the bank is threatening to imperil habitat for migrating Atlantic Salmon. The issue is that the shallowing associated with over widening in this area will cause further heating of the river which makes it inhospitable for Atlantic Salmon. The bank under restoration is at the confluence of Lake O'Law brook, the most productive juvenile rearing tributary. The threat of widening and destruction of habitat in this area would make it hard for both adult and young salmon to migrate, nullifying the cool water supply from the brook.

5. PRESENTATION: Adam Hanna and Ken McKinnon, Property Valuation Services Corporation

Property Valuation Services Corporation (PVSC) provides property assessment services and information for Nova Scotia's municipalities and property owners in accordance with the Nova Scotia Assessment Act.

PVSC delivers an assessment roll to all 49 municipalities by December 31 each year, delivers 647,000 assessment notices to property owners each January and administers the Capped Assessment Program (CAP) and Seasonal Tourist Business Designation program on behalf of the

NS government. The program places a 'cap' on the amount that the taxable assessment for eligible residential property can increase year over year based on the Nova Scotia Consumer Price Index (CPI) in November. The CAP rate for 2024 assessments is 3.2%.

The total assessment roll for the province of Nova Scotia for 2024 is \$2,345,751,600, up from \$1,898,734,600 from the year before. The delivery of assessment notices occurs in early January with an appeal period ending on February 8th.

6. COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATIONS

a) Belle Cote & Area Community Centre – Community Centre Roof

The Request of Council is \$5,000.00

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

b) Margaree Salmon Association – Swimming Hole Pool Restoration

The Request of Council is \$10,000.00

Recommendation to fund this request in whole from the following sources:

District 2 CDC funds - \$2,160.52

Scotia Wind Fund - \$7,839.48

c) Margaree Area Development Association – Margaree Meals on Wheels

The Request of Council is \$25,000.00

Recommendation to fund this request in the amount of \$10,000.00 with funds coming from the Scotia Wind Fund. Any remaining financial contribution will be revisited during budget deliberations.

d) Société Mi-Careme - Renovations to Centre de la Mi-Carême

The Request of Council is Council is \$29,325.00

Recommendation to fund this request in whole from the following sources:

Regional CDC Funds - \$20,000.00

Scotia Wind Fund - \$9,325.00

7. NEXT MEETING DATE

April 4th, 2024 3:00 pm, Regular Council

8. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: *That Council adjourn at 12:27 pm*

Moved BY: Councillor MacLennan

MOTION CARRIED