

**Municipality of the County of Inverness
Committee of the Whole Meeting
Thursday, June 20th, 2024
9:30 am
Council Chambers**

MINUTES

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

Staff: Keith MacDonald, CAO
Brian Luciano, CFO
Chestley Carr, Director of Public Works
Debbie Nicholson, Administrative Assistant to Council/ CAO
Jason Calder, Acting Manager of Recreation and Community Wellness
Crystal Jones, Solid Waste Manager

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.

Congratulations was extended to Lewis MacQuarrie on his retirement from the Municipality. Lewis has been a valuable member of the public works team for 26 years. A warm thank you was given to Lewis from Council and staff.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: *That the agenda be approved as presented.*
MOVED BY: Deputy Warden Gillis
SECONDED BY: Councillor Chisholm
MOTION CARRIED

3. PRESENTATION: ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE; STAFF SARGEANT DAVE MORIN

The Inverness District RCMP has detachments in the communities of Cheticamp, Inverness, Waycobah and Port Hawkesbury. All detachments are currently fully staffed with the exception of Port Hawkesbury which will be up to a full staff compliment soon. Crime statistics for each

detachment for the second quarter of 2024 were provided. Mandatory and developmental training for members is ongoing in firearms, use of force, search warrants, interviewing drug recognition and crime scene management. Current policing priorities emphasize traffic safety (checkstops, parking offences, collisions), drug enforcement (Street Crime Enforcement Unit in partnership with Antigonish), and community involvement (parades, Remembrance Day, Canada Day, coaching, school activities, and presentations to various community groups)

4. PRESENTATION: COASTAL PROTECTION ACTION PLAN; MEGHAN MCMORRIS

The Coastal Protection Action Plan includes actions for property owners, municipalities and the province to make coastal homes, communities and natural areas safer. The plan supports informed decision making by empowering coastal property owners to make informed decisions to protect and develop their property. Guidance and support will be provided to municipalities with example land use by-law content they can use to regulate coastal protection in their communities. The plan will ensure the province's human and financial resources appropriately and equitably support coastal protection and support Nova Scotians

5. PRESENTATION: DESTINATION CAPE BRETON; TERRY SMITH

Amendments to the Marketing Levy By-Law came into effect on February 1, 2024. Since then a 3% rate is applied to all fixed roof accommodations within the municipality. Statistics were provided regarding the number of visits to visitcapebreton.com, room nights sold over the last 5 years and economic growth projections. Goals of the Tourism Strategy include brand enhancement, growing year-round visitation, increasing the length of stay, average spend and elevating the visitor experience. Destination Cape Breton plans to work with partners to roll out equity, diversity and inclusion training initiatives. The Tourism Strategy can be viewed at www.destinationcapebreton.com

6. STAFF REPORTS

(a) Chestley Carr, Public Works

In recent weeks there were three repairs made to the water distribution systems in the community of Inverness. All water towers within the municipality have been maintaining appropriate levels to meet the capacity of the needs in each community. With the summer season approaching the public works team is busy with service installations, infrastructure inspections and preparing for upcoming construction projects. Staff are addressing repairs and/or replacements of stand pipes that were damaged over the winter.

Cross functional work included assisting the finance department with water utility service connects/disconnects and assisting with identifying water shut off locations. Assistance was also given to the Capital Projects and Planning team with access road development, review of water/wastewater service requests, and compliance reports for the NSECC.

Ongoing maintenance projects within public works include municipal hydrant inspections, municipal lifts station inspections, new filter and piping at the Inverness water treatment plant and the installation of new aerators at the Whycocomagh wastewater treatment plant. 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. In compliance with the reporting requirements of water treatment plant operating approvals, annual reports for the 2023 water systems of Inverness, Chéticamp, Mabou, Whycocomagh, Port Hood, Judique, and Port Hastings were submitted to NSECC before April 1, 2024. Speed data collected at the East Margaree, Margaree Forks and Cheticamp radar signs was provided.

Numerous staff members have become eligible to take their water/wastewater exams in the upcoming months. Additionally, members of the Infrastructure Maintenance team with Public Works have been registered to take their OIT exams. Upon successful completion, they will be qualified to pursue certifications in distribution or waste collection.

(b) Erin Gillis, Operations Department (report presented by Crystal Jones)

During the recent spring heavy garbage collection 186 metric tons of garbage were collected. The majority of the municipality was collected within the scheduled week, with a few delays because of volumes. Department staff are investigating options to reduce textiles from the waste stream by partnering with local resources and community groups to increase diversion. Residents took advantage of the recent Household Hazardous Waste and E-waste collections. Spring community clean-up activities removed over 15,000 pounds of litter from communities.

Premade litter kits containing bags, gloves, related information and labels have been created and distributed to all eastern Counties Regional Libraries and the Port Hood Municipal building. Funding for litter and signage has been approved. Staff are working with community groups in Margaree to identify a location. The Beach Bingo project is set to launch in July.

The Fences and Arbitration Committee mandate, ability and membership is being finalized. There is 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.

Monthly site inspections, improvements to contractor management, on-site management, and a risk assessment are underway. Preparation is underway for a spring provincial EMO exercise. The EMO TMP radio communications system has arrived and training has taken place.

Multiple projects are at various stages of completion including the C&D regulatory changes, 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

The Get Active Summer Programming hired 8 summer students and a student coordinator. This group includes 4 returning students, and 1 Dalbrae co-op student that has added experience and maturity to our team that will complement the programming throughout the summer. Staff have been working to develop meaningful programming throughout the summer throughout the municipality, including developing program plans, sourcing equipment, developing marketing and

creating an online registration process. The NHL Street program and Playbox programs have already been launched.

The Accessibility Awareness week was declared with a proclamation by Council, Flag Raising and an Adaptive Equipment Try Event held recently at the Al MacInnis Sports Centre. Staff continue to develop the Accessibility Report card with the accessibility committee and the Age-Friendly Action plan with Seniors Council members. A Seniors flower potting workshop was held recently in Inverness. A campaign promoting Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15th is being developed with Seniors Council members.

Ongoing meetings include the Seniors Council, Wellness Committee, Accessibility in municipalities, and regular Recreation team meetings. Partnerships continue with the local school community, Mill Road Social Enterprises, Eastern Counties Regional Libraries, as well as county organizations to host and promote recreational opportunities for youth.

(d) Brian Luciano, Director of Finance

The 2024-25 operations budget is awaiting approval by Council. Once this is achieved the focus of the finance department will be issuing the annual property tax bills. The estimated mail out date is the end of June. Finalization of the year end 2023-24 audit work will occur over the next several weeks.

In addition to the audit and budget planning various projects are at various stages of completion including joint fire department insurance, network infrastructure upgrades, water meter updates, a review of proposed changes to the intermunicipal agreement, 2024 municipal election preparation, accounts collection and write-offs and implementation of a payment method for the Kenloch facility.

Multiple meetings continue regularly such as the finance department team, employee benefits, land committee, audit committee, department heads, bylaw committee, the Strait IT board, Municipal Homes board, Questica Implementation, and the water utility committee. Members of the finance, water, public works, and infrastructure teams meet regularly to review municipal service requests.

Department staff recently attended the following conferences: Music in Tourism, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia, and the Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators. Multiple requests for proposals, requests for quotations and tenders are either open, awarded, or currently being evaluated.

(e) Morgan Murray, Department of Culture and Community Wellness

The Culture & Community Development team continues building its portfolio of projects. Looking ahead to the next month, the team will advance the implementation of several community development projects like the Mabou Marina and Destination 252, to begin rolling out funding to community organizations as they kick off a busy summer of activities, advance larger planning documents (e.g. food security, youth, etc.), and to make progress on various other projects.

Community Development Grants for various organizations have either been completed, are in process or are on hold awaiting further information.

With budget approval imminent, 2024 community grant applications for cultural centres, beautification and gardens, cultural events, summer employment, and Visitor Information Centres were prepared and circulated publicly, noting that funding was contingent upon budget approval.

The community grant policy continues to be drafted and processes are being streamlined alongside Finance and Recreation & Wellness for presentation to council at a later date.

Staff continue to meet with multiple community groups on various initiatives such as childcare, food security, healthcare recruitment and retention, literacy, volunteerism, population growth, and youth engagement.

7. 2024 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATIONS

Dates and times for this year's high school graduations within the municipality were provided to Council. Councillors can attend the ceremony within their district if they so choose.

8. COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATIONS

a) Margaree Highlanders Snowmobile Club – Multi purpose facility design

The Request of Council is \$1,437.50

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

b) La Coopérative de Transport de Chéticamp – Medical Coupon Program

The Request of Council is \$3,000.00

Recommendation to fund this request in full with funds coming from the following sources:

\$1500.00 - District # 1 CDC Funds.

\$1500.00 – District # 2 CDC Funds

9. 2024-25 MUNICIPAL OPERATIONS BUDGET

MOTION:

RESOLVED that pursuant to Section 72 of the Municipal Government Act, of the Province of Nova Scotia, the Municipal Council of the Municipality of the County of Inverness hereby authorize the levying and collection of a commercial property rate of \$1.91 per \$100 of taxable assessment, a residential tax rate of \$1.05 per \$100 of taxable assessment, a resource tax rate of \$1.05 per \$100 of taxable assessment and a forest property rate of \$0.25 per acre for property based on the 2024 Assessment Roll provided by Property Valuation Services Corporation.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the said Council hereby authorize and levy the following area rates based on the 2024 Assessment Roll provided by Property Valuation Services Corporation:

Wastewater Area Rates

Wastewater Service Area Rate - Districts 1	0.404	Per \$100 of assessment
Wastewater Service Area Rate - District 3, 4, 5, 6	0.393	Per \$100 of assessment

District 1

Cheticamp Volunteer Fire Department	\$0.10	Per \$100 of assessment
Cheticamp Volunteer Fire Department (Commercial Rate)	\$0.06	Per \$100 of assessment
Meat Cove Volunteer Fire Department	\$60.00	Per 1 Dwelling Unit
Pleasant Bay Volunteer Fire Department	\$125.00	Per 1 Dwelling Unit

District 2

North East Margaree Volunteer Fire Department	\$0.10	Per \$100 of assessment
Margaree Volunteer Fire Department	\$0.10	Per \$100 of assessment
Margaree Volunteer Fire Department (Commercial Rate)	\$0.10	Per \$100 of assessment
LeMoine Volunteer Fire Department	\$0.10	Per \$100 of assessment
Lemoine Volunteer Fire Department (Commercial Rate)	\$0.10	Per \$100 of assessment

District 3

Inverness Volunteer Fire Department	\$0.08	Per \$100 of assessment
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District 4

Whycocomagh Volunteer Fire Department	\$0.10	Per \$100 of assessment
Ainslee/Upper Margaree Volunteer Fire Department	\$0.10	Per \$100 of assessment
Valley Mills Volunteer Fire Department	\$0.10	Per \$100 of assessment
Blues Mills Volunteer Fire Department	\$0.10	Per \$100 of assessment
Blues Mills Volunteer Fire Department (Commercial Rate)	\$0.05	Per \$100 of assessment

District 5

Mabou (1 Dwelling) Volunteer Fire Department	\$150.00	Per 1 Dwelling Unit
Mabou (More than 1 dwelling) Volunteer Fire Department	\$300.00	More than 2 Dwelling Units
Port Hood Volunteer Fire Department	\$0.10	Per \$100 of assessment
Port Hood Volunteer Fire Department (Commercial Rate)	\$0.06	Per \$100 of assessment

District 6

Port Hastings Volunteer Fire Department	\$0.13	Per \$100 of assessment
Judique Volunteer Fire Department	\$0.10	Per \$100 of assessment
West Bay Road Volunteer Fire Department	\$0.15	Per \$100 of assessment

FURTHER RESOLVED that the said Council hereby require payment of the said rates to be made to the Tax Collector or Treasurer of the said Municipality on August 30th, 2024.

FURTHER RESOLVED that the said Council hereby impose an additional percentage of one percent per month on all rates and taxes remaining unpaid after August 30th, 2024.

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council fixes April 1st, 2025 as the day after which the tax collector may proceed to issue warrants for the collection on all rates and taxes then unpaid.

That the 2025 General Operating Budget totalling \$24,700,517 for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2025 be approved.

MOVED BY: Deputy Warden Gillis

SECONDED BY: Councillor Chisholm

MOTION CARRIED

10. CORRESPONDENCE

- **Eastern District Planning Commission** – building permit statistics for the month of May 2024 were included in the Council package.

11. NEXT MEETING DATE

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

12. "IN CAMERA"

MOTION: *That Council move to "In Camera" at 12:05 pm to discuss a security item.*
Councillor Poirier left the meeting.

MOVED BY: Councillor Chisholm

SECONDED BY: Deputy Warden Gillis

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: *That Council move out of "In Camera" at 12:11 pm*

MOVED BY: Deputy Warden Gillis

SECONDED BY: Councillor Phillips

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: *That Council form a Fences and Arbitration Committee.*

MOVED BY: Deputy Warden Gillis

SECONDED BY: Councillor Chisholm

MOTION CARRIED

13. ADJOURNMENT

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

MOVED BY: Councillor Chisholm

MOTION CARRIED