

**Municipality of the County of Inverness  
Committee of the Whole Meeting  
St. Peter's Parish Hall, Port Hood  
Thursday, July 25th, 2024  
11:30 am**

**MINUTES**

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

Staff: Keith MacDonald, CAO  
Brian Luciano, CFO  
Chestley Carr, Director of Public Works  
Melanie Beaton, Deputy CAO  
Erin Gillis, COO  
Debbie Nicholson, Administrative Assistant to Council/ CAO  
Jason Calder, Acting Manager of Recreation and Community Wellness  
Morgan Murray, Department of Culture and Community Development  
Crystal Jones, Solid Waste Manager  
Lauren MacDonnell, Municipal Engineer  
Jessica Grande, GIS Technician

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Warden MacIsaac called the meeting to order at 11:30 am and welcomed all in attendance. Roll call was taken.

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

**3. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Warden MacIsaac acknowledged that the land on which we gather is located in the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

#### **4. STAFF REPORTS**

##### **(a) Chestley Carr, Public Works**

In recent weeks public works staff have completed service installations, completed emergency repairs within the water/wastewater systems across the county, and conducted ongoing inspections of municipal infrastructure to identify areas requiring repair. Nine standpipe replacements/repairs have been conducted throughout the municipality. The Port Hood streetlight wire was located, excavated and the damage was repaired. Repairs have been scheduled on municipally owned roads that were inspected for damage 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, aeration line cleaning and inspection at the Inverness wastewater treatment plant and aerator replacement at the Cheticamp wastewater treatment plant.

Numerous staff members have become eligible to take their water/wastewater exams in the upcoming months. Upon successful completion, they will be qualified to pursue certifications in distribution or waste collection.

This month, the Municipality purchased a new Boom Truck to help with lifting and hoisting heavy objects, making it useful for placing equipment and materials in hard-to-reach areas. It will allow for well inspections and repairs, assist with lifting water lines and help with performing and monitoring pump tests in various locations.

##### **(b) Erin Gillis, Operations Department**

Now that the summer season has arrived there is an increase in the amount of solid waste and recycling materials being collected. Curbside collection is underway at We'koqma'q where residential units now have collection bins for blue bag recycling, residual garbage and organics. A lightbulb collection and recycling program is ready to be launched at the Strathlorne recycling facility.

Solid waste education initiatives have been published via social media, including the sort guide, litter study and beach bingo. 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 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. The Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Policy has been updated and was part of an OHS program launch at the latest staff day. Staff signed as a show of support and willingness to incorporate the OHS programs and procedures.

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 and Community Wellness**

The Get Active Summer Program is well underway for the 2024 season. With the help of 8 summer students and a student coordinator multiple programming opportunities are being offered to residents throughout Inverness County.

The municipality has been awarded an Age Friendly Communities Program Grant from the Nova Scotia Department of Seniors and Long Term Care in the amount of \$11,500.00.

The recreation program coordinator recently crowned the NHL Street champions and participated in a Girls Equity in Sports research project with Cape Breton University.

The Accessibility Coordinator completed accessibility assessments for the Judique Community Centre, Cheticamp Library and the Whycocomagh Waterfront Centre. She also participated in Autism 101 training and attended the Accessibility Confident Employers Conference. Ongoing projects include the equity, diversion and inclusion strategy and the accessibility report card.

Ongoing meetings include further planning of the Summer Program, Risk Management Training, Tennis NS Training, De-escalation Training, and Evacuation Chair Training. Staff met with a Belle Cote volunteer group on funding needs and an accessibility project for the beach location. Monthly meetings continue with accessibility leads and the Wellness committee.

### **(d) Melanie Beaton, Deputy CAO**

**The following projects were updated:**

#### **Ongoing Linear Infrastructure Projects:**

- Sanitary Sewer and Watermain Replacement Detailed Design, Central Ave., Inverness
- Port Hastings Rotary Water and Sanitary Sewer Re-Alignment.

#### **Complex Infrastructure Projects:**

- Whycocomagh Wastewater Treatment Plant and Collection System
- Whycocomagh Effluent Pipe and Outfall
- Chéticamp Wastewater Treatment Plant Digester Walkway Replacement
- Inverness Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Inverness Outfall
- Judique Wastewater Treatment Plant & Outfall
- Chéticamp Wellfield Exploration
- Inverness Wellfield Expansion/Exploration.

#### **Facilities/Buildings/Roads/Active Transportation:**

- Accessibility Improvements Municipal Building
- Complete Streets Design, Central Avenue
- Active Transportation Planning Whycomomagh
- Inverness Wellfield Access Road Improvements
- Jajiktek Seawall Trail Project
- Inverness Beach Canteen.

**Recreation Facility Development:**

- Inverness Outdoor Multi-Court Recreation Facility.

**Compliance:**

- 2023 Water Utility Corrective Action Plans
- Source Water Protection
- Dunmore WTP (Water Treatment Plant) Backwash Pond Decommissioning
- Chéticamp PW1 Decommissioning.

**Planning and Development:**

- Development & Servicing
- Plan Inverness.

**Joint Committees, Foundational Documents, and Core Competencies:**

- Asset Management & Asset Inventory Development
- Sewer Bylaws
- Planning Advisory Committee.

**Training & Professional Development**

- De-escalation Training, Trenching and Excavations Safety training and First Aid Training.

**(e) Brian Luciano, Director of Finance**

The 2024-25 operations budget has been approved by Council and all property tax bills have been issued to residents and business owners. The Finance Department will be busy over the coming weeks collecting tax payments. Tax staff will work on grant-in-lieu applications while finance submits provincial reporting. The returning officer continues with preparations for the upcoming Municipal elections in October.

Various projects are at various stages of completion including joint fire department insurance, network infrastructure upgrades, water billing, water meter updates, a review of proposed changes to the intermunicipal agreement, accounts collection and write-offs and implementation of a Point of Sale payment method for the Kenloch facility.

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

Municipal staff met with Destination Cape Breton and neighboring Municipalities to discuss the marketing levy platform. Marble Hill residents were invited to an information session recently to review the potential costs and issues associated with a water and sewer extension to that area of Port Hood. Multiple requests for proposals, requests for quotations and tenders are either open, awarded, or currently being evaluated.

**(f) Morgan Murray, Department of Culture and Community Wellness**

Various community grants have been issued for the following initiatives:

- Cultural Centres Operating Grants
- Visitor Information Centres Operating Grants
- Beautification and Gardening Fund Grants
- Seasonal Employment Support Grants
- Culture and heritage Programming and Events

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 draft a municipal food security plan. They are compiling together details of a county-wide Meals on Wheels program. Several funding proposals have been submitted to the provincial department of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Community Development Grants for various organizations have either been completed, are in process or are on hold awaiting further information.

Department staff continue to meet with multiple community groups on various initiatives such as childcare, food security, Belle Cote Beach Accessibility, signage initiatives, healthcare recruitment and retention, literacy, volunteerism, population growth, and youth engagement.

The volunteer profiles continue to run on social media. Staff are developing a Volunteer Engagement Strategy, including two new grant streams for volunteer capacity building and volunteer recognition.

**(g) Lynne MacLennan, Cape Breton Partnership**

The Cape Breton Partnership provides economic development support to the Municipality of the County of Inverness under the Regional Enterprise Network (REN) model in partnership with the Province of Nova Scotia.

Highlights, milestones achieved, and metrics from April 1 to June 30, 2024 include:

- May 6<sup>th</sup> - The Impact of Transportation Costs on Life and Work in Unama'ki – Cape Breton
- May 8<sup>th</sup> - Safety First Symposium
- The Cape Breton Partnership Celebrates 20 Years! – milestones from the last 2 decades

Local Economic Development Updates

- Tourism Training & Community Engagement Sessions – several events focused on tourism
- Language Supports for Temporary Foreign Workers – community of Cheticamp
- Farm Loan Board Presentation – June 19<sup>th</sup> information session

Project Updates – Creative Economy

- Rural Film and TV Productions – funding announcement on June 28<sup>th</sup>
- Lighthouse in Little Lorraine Movie – filming across Cape Breton from June 25<sup>th</sup> to July 27<sup>th</sup>

- Inverness County Culture Sector – supporting artisans, authors, and playwrights

Project Updates - Green Energy Engagement Program

- April 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> - Smart Energy Conference 2024
- Electricity Sector Implementation Team
- Nova Scotia Offshore Wind Roadmap

Project Updates – People and Labour Market Team

- May 23<sup>rd</sup> – Deputy Minister’s Roundtable
- June 23<sup>rd</sup> – Welcome Newcomers Event in Port Hood/ Mabou
- June 10<sup>th</sup> - Inverness County Visitor Information Centres training session
- Cape Breton Job Board – 40 county businesses/organizations are now registered here.

The 2024 Investor Summit, commemorating the 20th Anniversary of the Cape Breton Partnership, will be held on October 24th, 2024, at the Inverary Resort on Baddeck Bay. The Cape Breton Partnership’s Investor Summit annually brings together over 200 business, community and government leaders from across Nova Scotia. Summit attendees will have the opportunity to provide input on building a strong economic future for Unama’ki – Cape Breton.

## **5. SECOND READING – ALTERNATIVE VOTING BY-LAW**

**MOTION:** *That Second reading be given to the Alternative Voting By-Law as included in today’s Council package; a by-law to permit voting in Municipal elections by telephone and internet.*

**MOVED BY:** Deputy Warden Gillis

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Chisholm

**MOTION CARRIED**

## **6. PRESENTATION: TYLER MATTHEIS; CAPE BRETON PARTNERSHIP**

The Cape Breton Partnership works collaboratively with private-sector investors and community leaders and organizations representing Unama’ki – Cape Breton region, as well as the Strait of Canso (TuiknekSamqwan), which includes portions of the traditional Mi’kma’ki districts of Piktuk and Eskikewa’kik. Forward.Together is the strategic growth plan for all communities, people and peoples in this broad region. This plan is guided by six guiding principles:

1. Collaboration and Community: We are all in this together.
2. Relationships and Reconciliation: We are all treaty people.
3. Energy and Optimism: A better future begins with better attitudes.
4. Inclusion and Diversity: The economy works best when it works for everyone.
5. People and Environment: Our greatest assets working in harmony.
6. Innovation and Creativity: Our creative spirit is the key to our success.

*Recommendation that Council accept the Forward. Together. plan as the Economic Development Strategy of the CBREN and commit to aligning Inverness County’s economic development efforts with Forward. Together. in coordination and cooperation with the CB REN.*

*Recommendation that Council sign the Multi-Party First Nations and Municipal Agreement, as endorsed and recommended by the CB REN Liaison Oversight Committee (LOC) on March 4th, 2024.*

## **7. PRESENTATION: JASON CALDER; EQUITY AND ANTI-RACISM PLAN**

The Dismantling Racism and Hate Act was passed in 2022 and outlines the province's commitment to addressing systemic hate, inequity, and racism. Municipalities and villages are important partners in becoming an equitable, anti-racist and accessible province as they represent a large range of sectors and individuals. Groups who experience discrimination and exclusion because of unequal power relationships across economic, political, social, and cultural dimensions could include people of colour, newcomers, African Nova Scotians and persons with disabilities for example.

Equity and Anti-Racism plans must be:

- Informed by engagement with underrepresented and underserved communities within Inverness County
- Completed and in place by April 1, 2025
- Publicly available in an accessible format
- Updated every three years, in line with the Accessibility Act requirement.

## **8. PRESENTATION: MORGAN MURRAY; POPULATION**

Morgan Murray provided a statistical overview of population dynamics in Inverness County since 2021. A steady decrease in population occurred from 2001 to 2015 with small annual increases during 2015-2021. The median age of Inverness County residents is rising. Younger residents are needed to grow the population → Retain and return our young people and attract more young families. By growing the population, the tax base also grows. This will allow for an expansion of amenities (basic services, economic development, housing, childcare, recreation, culture, etc.).

## **9. MUNICIPAL BRANDING/LOGO**

The Inverness County municipal logo is the all-business sibling to the 'Canada's Musical Coast' Brand. Where the CMC brand job is to be the face of tourism in Inverness County, the municipal brand represents governance and services for its residents. The municipal brand should be used to indicate the presence of the municipal government.

*Recommendation to Council to adopt the municipal logo as presented in today's Council package and approve it at the next Council meeting.*

## **10. ACAP QUARTERLY REPORT**

Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP) is a non-profit organization that focuses on environmental

action and education in Cape Breton. The first fiscal quarter of 2024 was busy for ACAP Cape Breton. They reached approximately 184 people from school visits to community events, plus an additional 355 residents during Earth Month events, for a total of 500 + participants in the educational events. In May they moved into their summer office in Mabou, hosted their first watershed walk of the fiscal year, and welcomed their first summer intern, Tessa. June saw ACAP make their first Mabou Farmers' Market appearances this season on June 23<sup>rd</sup>. Additional visits to the market will be on July 14<sup>th</sup>, July 28<sup>th</sup> and August 11<sup>th</sup>.

#### **11. MEALS ON WHEELS/FOOD SECURITY**

There was a Food Security conference held earlier in 2024 that brought together individuals with a common interest in this sector. It was a very productive day and to keep this initiative going a staff member will be hired within the Department of Culture and Community Development to further the recommendations that came out of that conference.

#### **12. ROAD NAME CHANGE – ARSENAULT LANE**

*Recommendation that an unnamed private road in Belle Côte between 10569 and 10573 Cabot Trail be named "Arsenault Lane".*

#### **13. EASTERN COUNTIES REGIONAL LIBRARY (ECRL)**

*Direction to staff to draft a letter to the Board of the Eastern Counties Regional Library regarding:*

- *The status of the Whycocomagh Library location*
- *The status of the Cheticamp Library location*
- *Request a quarterly update from ECRL staff to Council*

#### **14. PUBLIC POOLS' OPERATIONAL COSTS**

CAO MacDonald shared information provided to him by the Municipality of East Hants regarding costs associated with constructing and maintaining their pool.

Initial build - \$19 million (\$13.2 million East Hants contribution/\$5.8 million Federal contribution)

Annual operational costs - \$750,000.00 - \$1,000,000.00

Staff were asked to estimate the potential tax impacts if a pool of a similar scale were built today in this municipality. It was estimated that a tax increase of approximately \$73 per \$113,000.00 of tax assessment would be required from property owners.

#### **15. CAPITAL BUDGET**

**MOTION:** *That Council approve the 2024-2025 General Capital Budget as presented in the amount of \$24,401,114.*

**MOVED BY:** Deputy Warden Gillis

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Poirier

**MOTION CARRIED**



**MOTION:** *That Council approve the 2024-2025 Water Capital Budget as presented in the amount of \$4,616,000.*

**MOVED BY:** Deputy Warden Gillis

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Chisholm

**MOTION CARRIED**

## **16. CORRESPONDENCE**

- The Rolling Barrage PTSD Foundation – A coast to coast ride to raise funds and support programs and organizations that assist individuals living with PTSD.
- Nova Scotia Seniors and Long-Term Care - Age-Friendly Communities Program Grant approval.

## **17. NEXT MEETING DATE**

September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024 – 3:00 pm, Regular Meeting of Council

## **18. "IN CAMERA"**

**MOTION:** *That Council move to "In Camera" at 2:21 pm to discuss two land issues.*

**MOVED BY:** Councillor Chisholm

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Poirier

**MOTION CARRIED**

**MOTION:** *That Council move out of "In Camera" at 3:43 pm.*

**MOVED BY:** Deputy Warden Gillis

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Chisholm

**MOTION CARRIED**

## **19. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** *That Council adjourn at 3:43 pm*

**MOVED BY:** Councillor Chisholm

**MOTION CARRIED**