

Committee of the Whole Meeting  
Thursday, October 17th, 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

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

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Warden MacIsaac called the meeting to order at 9:30 am and welcomed all in attendance. Roll call was taken.

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

During the past month there were nine repairs made to water distribution systems with the majority being in Port Hood, one in Inverness and four in Mabou. All water towers have been maintaining good levels to meet the needs in each community. With the assistance of leak detection professional Graham MacDonald seven potential leaks were identified in Mabou. Four of these were repaired while three require further exploration. Standpipe replacements and repairs have been completed throughout the municipality. Department staff assisted a local contractor in completing repairs to municipal street lights in Port Hood.

Ongoing maintenance projects include hydrant inspection and replacement where necessary and lift station inspection and repair as required.

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. These sampling efforts encompass a range of parameters essential for maintaining compliance with regulatory standards, including water quality, quantity, and other relevant criteria specified in the operational approvals.

Speed statistics collected from September 1<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> in East Margaree, Margaree Forks and Chéticamp were provided.

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.

Several staff members will be writing certification exams in the upcoming weeks and months. Some department staff have taken SCADA training and new safety policy training.

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

Leaf and yard waste has been added to the Kenloch Transfer Station's approval to operate. An acceptance period for residents to drop off waste will be established once a designated location within the facility is ready. Phase 1 of the Kenloch Lower Section redevelopment is underway. The key improvements involve enhanced signage, groundskeeping, and a better access road. The recycling line has been removed from the facility. Blue bags are dropped off and placed in a bin for either plastics or paper. They are then shipped off site for sorting and marketing.

Solid waste initiatives continue such as community education sessions in Creignish and Belle Cote, household hazardous waste collections on September 23<sup>rd</sup> in St Joseph du Moine and Whycocomagh. A Christmas swap will be held at Bayview education Center on October 23<sup>rd</sup>; eligible items include Christmas ornaments, decorations, and lights.

By-law enforcement continues to receive complaints from residents; the most common concerns reported are dog issues, noise complaints and instances of illegal dumping.

The Occupational Health and Safety policy and program are being developed. Improvements to contractor management; tendering process, selection, on-site management, and review are underway.

Projects currently ongoing include C&D regulatory changes, storage building construction in Kenloch, and review and assessment of the Extended Producer Responsibilities (EPR).

**(c) Jason Calder, Department of Recreation and Community Wellness**

Now that the summer is over fall programming will begin to be implemented in our local schools. Online registration numbers to date are greater than those of previous years. September is a very busy month for KidSport funding with hockey resuming. Department staff met with parents in person and over the phone to assist with application completion.

The Diversity and Inclusion Action Team has been formed and will begin work on developing an Anti-Racism and Hate Strategy for the Municipality.

The Seniors Council continues to develop the Age Friendly Action Plan for Inverness County as well as helping with the planning of the upcoming Fall/Winter calendar for seniors Age Well sessions, beginning in October. A Seniors expo is planned for Belle Côte to celebrate National Seniors week in October.

Multiple projects are well underway including the Learn to Skate – Autism NS, Accessibility Plan Update, Seniors programming, the Age Friendly Action Plan, Accessibility Report Card, and the Equity, Diversion and Inclusion Strategy.

Multiple meetings took place, or are planned including JaysCare review, summer programming debrief, Inverness school programming, Seniors expo, Communities of Practice, Accessibility Committee, Gather and Grow, MPAL and ACAP.

**(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
- Port Hood Convent Street Water Main Replacement
- Port Hood Sanitary Main Flushing & CCTV Inspections

**Complex Infrastructure Projects**

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

- Judique Dam Rehabilitation

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

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

#### **Recreation Facility Development**

- Inverness Outdoor Multi-Court Recreation Facility
- Inverness Multi-Court Recreation Facility Amenity Building Design

#### **Compliance**

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

#### **Planning and Development**

- Development & Servicing
- Plan Inverness

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

- Asset Management & Asset Inventory Development
- Sewer Bylaws

#### **(e) Brian Luciano, Finance Department**

The 2023-2024 audit field work is now complete. Grant Thornton is compiling final statements for approval. Remaining items include final testing documents and Inverary Manor field work.

In the coming months finance will be working on reviewing purchasing practices and working with department heads to streamline the process. The focus will be to create greater budget oversight and accountability for departments.

Senior leadership will be meeting to discuss the coming year's budget process. Preliminary planning will begin in the new year.

Multiple meetings continue regularly such as the finance department team, employee benefits, department heads, the Strait IT board, Occupational Health and Safety, and the water utility committee. Account collections continue with regular contact to delinquent account owners. 30-day notices for taxes have been sent to delinquent tax accounts. Water utility bills for the second quarter have been issued up to the end of September. Legal has returned 96 title search files for tax sale. Staff anticipates that a sale will be held before the new year. The Joint Volunteer Fire Department insurance is moving forward.

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 Development**

The Culture & Community Development (CCD) team has been busy the last month on several fronts. Most notably, work continues to ramp up on healthcare professional attraction and retention, culture and heritage supports, food security, festival supports, community volunteer organization supports, expansion of library services, and formalizing partnerships with organizations like CBU and the Inverness County Council for the Arts. In the coming months, a department strategic work plan will be developed, a community grants policy will be presented to council, a community roundtable on festivals and events will be held, the heritage property committee will be relaunched, and focus will remain on advancing the food security and housing files within the department and across the municipality.

The CCD team has had many positive meetings with community, culture, and heritage organizations throughout the county to learn more about these organizations and look for ways to support their success in the future. Business planning is well underway for a county-wide meals on wheels program.

Partnerships continue with various partner organizations including ACAP Cape Breton, Cape Breton University, local school groups and community development and economic development organizations. A welcome reception for Dr. Annalee Coakley, a new doctor at the Inverness Consolidated Memorial Hospital will be held on October 18<sup>th</sup> at the Inverness Centre for the Arts.

**(g) John Bain, Eastern District Planning Commission**

Updates were provided to Council on the following initiatives and projects:

- Plan Eastern Nova
- Coastal Protection Action Plan – Advisory Committee
- Cell Phone Towers
- Short term Rentals Correspondence
- Inverness County Wind Turbine Policy Review
- Plan Amendments, rezonings, and policy changes
- Dangerous and Unsightly Premises Files
- Fire Inspection Report Period; January 1, 2024 – October 31, 2024

**(h) Monica Ragan, ACAP Cape Breton**

The summer of 2024 saw ACAP Cape Breton engage with residents of all ages across the Municipality to learn about the importance of their environment and how they can be good stewards of the land. Key initiatives included:

- Summer Clean ups – In partnership with the Municipality of the County of Inverness and community groups, ACAP Cape Breton hosted four summer clean ups (Cheticamp Beach,

Port Hastings rotary area, Port Hood Sunset Beach, and Whycomomagh Bay). A total of 690 kg of litter was collected during these 4 days).

- Mabou Farmer’s Market participation – During July and August, ACAP Cape Breton was at the Community Table educating visitors about their work, and fielding questions and comments, and having a hands-on demonstration.
- “Outdoor Learning for Littles’ – This was a drop-in a program designed to engage with younger residents in the Municipality's different aspects of the environment. Session themes were water and water cycle, habitats, litter and waste and pollinators.
- Participation in Summer Festivals/Events – Whycomomagh Summer Festival, Judique on the Floor, and 4-H Achievement Day in Brook Village.

#### **(i) Lynne MacLennan, Cape Breton Partnership**

For the period July 1 to September 30 2024 updates were provided on the following initiatives:

##### **Highlights and Events:**

- Food and Beverage Business Support events for food and beverage owners and operators.
- Business Summer Socials – 3 networking events for the business community.
- Labour solutions for the Hospitality Industry; an event to focus on labour challenges.

##### **Project Updates – Local Economic Development Initiatives:**

- Workforce Development meeting – to explore opportunities for customized training.
- Business and Entrepreneur Supports – individualized support for small businesses.

##### **Project Updates – Creative Economy:**

- TV Production – consultation by Bill Culp for the Bell Fibre TV series The ABC’s of Oysters.
- Cape Breton Museum Weekender 2025 – aimed at promoting attendance at museums.
- Film and TV Training – training in We’koqma’q in film and television production.
- Festivals, Events, & Organizational Support – provided to the Cape Breton Comedy Festival, Celtic Colours International Festival and the Cape Breton Creative Awards.

##### **Project Updates – Green Energy Engagement Program:**

- What We Heard: Release of Community Offshore Wind Information Sessions in August.
- Offshore Wind Survey Results – highlighted the results of a preliminary survey from 2023.
- Offshore Wind Community Information Sessions – in November with Net Zero Atlantic.
- Marine Renewables Forum- focused on opportunities and challenges of wind energy.

##### **Project Updates – People and Labour Market Team:**

- Supporting Newcomers, Employers & Community- information sessions during September.
- Work Permit Options – September lunch & learn hosted in Port Hawkesbury.
- Cape Breton Job Board – currently has 44 registered Inverness County employers.

##### **Upcoming Events:**

- Cape Breton Partnership Investor Summit – October 24<sup>th</sup> at the Inverary Resort.

(j) Laura Emery – Eastern Counties Regional Library (ECRL)

**Current Initiatives:**

- Community Wellbeing – Free items are currently available to the public at all Inverness County library locations (diapers, menstrual products, incontinence products, HIV self-test kits). ECRL is waiting on an update from Public Health on additional distribution of COVID-19 rapid tests.
- Food Security- Working with Halifax Seed, ECRL distributed over 1,000 packages of seeds to our communities to support food security and food literacy.
- Community Engagement- ECRL launched a community engagement survey in September to gather input to develop the library's food security initiatives. 165 respondents answered the survey, 52 of whom identified themselves as being from Inverness County.
- Summer Reading Club – The 2024 Summer Reading program had over 250 entries. At the end of the summer winners were randomly selected and received a telescope and constellation book; a space Lego set and activity book; and an assortment of space-themed books.

Monthly usage statistics were provided for the period of April, May and June at the Mabou, Margaree Forks, and Cheticamp library locations.

**5. HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Updates to the Human Resources and Personnel Policy (Return to Work Policy and Respectful Workplace Policy) were provided for Council's review. Any questions or concerns can be brought back to a future meeting of Council.

**6. CORRESPONDENCE**

September building statistics were provided by the Eastern District Planning Commission.

**7. NEXT MEETING DATE**

November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024 – 3:00 pm, Regular Meeting of Council

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** *That Council adjourn at 10:20 am*  
**MOVED BY:** Councillor Chisholm  
**MOTION CARRIED**