

Committee of the Whole Meeting
Thursday, November 21st, 2024
9:30 am
Council Chambers

MINUTES

Council: Warden Bonny MacIsaac
Deputy Warden Lynn Chisholm
Councillor John MacLennan
Councillor Blair Phillips
Councillor Catherine Gillis
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
Emery Ferraro, Trails Coordinator

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. 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.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

4. PROCLAMATION: INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The following proclamation was read by Warden Maclsaac:

WHEREAS, December 3 is recognized globally by the United Nations as International Day for Persons with Disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Canada is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disability, and two out of five Nova Scotians live with a disability; and

WHEREAS, Nova Scotia has proclaimed the Accessibility Act that recognizes accessibility is a human right and set a goal of an accessible province by 2030; and

WHEREAS, International Day of Persons with Disabilities promotes an understanding of disability issues and the importance of equal access for Nova Scotians with disabilities in all aspects of society; and

*WHEREAS, through public awareness, community partnerships, and municipal accessibility initiatives this day aims to foster an environment of equal participation of individuals with disabilities within **The Municipality of the County of Inverness**.*

THEREFORE, be it resolved that I, Bonny Maclsaac, on behalf of the Municipality of the County of Inverness do hereby proclaim December 3, 2024 as "International Day of Persons with Disabilities" in the Municipality of the County of Inverness.

5. STAFF REPORTS

(a) Chestley Carr, Public Works

During the past month there were four repairs made at water distribution systems (Inverness, Mabou, Whycomomagh and Judique). All water towers have been maintaining good levels to meet the needs in each community. Standpipe replacements and/or repairs have been completed in Port Hood and Whycomomagh. Staff repaired a string of lights in Inverness and continue to perform scheduled inspections and continue to coordinate with Hilltop Electrical for necessary repairs.

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. Each municipal well was tested in late October to ensure compliance with the Canadian Drinking water guidelines.

Speed statistics collected from October 1st to 31st in East Margaree, Margaree Forks and Chéticamp were provided.

Ongoing projects include lift station control panel replacements in Port Hastings and lift station control panel replacements in Mabou..

Several staff members have completed the SCADA programming course. In the near future, some staff will be participating in trenching/excavation, fall arrest and confined space courses.

(b) Erin Gillis, Operations Department

Phase 1 of the Kenloch lower section redevelopment project is underway. Key improvements include the installation of signage, groundskeeping, road improvements, and a better drop-off area. The recycling process is working well. Now that the slower season is here it will allow for a streamlined process before the next summer season.

Partnerships have been established with the Bayview Greenwave Gang to organize a swap event for waste reduction week and the Creignish Recreation Centre for a Halloween costume event. On October 19th a community education session was held with the Chéticamp Girl Guides where staff facilitated a presentation on ocean plastics.

The municipal by-law enforcement officer is now registered as a Special Constable with the provincial Department of Justice and is now able to issue summary offence tickets on registered by-laws. The Fences and Arbitration Committee has been formed with membership from municipal Council and the Federation of Agriculture. Communication is ongoing with the SPCA and RCMP regarding dog issues and by-law enforcement.

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). A mock evacuation was held recently at the Chéticamp hospital.

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

The Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Action Team was formed and had their first meeting to review Terms of Reference and Committee Policies. This group will be working towards developing the municipal EDI Strategy by April 2025.

In celebration of National Seniors Week (October 2nd-9th), the municipality hosted the first Seniors' Expo in Belle Côte. Ten booths participated and over 50 residents attended. Attendees were pleased with the event and suggested bringing back the Seniors Games for 2025. Ongoing planning for seniors programming is taking place with the help of the Seniors Council. The department plans to create a 'Santa for Seniors' program where seniors can sign up to receive a small gift on behalf of the Recreation Department. This program is in partnership with the local schools and students in participation through the craft workshops.

A new Age Well session is planned for November in Judique along with continued planning to host Frauds and Scams awareness events in multiple locations in Inverness County.

Staff are preparing for multiple projects in recreation such as the Youth Crafting Series and Learn to Skate in partnership with Autism NS. Both are planned to start in November.

Department staff participated in meetings such as Communities of Practice, JOHSC, Gather and Grow, NS Seniors Federation, and Accessible Communications over the past month.

(d) Melanie Beaton, Deputy CAO

The following projects were updated:

Linear Infrastructure Projects

- Port Hastings Rotary Water and Sanitary Sewer Re-Alignment
- Port Hood Sanitary Main Flushing & CCTV Inspections

Complex Infrastructure Projects

- Whycomomagh Wastewater Treatment Plant and Collection System
- Whycomomagh 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
- Water Storage Tank Inspections
- Port Hood and Chéticamp Lift Station Replacements

Facilities/Buildings/Roads/Active Transportation

- Accessibility Improvements Municipal Building
- Active Transportation Planning Whycomomagh
- Inverness Wellfield Access Road Improvements
- Jajiktek Seawall Trail Project

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

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 and is currently preparing consolidated statements. A meeting of the Audit committee will be held for statement approvals.

Account collections continue with regular contact with delinquent accounts. Thirty day notices for taxes have been sent to delinquent tax accounts. Thirty six properties are scheduled to be on the December 3rd tax sale.

All Inverness Municipal IT network infrastructure has been updated with new equipment. The finance department is working on a credit card policy to allow the departments to have their own cards. The policy is to be presented to Council in the coming months. The Water Utility is assisting Capital Planning and Projects (CP&P) in mapping water utility standpipes across the county. Preliminary data has been provided to CP&P.

Multiple meetings continue regularly such as the finance department team, employee benefits, department heads, the Strait IT board, municipal signage, land issues, employee benefits, by-law committee, Diamond group of 9, marketing levy remittance process, and the water utility committee.

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 team continues to work 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 Cape Breton University (CBU) and the Inverness County Council for the Arts. Work has also begun on a department strategic work plan, and grant and project tracking. Upcoming, a community grants policy will be presented to council, a community roundtable on festivals and events will be held, several youth engagement sessions will be hosted, 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.

Partnerships continue with various partner organizations including ACAP Cape Breton, Cape Breton University, local school groups, community development and economic development organizations, Cabot Trail 100th anniversary planning, Destination 252, Meals on Wheels, and the Jajiktek Seawall Trail.

Department staff are working to finalize a commemorative information panel to be placed at the Celtic Shores Trailhead near the former Mabou Asylum site. A public event is planned for National Mental Health Month in May of 2025. Support of the administration of the Inverness County Literacy Association and the delivery of the educational programs continues.

6. PRESENTATION: ANGIE MACISAAC; Strait Area Museum

The Strait Area Museum is committed to conserving and promoting the heritage and history of the Strait Area by engaging, educating, and entertaining residents and visitors. The facility is located at 24 Highway 19 Port Hastings and overlooks the Strait of Canso. Public events include Coffee at the Causeway, artisan shop, ice cream barn, strawberry festival, ceilidhs, various workshops and ongoing activities with ACAP Cape Breton. There is concern for the facility while the rotary redesign is underway as there will be no access to the building.

Direction to staff to assist in writing a letter to the Department of Public Works asking if access can be granted to the building by museum staff during the rotary redesign and if an alternate location can be found for the ice cream barn.

7. PRESENTATION: COLLEEN MCNAB; Creignish Recreation Centre

The Creignish Recreational Centre offers a variety of recreational activities for visitors of all ages. With its focus on community engagement and wellness, the center provides a space for individuals to come together and enjoy sports, fitness classes, and social events. Friday Night Happy Hour in support of local musicians, active living programs and various community and children's events are just some of the many offerings hosted by the Centre.

The Creignish Recreation Association recently completed work on a new playground facility for the community, as well as a multi-use court that will accommodate both tennis and pickleball. The project received \$200,000 in funding from the provincial government, as well as a contribution of \$35,000 from the Municipality of the County of Inverness.

8. PRESENTATION: STAN JOHNSON and RON NEWCOMBE; Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative

In recent years Mi'kmaq communities, municipal, provincial, and federal agencies and citizens with an interest or responsibility in the Bras d'Or watershed have banded together to work on a management plan for the Lakes. A unique declaration, the Bras d'Or Charter, was signed by all these groups, which committed them to the Bras d'Or Lakes Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative (CEPI). The spirit of the Charter is the collaboration of past history and teachings, and modern science. All agencies and peoples work together, bringing their statutes, expertise, and interests to the group where information and ideas are shared.

After a successful 2023 Two Eyed Seeing conference, it was decided to have another conference in 2025 due to the overwhelming positive response. This event will involve workshops to assist communities in applying Two Eyed Seeing in their programs and initiatives.

9. PRESENTATION: EMERY FERRERO; Municipal Trails Coordinator

The goal of the trails strategy plan is to outline a 3 year plan for municipal trails staff to engage residents and visitors alike in caring for and celebrating the trails that connect our communities. The key components of the strategy are:

- I. Community – Support the Inverness County Trails Federation, improve volunteer recruitment, retention and engagement, and expansion of municipal programming.
- II. Connection - Develop new partnerships, pilot a trail accessibility audit, and support new trail development.
- III. Appreciation- Develop a trails volunteer recruitment and recognition program in concert with the overall Municipal volunteer program.
- IV. Leadership- Become a hub for stewardship education, increase municipal capacity, work with stakeholders to create a ten year strategic plan for 2027-2037.

These steps are designed to establish Inverness County as a leader in trail stewardship and community involvement while promoting sustainable growth and exceptional trail experiences that create a lasting impact for years to come.

10. PRESENTATION: KRISTIN MUNTZ, BILLY CROWLEY; Margaree Meals on Wheels

The Margaree Meals on Wheels program currently delivers nutritious, delicious and affordable meals to sixteen senior citizens in the Margree area. It is a volunteer driven initiative supplying homestyle cooking to seniors and residents in need. Beginning November 25th the service will be hosted out of the Margaree Forks Volunteer Fire Hall. The goal of the organization is to grow the number of clients served, as well as their volunteer base. This initiative is sustained through assistance from federal, provincial and municipal levels of support. The organization is requesting \$10,000 in assistance from the municipality for operational expenses for the fiscal 2025 year.

11. LOAN GUARANTEE REQUEST – LEMOINE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

The LeMoine Volunteer Fire Department is requesting a loan guarantee from the municipality in the amount of \$115,000.00 + gst for the purchase of a 2002 Cyclone E-one fire truck.

Recommendation to Council that the municipality approves a loan guarantee for the LeMoine Volunteer Fire Department in the amount of \$115,000.00 + gst for the purchase of a 2002 Cyclone E-one fire truck.

12. MUNICIPAL CODE OF CONDUCT

Recommendation to Council to adopt the Municipal Code of Conduct Policy as included in today's Council package.

13. FENCES AND ARBITRATION COMPLAINT PROCESS

Consensus of Council that a fee of \$50 accompany any written notice of a violation of the act to the Fences and Arbitration Committee. 50 % of the fee can be returned once the complaint is identified.

14. CORRESPONDENCE

October 2024 building statistics were provided by the Eastern District Planning Commission.

15. NEXT MEETING DATE

December 5th, 2024 – 9:30 am; Regular Meeting of Council

16. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: *That Council adjourn at 11:59 am.*

MOVED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm

MOTION CARRIED