

Committee of the Whole Meeting
Monday, December 16th, 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

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: Councillor Phillips
SECONDED BY: Councillor Poirier
MOTION CARRIED

4. STAFF REPORTS

(a) Chestley Carr, Public Works

During the past month the Public Works staff have been addressing infrastructure repairs required prior to the onset of winter. These include service installations, winterizing any vulnerable municipal infrastructure, and repairing service leaks as they occur. A number of communities have been contracted out for snow removal so as to ensure that sidewalks are salted and sanded in a timely fashion.

There were five repairs made at water distribution systems (Inverness, Whycomagh and Port Hood). All water towers have been maintaining good levels to meet the needs in each community. Staff have been working closely with Hilltop electric to complete necessary lighting repairs throughout the Municipality. Municipally owned roads have been inspected for damage with maintenance being preformed 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. Staff assisted the finance department with water utility service connects/disconnects and finding water shut off locations. Staff also assisted the Capital Projects and Planning team in reviewing water/wastewater service requests to determine the capacity of serviced communities.

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

Ongoing projects include lift station control panel replacements in Port Hastings, control system upgrades in Port Hood and lift station control panel replacements in Mabou.

Training is underway to help operators scheduled to write water/wastewater exams in the upcoming months, which includes a combination of online courses and instructor lead day courses.

(b) Erin Gillis, Operations Department

Ongoing projects at the Kenloch Transfer Station include garage door expansion and replacement, scale rewiring, and storm debris cleanup. Staff have been doing an excellent job with the lower section site cleanup. In November, the facility entrance was enhanced with the placement of granular material along the entrance and drop-off areas of the lower section.

In Strathlorne the baler is now operational after being down for several weeks. Cardboard continues to be processed from residential customers which generates revenue for the municipality. The practice of 2 stream recycling is progressing well. Waste diversion initiatives continue to be promoted at the Recycling Facility, including electronic waste, light bulbs, and batteries. There are designated areas set up within the facility for these programs.

Educational programs will be introduced via social media that will cover what to do with broken Christmas lights, 2 blue bags, curbside rules and bag limits. December is sharps injury prevention month. The municipality will be participating in a provincial campaign to bring awareness to proper sharps disposal and staff safety.

Bylaw enforcement initiatives continue with training on de-escalation, networking with regional bylaw enforcement officers and reviewing the dangerous and unsightly property files with EDP. JOHSC committee meetings continue monthly. Planning for the 2025 provincial EMO exercise has begun with a practice date in May 2025.

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

Seniors Age Well sessions have resumed, the facilitators will continue to present on topics such as healthy eating on a budget, emergency preparedness for older adults, frauds & scams awareness and more. Sessions have been well attended and these will take place monthly across the county. The Santa for Seniors program has been launched. The department has partnered with local schools including Bayview Education Centre, Inverness Academy, Whycomomagh Education Centre and Cape Breton Highlands Academy to have handmade cards created by the students. The registration is open on the municipal website for older adults to sign up and receive a special gift.

Recreation is supporting the launch of the women's ringette program at the Mabou Athletic Centre and the rollout of the Learn to Skate program with Autism NS.

Multiple meetings and events are ongoing such as Communities of Practice, Equity Diversity and Inclusion planning sessions, Inverness Multi Court project planning, and the JOHSC monthly meeting. Staff attended a virtual presentation from the Human Rights Commission on the Human Rights remedy and how this will impact communities positively.

(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
- Port Hood Lift Station # 1

- Central Avenue Lift Station Designs

Facilities/Buildings/Roads/Active Transportation

- Active Transportation Planning Whycomomagh
- Strathlorne Keyless Entry Pilot Program

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

Draft financial statements have been received from Grant Thornton. These will be reviewed by the Audit committee at a meeting in the New Year. Preliminary budget planning for the next fiscal year has begun. Account collections continue with regular contact with delinquent tax accounts with list of accounts being prepared for the next tax sale. All Inverness Municipal IT network infrastructure has been updated with new equipment. Scada software will now be reviewed. 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.

A tax sale was held in Council Chambers on December 3rd. The sale was advertised in local newspapers, and on the municipal website. 28 properties sold. The bid total on these properties was \$340,608.70, generating a surplus of \$260,495.91. A tender recently closed regarding the public auction of 18 pieces of municipal equipment. 149 bids were received from 35 separate bidders. The sale collected \$ 53,217.96 in revenue.

Multiple meetings continue regularly such as the finance department team, employee benefits, department heads, the Strait IT board, employee benefits, by-law committee, Diamond Group of 9, Sea Wall trail planning, and the water utility committee. Staff met with the Capital Projects team to review the draft cost share agreement with the province of Nova Scotia on the Port Hastings Roundabout project.

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.

Four grants were distributed to municipal organizations through the Community Development Grants initiative. As part of the Youth Engagement Strategy Youth Engagement sessions are planned for the winter break in December.

5. PRESENTATION: Olga Beaton Everson, Xavier Rankin; Mabou & District Community Development Association

The Master Plan for the Mabou Waterfront Development Project was presented to Council. Project objectives include a vibrant and multi-use waterfront for all ages and abilities, local business support, marine recreation, accommodation of larger vessels, showcase Mabou's culture through music and arts, maintaining ecological sustainability, and enhancing the quality of life for locals and visitors. Community benefits include attracting tourists to a vibrant waterfront space, boosting the local economy, supporting local businesses, job creation and fostering a sense of community through shared space.

6. PREGNANCY AND PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY

Proposed amendments to the Pregnancy and Parental Leave Policy were provided to Council for review. Council will revisit this item at a future meeting to consider accepting these changes.

7. THE GROWTH AND RENEWAL FOR INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (GRID)

Subject: Submission of Application for Province of Nova Scotia's Growth and Renewal for Infrastructure Development Program (GRID).

MOTION: *WHEREAS the Municipality of the County of Inverness has identified critical infrastructure needs as part of its commitment to ensuring environmental sustainability, public health, and economic growth; and*

WHEREAS the Whycomomagh Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) Replacement Project addresses key deficiencies in the Municipality's

wastewater management system, and its renewal will ensure environmental protection, regulatory compliance, operational efficiencies and improved capacity for sustainable commercial and residential growth; and

WHEREAS this project aligns with the Province of Nova Scotia's strategic goal to grow the population to two million by 2060, by ensuring infrastructure readiness to accommodate housing and economic development; and

WHEREAS the estimated total cost of the program application is \$5,872,043.75, which includes the following major components:

- *Headworks: \$2,689,965.00*
- *Lift Station: \$1,483,845.00*
- *Oxidation Ditch: \$361,042.50*
- *3rd SBR Train: \$690,000.00*
- *Outfall: \$647,191.25; and*

WHEREAS the application is for a total cost of \$5,324,973.26 and the Municipality is seeking funding support from the Province of Nova Scotia through the Growth and Renewal for Infrastructure Development Program (GRID), totalling \$2,662,486.63.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The Council of the Municipality of the County of Inverness formally approves and prioritizes the submission of the Whycocomagh Wastewater Treatment Plant Replacement Project application to the Growth and Renewal for Infrastructure Development Program (GRID) as its top priority project for funding consideration.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT:

The Municipality reaffirms its commitment to environmental stewardship, public health, and sustainable growth, and requests the Province of Nova Scotia's continued collaboration and financial support to ensure the successful implementation of this vital infrastructure project.

MOVED BY: Councillor MacLennan
SECONDED BY: Councillor Gillis
MOTION CARRIED

8. CORRESPONDENCE

- Orangedale Water Society – Correspondence was received from the Orangedale Water Society requesting Council’s support for acquiring funding to carry out upgrades to their water system. This issue will be brought back to a Committee of the Whole meeting in the New year.
- Eastern District Planning Commission - November 2024 building statistics were provided in today’s Council package.
- Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) – Information was provided to Council on how to apply for membership on one of 11 NSFM committees.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

January 9th, 2025 – 9:30 am; Regular Meeting of Council

10. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: *That Council adjourn at 11:46 am.*
MOVED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm
MOTION CARRIED