

Committee of the Whole Meeting  
Thursday, February 20th, 2025  
9:30 am  
Council Chambers

**MINUTES**

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

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

**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 Gillis  
**MOTION CARRIED**

#### **4. PRESENTATION: CAPE BRETON UNIVERSITY; President Dave Dingwall, Sarah Burke**

Cape Breton University (CBU) initially opened in 1951 as a satellite campus of St. Francis Xavier University in Sydney. Over 9000 students are enrolled at the school, of which roughly seventy five percent are international. The University is comprised of schools of Arts and Social Sciences, Education and Health, Nursing, Business, Science and Technology and Unama'ki College. The Forever CBU campaign is a \$50 million national fundraising campaign that is part of an overall \$150 million investment into the campus. The campaign is rooted in CBU's strategic, academic and research plan and will meet the needs and demands of a growing and diverse student body. Through a collection of employees, government, community, alumni and donors, the Forever CBU campaign will change the educational landscape of the Island and create opportunities for growth.

#### **5. STAFF REPORTS**

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

In recent weeks, public works staff have been busy with snow removal, sidewalk salting and sanding, repairs to the water distribution system, standpipe repairs, addressing lighting issues with Hilltop Electrical, and addressing the sewer line replacement at the Port Hood municipal building.

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 and compliance with municipal requirements.

Sampling activities have ensured compliance with operational approvals, with no exceedances detected. These efforts encompass a range of parameters essential for regulatory standards. All results from completed sampling have met the Canadian Drinking Guidelines with no issues. The next round of compliance testing will occur in March.

A hydrant maintenance/operation course has been scheduled for the first week in March, this course is focused on fire hydrant functions, flushing techniques, and operation. New staff completed a Lift Station operation and Maintenance course.

Speed statistics collected from January 1<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> in Margaree Forks and Chéticamp were provided.

Ongoing projects include lift station control panel replacements in Port Hood, control system upgrades in Port Hood, lift station control panel replacements in Port Hastings and filter head replacements at the Mabou water treatment plant

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

The municipality is collaborating with Green for Life (GFL) to enhance service for county residents by modifying the collection route and improving workflow. Affected residents will be notified during the week of February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025. The request for proposals for the spring heavy garbage pick up has been issued.

A project summary for the improved residential drop-off area at the Kenloch transfer station has been submitted to Divert Nova Scotia in hopes of securing funding for further development.

The municipality is partnering with the Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP) to offer community clean ups throughout the county. Education sessions are being planned in various schools throughout the county during the week of April 22<sup>nd</sup> to coincide with Earth Day. Social media posts developed on the following topics: textile donation, cardboard, sharps, what we accept at our facilities, the waste app, battery recycling and keeping garbage boxes and bags cleared from snow. The first meeting of the solid waste committee was held on Friday, January 24<sup>th</sup>.

Staff are reviewing the application process for additional bylaw enforcement training, defensive options, and provincial registration. Occupational Health and Safety policies are being reviewed and packaged for approval. A memorandum of understanding is being developed for comfort/warming centres.

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**

Equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA) strategy planning took place with both the Accessibility and Diversity and Inclusion committees. Equity leads participated in other planning sessions with AMANS and other municipalities and villages across the province. As part of Alzheimer's Awareness month, an Age Well session was held in Port Hood on "Understanding Dementia".

Planning for spring programming is well underway for programming, summer staffing and strategic planning for the upcoming fiscal year. Adult recreation sports and youth dance started the winter term with new offerings. Mabou Athletic Centre hosted the first ringette game in decades with support from Recreation and Community Wellness.

Multiple programs are underway including Creative Careers, the Accessibility Plan, Seniors Programming, NHL Street, Field of Dreams, and Values Workshop.

Meetings continue both with internal and external partners such as the YMCA, accessibility leads, and various community groups. Department staff participated in developing a vision and mission statement for the recreation & community wellness team.

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

The following projects were updated:

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

- Whycocomagh Wastewater Treatment Plant and Collection System
- Whycocomagh Effluent Pipe and Outfall

- Inverness Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Inverness Outfall
- Chéticamp Wellfield Exploration
- Inverness Wellfield Expansion/Exploration
- Judique Dam Rehabilitation
- Water Storage Tank Inspections
- Port Hood Lift Station # 1
- Central Avenue Lift Station Designs
- Foyer Pere Fiset

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

- Jajiktek Seawall Trail
- Active Transportation Planning Whycomomagh

#### **Compliance**

- Water & Wastewater 2024 Annual Reporting

#### **Planning and Development**

- Plan Inverness Municipal Planning Strategy & Land Use Bylaw
- Development & Servicing

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

- Asset Management & Asset Inventory Development
- Sewer Bylaws

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

Department heads within the municipality have begun to compile information for the 2025-26 budget. Worksheets will be issued to all departments to help facilitate the process. The 2023-24 audit is complete and the final financial statements have been issued to the province.

A draft credit card policy has been circulated for administration's review. The policy is to be presented to Council in the coming months. Staff are preparing for a spring tax sale. A number of files have been sent to legal for title searches. AJG presented a proposed insurance plan for participating fire departments with coverage projected to be in place by April. Updates to water meters continue. Staff are reviewing the final remaining flat rate accounts with about 50 remaining to be converted.

The Eastern District Planning Commission has a letter for short term rental accommodation owners to provide to the province for tourist registration. All requests can be directed to [rentals@edpc.ca](mailto:rentals@edpc.ca)

Multiple meetings continue regularly such as the finance department team, employee benefits, department heads, the Strait IT board, by-law committee, Diamond Group of 9, tipping fees proposal, bylaw updates, and the water utility committee. Discussions were had regarding the potential of water services being provided to homes on band land at Wacobah First Nation. 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 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 (CCD)**

Over the coming months the CCD team will continue to support community organizations, work towards formalizing and funding a robust population growth plan (including newcomers and youth) and finalize a department workplan for the next fiscal year. Recent department highlights include:

- February 12<sup>th</sup> – Healthcare Careers Fair held in We’koqma’q. This event was attended by over 100 high school students, and 35 presenters.
- Staff supported more than a dozen county volunteer organizations in preparing and submitting applications to the provincial department of Culture, Communities, Tourism and Heritage Community Facility Improvement Program, and AccessAbility Program.
- Staff hosted a board planning workshop with Strathspey Performing Arts Centre covering board governance, and strategic visioning. A second workshop will be held in March.
- Productive meetings were held with local Meals on Wheels providers to continue advancing planning of a county-wide program.
- A call has been put out for community volunteers for the Heritage Advisory Committee, with the deadline of March 1 for applications.

Partnerships continue with various partner organizations including ACAP Cape Breton, Cape Breton University, local school groups, Inverness County Literacy Association, community development and economic development organizations, Cabot Trail 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary planning, Destination 252, and the Jajikteq Seawall Trail.

Seven grants were distributed to municipal organizations through the Community Development Grants initiative. One arena received funding through the Recreation Facility Grant. Project completion reports for the 2024 beautification and gardening fund grants continue to be received.

**6. PRESENTATION: Strait Area Transit; Nichole Briand, General Manager**

Strait Area Transit (SAT) provides accessible, supportive, door-to-door transportation options to all residents of Inverness County, Richmond County and the Town of Port Hawkesbury. The organization is funded by the Government of Canada, the province of Nova Scotia, the Municipality of the County of Inverness, the Municipality of the County of Richmond, and the town of Port Hawkesbury. Both fixed route and Dial-A-Ride options are available. Strait Area Transit is finalizing a new business plan with the assistance of Rise Results. This new plan has several recommendations for advertising, which they plan to start implementing soon. Some of these recommendations include an enhanced website and social media presence, promotional offers and seasonal campaigns, and surveys and feedback systems.

The organization has a fleet of seven vehicles, eleven drivers, a general manager and dispatcher and is overseen by a Board of Directors from the Town of Port Hawkesbury, the Municipality of the County of Inverness, the Municipality of the County of Richmond, and the department of Community Services.

## 7. COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATIONS

- Community Matters Allons-y ensemble - The Cheticamp Adventure Map (district 1)

The Request of Council is \$1,000.00

*Recommendation to grant \$1000.00 to this project with funding coming from District 1 CDC funds.*

- Community Matters Allons-y ensemble - The Cheticamp Adventure Map (district 2)

The Request of Council is \$500.00

*Recommendation to grant \$500.00 to this project with funding coming from District 2 CDC funds.*

*Councillor Gillis declared a conflict of interest and stepped out of Council Chambers.*

- Dr. John Waters Community Health Centre – Roof Replacement

The Request of Council is \$4,000.00

*Recommendation to grant this \$4,000.00 request in full with funding coming from District 5 CDC funds.*

- Dr. John Waters Community Health Centre – Defibrillator

The Request of Council is \$3,117.04

*Recommendation to grant 50 % of this request (\$1558.52) with funding coming from District 5 CDC funds. Recommendation to grant \$500 to this request from District 3 CDC funds.*

*Councillor Gillis returned Council Chambers.*

- Port Hood & District Recreation Commission – Elevator Replacement

The Request of Council is \$15,030.00

*Recommendation to grant this request in full with funds coming from the Recreation Facility Grant Fund.*

## 8. UPCOMING COUNCIL MEETING DATES

*Consensus to move the dates of the May Council meetings to the following dates:*

*May 8<sup>th</sup> – Regular Council*

*May 22<sup>nd</sup> – Committee of the Whole*

## 9. FIRST READING: VENDING BYLAW

**MOTION:** *That Council give First Reading to the Mobile Vending Bylaw as included in today's Council package. The Public Hearing will be held on March 19<sup>th</sup> at 5 pm in Council Chambers.*

**MOVED BY:** Councillor Poirier

SECONDED BY: Councillor Gillis  
MOTION CARRIED

#### **10. FIRST READING: EXPENSE POLICY**

MOTION: *That Council give First Reading to the changes to the Municipal Expense Policy as included in today's Council package.*

MOVED BY: Councillor Gillis

SECONDED BY: Councillor Phillips

MOTION CARRIED

#### **11. HERITAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

*Deputy Warden Chisholm and Councillor Phillips agree to be members on the Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee.*

#### **12. MANDATORY RESPONSIBLE ALCOHOL SERVICE TRAINING**

The province of Nova Scotia introduced new regulations for the service of alcohol in December 2024. Anyone who serves alcohol must have this responsible service training. Through communication with various community groups in the county it has become apparent that there is a level of confusion about what these requirements entail especially for volunteer organizations. There is a fee and time commitment for anyone needing the training.

*Consensus that the municipality help to advocate for the concerns of volunteer groups regarding this training.*

#### **13. TAX RELIEF REQUEST – LA PLAGES ST PIERRE BEACH AND CAMPGROUND**

*Recommendation that the municipality deny the request for the removal of interest on the municipal tax accounts 02402181, 10350654, & 10554381 of the Enterprise Cormier Ltee O/A Plage St-Pierre Beach and Campground.*

*Recommendation that the accounts be removed from the tax sale process and the \$750.00 search fee be removed pending payment arrangements.*

#### **14. TEMPORARY BORROWING RESOLUTION – HEAVY EQUIPMENT PURCHASE**

MOTION: **WHEREAS** Section 66 of the Municipal Government Act provides that the Council of the Municipality of the County of Inverness, subject to the approval of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, may borrow to expend funds for a capital purpose as authorized by statute;

*WHEREAS the Council of the Municipality of the County of Inverness has adopted a capital budget for this fiscal year as required by Section 65 of the Municipal Government Act and are so authorized to expend funds for capital purposes as identified in their capital budget; and*

*WHEREAS the specific amounts and descriptions of the projects are contained in Schedule "A" (attached);*

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT**

*under the authority of Section 66 of the Municipal Government Act, the Council of the Municipality of the County of Inverness borrow a sum or sums not exceeding Dollars (\$525,967.00) for the purpose set out above, subject to the approval of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing;*

*THAT the sum be borrowed by the issue and sale of debentures of the Council of the Municipality of the County of Inverness to such an amount as the Council deems necessary;*

*THAT the issue of debentures be postponed pursuant to Section 92 of the Municipal Government Act and that a sum or sums not exceeding Five Hundred Twenty Five Thousand Nine Hundreds Sixty Seven Dollars (\$525,967.00) in total be borrowed from time to time from any chartered bank or trust company doing business in Nova Scotia;*

*THAT the sum be borrowed for a period not exceeding Twelve (12) Months from the date of approval of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing of this resolution;*

*THAT the interest payable on the borrowing be paid at a rate to be agreed upon; and*

*THAT the amount borrowed be repaid from the proceeds of the debentures when sold.*

MOVED BY: Councillor Gillis  
SECONDED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm  
MOTION CARRIED

**SCHEDULE A - CAPITAL PROJECTS**

Heading/Category – Heavy Equipment	Estimates \$
Item – 2024 Freightliner Dump Truck	238,815.00
Item – 2022 Split Stream Garbage Truck	287,152.00
<b>TOTAL REQUEST CONTAINED WITHIN THIS RESOLUTION</b>	<b>525,967.00</b>

**15. BELL ALIANT**

*Direction to staff to invite a representative from Bell Aliant to a meeting of Council to address unreliable land line service during power interruptions, notably in Margaree, Meat Cove and Lake Ainslie.*



**16. CORRESPONDENCE**

- Building Statistics for the month of January 2025 were provided by the Eastern District Planning Commission

**17. NEXT MEETING DATE**

March 6th, 2025 – 9:30 am; Regular Meeting of Council

**18. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** *That Council adjourn at 12:26 pm.*  
**Moved BY:** Councillor Poirier  
**MOTION CARRIED**