

Committee of the Whole Meeting
Thursday, March 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: Keith MacDonald, CAO
Melanie Beaton, Deputy CAO
Brian Luciano, CFO
Jason Calder, Acting Manager of Recreation and Community Wellness
Morgan Murray, Director of Culture and Community Development
Erin Gillis, Chief of Operations
Michelle Coffin, Governance and Bylaw Researcher
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 amended: The new agenda item # 17 is Second Reading of the Mobile Vending Bylaw.*

MOVED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm

SECONDED BY: Councillor Phillips

MOTION CARRIED

4. PRESENTATION: MILL ROAD SOCIAL ENTERPRISES; Cindy O'Neill, Caroline Cameron

Mill Road Social Enterprises provides vocational, personal, and social skills training for adults who have diverse abilities. The organization has been in existence for 44 years. The Mill Road Grows initiative is a food security program which comprises the accessible community garden and green house and mobile meals. These programs engage the participants in positive skill development. The community garden started in 2019 as a small garden and has grown ever since. Free produce and free workshops are provided to participants. \$10,000 is being requested of the Municipality to help cover the cost of a position for one day a week for 50 weeks. Additional creative fundraising initiatives would compliment these funds.

5. PRESENTATION: CELTIC MUSIC INTERPRETIVE CENTRE; Bob MacEachern, Reilly Graham, Marina MacEachern

The Celtic Music Centre (CMIC) is committed to showcasing Celtic music and culture and contributing to community development while delivering memorable guest experiences. The mission of the Celtic Music Interpretive Centre has always been to celebrate and foster the Celtic Music and Heritage of Cape Breton Island as a living tradition through archival preservation, education and performance. The facility houses a restaurant with a 120-person seating capacity, a music stage, exhibition galleries, quality-controlled archival storage, a gift shop, and administration offices. It is also connected to the Celtic Shores Coastal Trail, which hugs the ocean shoreline. The center plans to renovate and expand programs in 2024 with financial support. The goals are to rebrand, maximize space, and expand and refurbish retail lines, archives, and displays. Additionally, the aim is to digitize archives and exhibits, advance technology for live broadcasting, recording studio access, and optimize online ordering. The financial request of the Municipality is \$75,000 for the roof project. This contribution could be made over a period of time.

6. PRESENTATION: CAPE BRETON FUTURES IN FILM; Bill Culp

The film industry is a \$100 Billion industry worldwide, and in recent years film production has been taking place on Cape Breton Island. Benefits of film production include job creation, creative sector opportunities for a variety of skills, local money spent in rentals, suppliers and food, and a boost to the Tourism Industry. The Cape Breton Partnership has collaborated with Screen Nova Scotia, alongside industry partners and professionals, government, and educational institutions to build a thriving film/TV sector on Cape Breton Island. The Futures in Film program will help develop a local film workforce and database, connect creative artists and content creators with industry opportunities, promote local businesses to the film industry and create a Cape Breton Island presence on the Screen Nova Scotia locations database. The Cape Breton Futures in Film Information Session will be held on Tuesday March 25th at 1:00 pm at the Inverness Centre for the Arts.

7. PRESENTATION: FÉIS MHÀBU; Bernadette Campbell, Janet MacKenzie, Vincent MacDonald, Joey Ryan

Féis Mhàbu is a registered non-profit organization comprised of a board of 9 members. They have been in existence for over 32 years and their focus is on supporting Gaelic and Gaelic cultural development throughout Inverness County. They offer mentoring programs with local tradition bearers to ensure that the Gaelic culture thrives. Projects planned for 2025 include community ceilidhs at Judique Storytelling Gallery, Port Hastings Museum, Whycocomagh Waterfront Centre, a gaelic cultural camp for children, gaelic song gatherings at the Storyteller's Gallery and adult gaelic immersion in homes and halls. Féis Mhàbu helps Inverness County stand out as a unique cultural zone in Cape Breton and Nova Scotia. It creates support and longevity for 1 of the 3 of Nova Scotia's Heritage cultures & languages. The financial request of the Municipality is \$7,500.00 to help support their programming.

8. PRESENTATION: ACAP CAPE BRETON; Hannah de Loe, Kathleen Aikens

ACAP Cape Breton delivers environmental education in partnership with schools, community organizations, and municipalities. Their work spans four core areas: Habitat Restoration, Environmental Monitoring, Environmental Education, and Waste Diversion. They are committed to true reconciliation with Indigenous communities, through respectful relations, good partnerships, and recognition of Mi'kmaq as custodians of the land in Unama'ki. One of their current projects is protecting pollinator species-at-risk in Inverness County. Three species found within Inverness County that are considered at risk or endangered include the yellow banded bumble bee, monarch butterflies, and the gypsy cuckoo bumble bee. These help to pollinate wild plants, support global food security and create healthy ecosystems.

9. STAFF REPORTS

(a) Chestley Carr, Public Works

As winter slowly comes to an end, the public works department is still actively engaged in snow clearing. Staff perform necessary sanding and salting of sidewalks and municipal facilities in Port Hood, Judique and Inverness with contractors taking care of the Port Hastings, Whycocomagh, Mabou and Cheticamp locations.

Three repairs have been completed within the Inverness distribution system recently. All water towers are maintaining adequate levels to meet community needs.

Department staff have been addressing lighting repairs across the county and have completed the final phase of the sewer line replacement at the Port Hood administration building. Public Works in collaboration with OHS had been working diligently to create and implement safe work practices within the department. This new process will ensure the safe and proper use of all equipment used and will help with new employee orientation.

Staff assisted the finance department with water utility service connects and disconnects and finding water shut off locations and assisted the Capital Projects and Planning team in reviewing water/wastewater service requests to determine the capacity and compliance with municipal requirements. All results from completed sampling have met the Canadian Drinking Guidelines with no issues.

Speed statistics collected from February 1st to 28th in East Margaree, 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

In collaboration with Green for Life (GFL), solid waste collection routes were modified to improve service for residents. The changes took effect on March 3rd, 2025, and appear to be working well. The RFP for Spring 2025 heavy garbage collection closed on March 6th, 2025. Feedback on the preliminary road drawings for the Kenloch lower section redevelopment was provided to the consultant. Staff continue to work with Divert NS to explore potential funding opportunities for the improved residential drop-off area.

The municipality continues to partner with ACAP Cape Breton on various initiatives. Staff will join them for school visits at Cape Breton Highlands Academy, Inverness Academy and We'koqma'q First Nation schools on April 23rd, 24th and 25th.

New 3 stream bins have been purchased and installed at locations in the Port Hood administration office. These bins have been installed to help improve waste management in the office and keep plastics and papers separated for recycling. This is a pilot project that will be extended to the other municipal buildings.

Three bylaw software demonstrations have been completed. Staff are preparing quotes, and evaluating of each software, making sure that they are compatible with the GIS software that the municipality is using. Amendments and improvements to various bylaws are ongoing. Occupational Health and Safety Policies have been prepared and approved by Council.

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

The intergenerational cooking program has been launched with the initial session held during first week of March. It was the first of its kind for the department with 13 attendees and lots of positive feedback. A second date is being planned for April. The Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility survey has been launched. The purpose of this survey is to gather community feedback on accessibility and inclusion related topics within the municipality.

Recreation staff continue to work with Jr. NBA and community groups on spring offerings. The goal is to host this program in Port Hood, Inverness and Margaree. Learn to skate is still underway in Mabou. The group of 4-6 year olds have improved significantly. This age group may have the biggest impact, and we look forward to growing this program in the fall. Staff attended a *Mental Health in Sport* workshop in Antigonish hosted by Recreation Nova Scotia.

Ongoing projects include the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion strategy, Age Well services, Seniors Programming, Recreation and Community Wellness Planning, Inverness County Athletics and Ball Hockey.

Meetings continue both with internal and external partners such as Destination Cape Breton, AMANS quarterly wellness champion meeting, NHL Street, Inclusion NS, Accessibility Lunch and Learn, and the Bayview Education Centre Community Engagement project. Staff attended a facilitation workshop in Elmsdale to learn how to better host engagement sessions.

(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
- Port Hood Outfall
- Chéticamp Digester Walkway Replacement
- Chéticamp Wellfield Exploration
- Inverness Wellfield Expansion/Exploration
- Judique Dam Rehabilitation
- Water Storage Tank Inspections
- Port Hood Lift Station # 1
- Central Avenue Lift Station Designs
- Port Hood and Chéticamp Lift Station Replacements

Facilities/Buildings/Roads/Active Transportation

- Active Transportation Planning Whycocomagh
- Foyer Père Fiset
- Strathlorne Municipal Building and Recreation Municipal Building Security Enhancement and Access Control
- Inverness Park
- Port Hood Park
- Destination 252 Signage Plan
- Multi-Court Recreation Plan

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
- Fleet Management Committee

- Sewer Bylaws

(e) Brian Luciano, Finance Department

Budget planning for the upcoming fiscal year is underway. Budget working sheets are with departments and drafts are expected back during the first week of April.

Account collections continue with regular contact with delinquent accounts. 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 on May 27th. 53 initial properties are pending sale. AJG Insurance has provided the municipality with the insurance premium for participating volunteer fire departments for initial review and acceptance. The goal is to have coverage in place by April.

The Water Utility is assisting Capital Planning and Projects (CP&P) in mapping water utility standpipes across the county. Staff will add additional account details for asset management. Finance has begun investigating the feasibility and process required to implement a Road Association Levy. Information regarding a by-law and process was received from Kings County.

Multiple meetings continue regularly such as the finance department team, employee benefits, department heads, the Strait IT board, by-law committee, weather reviews, Diamond Follow Up, budget updates, Capital Bridge Financing, Solid Waste Review and the AMA Joint Regional meeting.

Multiple requests for proposals, requests for quotations and tenders are either open, awarded, or currently being evaluated.

Direction to staff to advertise for public members of the Audit Committee.

(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:

- A funding proposal has been submitted to the Office of Healthcare Professional Recruitment (OHPR) to support ongoing efforts to attract and retain healthcare workers.
- A successful Freedom to Read event was hosted at the Chéticamp Library on March 1st, engaging the community in discussions about literacy and sharing stories.
- Funding has been received to expand public transportation planning options.
- Members of the public have been appointed to the Heritage Advisory Committee.

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, food security initiatives, childcare options, summer festival support, and heritage property registry maintenance.

Two grants were distributed to municipal organizations through the Community Development Grants initiative.

10. DEBENTURE RESOLUTION AND CAPITAL FINANCE TBR

MOTION: *That Council approve a Temporary Borrowing Resolution for \$10,000,000.00 in the form of a revolving construction loan. This will provide the Municipality with the working capital to finance the projects while waiting on funds from the claim draws.*

MOVED BY: Councillor Gillis

SECONDED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: *That Council allow staff to do internal temporary financing to secure a line of credit.*

MOVED BY: Councillor Gillis

SECONDED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm

MOTION CARRIED

Recommendation that the Municipality borrow by the issue and sale of debentures a sum or sums not exceeding \$525,967, for a period not to exceed 5 years, subject to the approval of the Minister.

11. COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATIONS

Port Hood & Area Development Association: Breakwater Beach Parking Lot

The Request of Council is \$4,772.50

MOTION: *That Council grant this request in full with funds coming from District 5 CDC funds.*

MOVED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm

SECONDED BY: Councillor Gillis

MOTION CARRIED

12. NOTICE OF MOTION: REPEAL OF CAPITAL GRANTS TO FIRE DEPARTMENTS POLICY

A Notice of Motion was provided to Council regarding the Repeal of the *Capital Grants to Fire Departments* Policy. This item will be brought to the April 3rd Meeting of Council for approval.

13. SECOND READING: HOSPITALITY POLICY

MOTION: *That Council give Second Reading to the Hospitality Policy as included in today's Council package.*

MOVED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm

SECONDED BY: Councillor Poirier

MOTION CARRIED

14. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE MARCH 6 2025 PLANNING AND ADVISORY MEETING

I. FIRST READING: INVERNESS COUNTY LAND USE BY-LAW

MOTION: *That Council give First Reading to the Inverness County Land Use By-Law as included in today's Council package.*

MOVED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm

SECONDED BY: Councillor Poirier

MOTION CARRIED

II. FIRST READING: INVERNESS COUNTY MUNICIPAL PLANNING STRATEGY

MOTION: *That Council give First Reading to the Inverness County Municipal Planning Strategy as included in today's Council package.*

MOVED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm

SECONDED BY: Councillor Phillips

MOTION CARRIED

III. DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT APPLICATION BY CHARLAMARA HOLDINGS INC. FOR A MUSEUM AND RESTAURANT AT 759 CHÉTICAMP ISLAND ROAD, CHÉTICAMP ISLAND (PID 50168384)

MOTION: *That Council approve and give First Reading to the proposed development agreement application by Charlamara Holdings Inc. for a museum and restaurant at 759 Chéticamp Island Road, Chéticamp Island (PID 50168384).*

MOVED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm

SECONDED BY: Councillor Poirier

MOTION CARRIED

IV. DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT APPLICATION FROM CHARLAMARA HOLDINGS INC. FOR UP TO TWELVE (12) RENTAL COTTAGES AT CHÉTICAMP ISLAND ROAD, CHÉTICAMP (PIDS 50350693, 50350685, AND 50350677)

MOTION: *That Council approve and give First Reading to the proposed development agreement application from Charlamara Holdings Inc. for up to twelve (12) rental cottages at Chéticamp Island Road, Chéticamp (PIDs 50350693, 50350685, and 50350677).*

MOVED BY: Councillor Poirier

SECONDED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm

MOTION CARRIED

V. DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT APPLICATION BY CHARLAMARA HOLDINGS INC. FOR A TEST KITCHEN AT 13716 CABOT TRAIL, POINT CROSS, INVERNESS COUNTY, NS (PID 50089655)

MOTION: *That Council approve and give First reading to the proposed development agreement application by Charlamara Holdings Inc. for a test kitchen at 13716 Cabot Trail, Point Cross, Inverness County, NS (PID 50089655).*

MOVED BY: Councillor Phillips

SECONDED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm

MOTION CARRIED

15. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY (OH&S) POLICIES

MOTION: *That Council approve the OH&S Policies as presented:*

- Personal Protective Equipment Policy
- Preventative Maintenance Policy
- Training Communications Policy
- Inspection Policy
- Incident Investigation Policy
- Environmental Policy

MOVED BY: Councillor Phillips

SECONDED BY: Councillor Poirier

MOTION CARRIED

16. CORRESPONDENCE

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

17. NEXT MEETING DATE

April 3rd, 2025 – 10:00 am; Regular Meeting of Council

18. SECOND READING: MOBILE VENDING BYLAW

MOTION: *That Council give Second Reading to the Mobile Vending By-Law as included in today's Council package with the following amendments:*

- *An amendment to allow fruits and vegetables from Nova Scotia to be sold by mobile vendors.*
- *An amendment that allows the Permit Administrator to approve the restrictions as outlined. For example to approve mobile vendors to be closer than 50 feet away from each other.*

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

19. IN CAMERA

MOTION: *That Council move to "In Camera" at 12:21 pm to discuss a land issue.*
MOVED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm
SECONDED BY: Councillor Phillips
MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: *That Council move out of "In Camera" at 12:25 pm.*
MOVED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm
SECONDED BY: Councillor Phillips
MOTION CARRIED

20. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: *That Council adjourn at 12:25 pm.*
MOVED BY: Councillor Poirier
MOTION CARRIED