

Committee of the Whole Meeting
Thursday, May 22nd, 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 (online)

Staff: Keith MacDonald, CAO
Melanie Beaton, Deputy CAO
Brian Luciano, CFO
Chestley Carr, Director of Public Works
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
Maggie MacDonald, Accessibility and Senior Safety Coordinator
Crystal Jones, Manager of Solid Waste
John Bain, Executive Director, Eastern District Planning Commission

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 Poirier
SECONDED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm
MOTION CARRIED

4. PROCLAMATION: ACCESS AWARENESS WEEK *(read by Warden MacIsaac)*

WHEREAS 2025 the week of May 25 – 31, 2025 is recognized as Access Awareness Week; and
WHEREAS Access Awareness Week aims to celebrate achievements made both by and for persons with disabilities in the areas of accessibility, transportation, housing, employment, recreation, education and communication; and

WHEREAS this is the 39th year that this public awareness initiative has taken place in Nova Scotia; and The theme for 2025 Access Awareness Week is Our Voices, Our Votes: Disability Rights in Action; and

WHEREAS accessibility barriers are many and interconnected, removing and preventing them is challenging and complex; and

WHEREAS the foundation of Nova Scotia’s Accessibility Act is to provide, support, and protect the rights of persons with disabilities to full inclusion and accessibility by the identification, prevention and removal of accessibility barriers; and

WHEREAS Access Awareness Week promotes the inclusion of all Nova Scotians with disabilities as full citizens within our communities; and

WHEREAS through public awareness, community partnerships and education, this campaign aims to foster an environment of equal participation for persons with disabilities within

THEREFORE I, Bonny MacIsaac, Warden of the Municipality of Inverness County do hereby proclaim May 26 - June 1, 2025 as “Access Awareness Week” in the Municipality of Inverness County.

5. STAFF REPORTS

(a) Chestley Carr, Department of Public Works

Public Works crews have been actively preparing by ramping up essential maintenance across the region. Over the past few weeks, teams have successfully repaired multiple water and sewer line issues across the municipality, ensuring reliable service and minimizing disruptions for residents.

Additional activities of staff include:

- Leak detection efforts in Mabou and Inverness.
- Lift station maintenance (inspecting pumps, clearing debris).
- Servicing lawn care equipment.
- Distribution System – four repairs completed in Port Hood, Mabou and Whycomomagh.
- Community standpipes – two repairs completed in Inverness.
- Municipal lighting – ongoing in collaboration with Hilltop Electric.
- Road maintenance – gravel delivery to Arts Centre Road Inverness.
- Public Works SOPs – the creation of safe work practices and policies is underway in collaboration with Occupational Health and Safety.

Staff assisted the finance department with water utility service connects and disconnects and finding water shut off locations and assisted the recreation department with transporting and setting up equipment at the Mabou arena playground. Regular maintenance is conducted on

municipal hydrants and generators, and regular sampling and testing of water is carried out to ensure the safety of water supplies.

Speed statistics collected from April 1st to 30th 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 and filter head replacements at the Mabou water treatment plant.

(b) Erin Gillis, Operations Department

The 2025 Spring Bulky garbage collection has begun. Community clean-up events, supported by ACAP and community partners have removed 2115 kg of waste from roads, trails and communities. The solid waste team is preparing for a full release of a revised Sort Guide to all County residents to improve education on proper waste sorting. A Residential Household Hazardous Waste Drop-off Event will be held on Thursday, June 5, 2025, from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm at the Judique Firehall and Margaree Forks Firehall. School presentations were held at Bayview on April 15th, Whycocomagh Education Centre on April 15th and Inverness on May 1st. Litter kits have been extremely popular this year. They have been distributed at 10 Canada Post locations and 3 branches of the Eastern Counties Regional Library.

The municipal bylaw officer will be among the first in the province to have a TMR as part of their uniform. This will provide an avenue for constant communication and increase the officer's safety while in the field and responding to residential calls.

Development continues on the Occupational Health and Safety Programs and Policies as well as training on incident reporting, hazard identification, and control with public works and solid waste.

A regional meeting with Public Field Communications on Cape Breton Highlands emergency communications struggles was held in Baddeck. Planning and coordination of meetings is underway for province wide live EMO training sessions.

Projects currently ongoing include C&D regulatory changes, storage building construction in Kenloch, review and assessment of the Extended Producer Responsibilities (EPR), Pleasant Bay waste audit, collections route review and bylaw updates.

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

Department staff recently participated in Wellness Day at Dalbrae Academy. It was a very well organized event that was created by students in partnership with NS Health. The municipality intends to participate in this event annually. The Jr. NBA program launched in three communities hosting 130 participants. Many volunteers assisted with the program. Registration for Ball Hockey went well. Initial registration was 185 participants in 3 communities. The annual Inverness County cribbage tournament was held with 27 teams in attendance. Roll out of the new online registration software program has begun and will continue through May with an early June launch date.

The ongoing flower potting workshops have been successful and provide older adults with opportunities to socialize, learn, and be creative this spring. The intergenerational cooking workshop brought together older adults and youth to learn new skills, join in conversation, and cook together. The Equity Diversity Inclusion and Accessibility Strategy is complete and has been presented to Council for approval.

Ongoing projects continue such as Age Well services, Seniors programming, Rec and Community Wellness Planning, Lacross NS – Try it and a community bike repair and maintenance program.

Meetings continue both with internal and external partners such as ISANS – Intercultural Workplaces, Take Note Graphic Design, AMANS, and the municipal finance department. A recreation component highlighting summer programming will be featured in the next edition of the Participaper.

(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
- Judique Wastewater Treatment Plant and Outfall
- Chéticamp Digester Walkway Replacement
- Mabou Wellfield Pump Testing and Wellfield Expansion
- 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

Linear Infrastructure Projects

- Central Avenue Water & Wastewater Replacement

Facilities/Buildings/Roads/Active Transportation

- Jajiktek Seawall Trail
- Central Avenue Complete Streets
- Active Transportation Planning Whycocomagh
- Foyer Père Fiset
- Strathlorne Municipal Building & Recreation Municipal Building Security Enhancement and Access Control
- Chéticamp Pedestrian Lighting

- Inverness Park
- Port Hood Park
- Destination 252 Signage Plan
- Multi-Court Recreation Facility

Planning and Development

- Development & Servicing

Joint Committees, Foundational Documents, and Core Competencies

- Asset Management & Asset Inventory Development
- Fleet Management Committee
- Sewer Discharge Bylaw

(e) Brian Luciano, Finance Department

The 2024-2025 annual audit is underway. Doane Grant Thornton has begun sending initial requests to the finance department. The focus on year end will begin once the budget sessions wrap up.

Account collections continue with regular contact with delinquent accounts. A list of write off requests will come forward to Council in June. 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 the spring tax sale on May 27th. 46 properties are presently listed for sale. The sale will be held at St. Peter’s Parish Hall to accommodate a large crowd.

Finance has begun investigating the feasibility and process required to implement a Road Association Levy. Information regarding by-law and process was received from Kings County.

A new process for reviewing and approving invoices is now in place. Directors receive and review invoices tied to their budget lines prior to processing. Finance is assisting Capital Projects and Planning in gathering claim data for submission.

Multiple meetings continue regularly such as the finance department team, employee benefits, department heads, the Literacy Council, Grants Policy Review, Pension Enhancement Review, vehicle equipment and repairs, and planning for the upcoming Staff Day.

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, including fleshing out a more structured program of supports and resources, 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:

- The inaugural Inverness County Excellence in Healthcare Awards was held on April 23rd in Cheticamp recognizing outstanding healthcare professionals in Inverness County.

- The Healthcare Careers Fair was held on May 6th at the Inverness Education Centre and Academy. The event connected students from two schools with 17 healthcare professionals.
- A third consecutive year of funding was received from the Office of Healthcare Professional Recruitment (OHPR) to continue recruitment efforts.
- A Festival-focused Community Navigator Session was held on April 26th at the Inverness County Centre for the Arts. The event brought together festival organizers to tackle permitting, fundraising, safety, and other challenges.
- 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.

Partnerships continue with various partner organizations including Destination 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, heritage initiatives, youth retention and heritage property registry maintenance.

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

6. PRESENTATION: LA COOPÉRATIVE DE TRANSPORT DE CHÉTICAMP LTÉ (L'ACABIE) Marielle Bourgeois

L'Acabie, is a community based, charitable, non-profit, transportation cooperative based out of Chéticamp and has been in operation since 2012. They have four non-accessible 6 passenger vans, two non-accessible 5 passenger SUVs and three accessible 4 passenger vans. They provide affordable, reliable transportation services to medical appointments for the residents of Inverness County. The EHS Pilot Project that was originally for 15 months, has been extended until the end of September 2025. This has proved to be an essential service helping with patient flow and ensuring that patients receive appropriate care in a timely manner.

7. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANT APPLICATION:

Margaree Food Security Program – Margaree Food Security Gift Card program
The Request of Council is \$2,500.00

Recommendation to fund this request in full with funds coming from District 2 CDC funds.

8. COLLABORATIVE FOOD NETWORKS FUNDING PROGRAM

The Collaborative Food Networks (CFN) is a program from the provincial government that provides seed funding to a group of organizations that deliver food security related services. They build a

community's capacity to address their own needs thereby restoring self-determination, improving health outcomes and enhancing quality of life. The Department of Opportunities and Social Development provides a \$200,000.00 grant to a lead organization to develop and coordinate partnerships across a geographic area to address food related needs.

9. EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

MOTION: *That Council approve the 2025 Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility Plan.*

MOVED BY: Councillor MacLennan

SECONDED BY: Deputy Warden Gillis

MOTION CARRIED

10. TIPPING FEES

Whereas Section 49 (1) (b) of the Municipal Government Act authorizes municipalities to regulate and set charges for the use of solid waste facilities within their jurisdiction; and

Whereas the Municipality of the County of Inverness has not increased its tipping fees since 2006; and

Whereas the Province of Nova Scotia introduced new regulations in March 2025 that require the municipality to sort and transport C&D waste to a receiving site which has resulted in increased operational costs for the municipality; and

Whereas, as a result, current tipping fees do not cover the tipping fee the municipality pays at receiving sites which impacts the level of solid waste services the municipality can provide; and

Whereas the Municipality of the County of Inverness has the lowest tipping fees of all the Cape Breton municipalities; and

Whereas as tipping fees at receiving sites increase the cost of service for the municipality will increase; and

Whereas increasing tipping fees will ensure that the municipality does not rely on the general tax base to fund solid waste/waste management facility operations; and

Whereas a new tipping fee structure will limit the impact to residents while promoting proper sorting of C&D materials by offering lower fees for sorted loads and applying higher fees to unsorted or contaminated loads.

Therefore be it resolved that the Council of the Municipality of the County of Inverness supports an increase to tipping fees at the municipality's waste management facilities to ensure that it has the revenue to continue to provide appropriate levels of service to residents while also promoting responsible C&D material disposal; and be it further

Resolved that as of September 2, 2025, the Council Municipality of the County of Inverness will increase tipping fees as outlined in an effort to cover the operational costs associated with C&D collection at waste management facilities.

WASTE TYPE	PROPOSED FEE
Residential RSW (Garbage)	No charge
Commercial RSW (Garbage)	\$97.20 MT
Unsorted C&D (Residential & ICI)	\$110.00 MT
Mixed C&D/RSW (Residential & ICI)	\$235.00 MT
Treated Wood	\$110.00 MT
Sorted C&D (Residential & ICI)	\$48.00 MT
Leaf & Yard Waste (Residential)	\$48.00 MT

11. OPERATIONS BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025-26

Documents will be presented to Council in June for approval of the 2025-26 Operations Budget.

12. CAPITAL BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025-26

Documents will be presented to Council in June for approval of the 2025-26 Capital Budget.

13. FIRST READING: REPEAL OF BYLAW 14 – TAX ON COMMENCING BUSINESS

MOTION: *That Council give First Reading to the Repeal of Bylaw 14 – Tax on Commencing Business.*
MOVED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm
SECONDED BY: Councillor Poirier
MOTION CARRIED

14. FIRST READING: REPEAL OF BY-LAW 22 – IMPROVEMENT CHARGES

MOTION: *That Council give First Reading to the Repeal of Bylaw 22 – Improvement Charges*
MOVED BY: Councillor Phillips
SECONDED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm
MOTION CARRIED

15. FIRST READING: REPEAL OF BY-LAW 46 – AMENDMENT TO THE SERVICE FEES FOR PAYMENT CARDS

MOTION: *That Council give First Reading to the Repeal of Bylaw 46 – Amendment to the Service Fees for Payment Cards.*
MOVED BY: Councillor Poirier
SECONDED BY: Councillor Phillips
MOTION CARRIED

16. SECOND READING: WIND TURBINE BYLAW

MOTION: *That Council give Second Reading and approve the amendments to the Wind Turbine – Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw as presented in the amending pages.*

MOVED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm

SECONDED BY: Councillor Poirier

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: *That Council give Second Reading and approve the amendments to the Wind Turbine Land Use Bylaw as presented in the amending pages.*

MOVED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm

SECONDED BY: Councillor Phillips

MOTION CARRIED

17. SECOND READING: PLAN INVERNESS COUNTY BYLAW

MOTION: *That Council give Second Reading and adopt the new Municipal Planning Strategy, the Plan Inverness Document for the Municipality of the County of Inverness.*

MOVED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm

SECONDED BY: Councillor Gillis

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: *That Council give Second Reading and approve the Land Use Bylaw for the Plan Inverness Document.*

MOVED BY: Councillor Phillips

SECONDED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm

MOTION CARRIED

18. NOTICES OF MOTION

Notice was provided to Council that during upcoming meetings the following policies will be put before Council for consideration and discussion. All relevant information required will be provided in the Council package in advance of the discussions.

- Disposal of Surplus Real Property Policy
- Community Grants Policy

19. CORRESPONDENCE

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

20. NEXT MEETING DATE

June 5th, 2025 – 9:30 am; Regular Meeting of Council

21. IN CAMERA

MOTION: *That Council move to “In Camera” at 11:36 am to discuss four land issues.*
MOVED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm
SECONDED BY: Councillor Phillips
MOTION CARRIED

Councillor Gillis left the meeting.

MOTION: *That Council move out of “In Camera” at 11:58 am.*
MOVED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm
SECONDED BY: Councillor Poirier
MOTION CARRIED

22. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: *That Council adjourn at 11:58 am.*
MOVED BY: Councillor Poirier
MOTION CARRIED