

Committee of the Whole Meeting
Thursday, February 19, 2026
9:30 a.m.
Council Chambers

MINUTES

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

Staff: Keith MacDonald, Chief Administrative Officer
Melanie Beaton, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Erin Gillis, Chief of Operations
Chestley Carr, Director of Public Works
Morgan Murray, Director of Culture and Community Development
Christina MacDonell, Director of Finance
Krista MacInnis, Recreation Coordinator
Debbie Nicholson, Administrative Assistant to Council/Chief Administrative Officer
Megan Wludyka, Chief of Communications
Siobhan Beaton, Communications & Digital Marketing Coordinator
Michelle Coffin, Governance and Bylaw Governance (online)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Warden MacIsaac called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. and welcomed all in attendance. Roll call was taken.

2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Warden MacIsaac acknowledged that the land on which we gather is located on 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 Phillips
MOTION CARRIED

4. PROCLAMATION: HEART MONTH

Warden MacIsaac read the following proclamation:

WHEREAS February is recognized across Canada as Heart Month to raise awareness of heart disease and stroke and to support life-saving research; and

WHEREAS heart disease remains a leading cause of death in Canada, and increased awareness, prevention, and early action can reduce illness, disability, and loss of life; and

WHEREAS Heart Month provides an opportunity to encourage residents to take steps to improve their heart health; and

WHEREAS residents are encouraged to learn the signs and symptoms of heart disease, adopt heart-healthy lifestyles, and obtain training in life-saving skills such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and automated external defibrillator (AED) use; and

WHEREAS we recognize and commend the many volunteers, health professionals, and researchers whose dedication helps prevent heart disease and stroke and supports those affected;

THEREFORE, be it resolved that I, Warden Bonny MacIsaac, on behalf of the Council of the Municipality of the County of Inverness do hereby proclaim February 2026 as Heart Month in Inverness County.

5. STAFF REPORTS

(a) Chestley Carr, Public Works

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- January 19: Staff successfully repaired a watermain break on MacLean Street, Inverness.
- January 26: A frozen water pipe in Judique resulted in a water conservation directive. With contractor assistance the frozen section was thawed and water flow restored.
- Department staff replaced an above ground lift station pump in lift station 2 Port Hood.
- Assessments were done on lift stations 3 and 6 Port Hood with the help of a contractor.
- Reinstatement of radio communications at lift stations 4, 5 and 6 Port Hood.
- The Inverness wastewater treatment plant clarifier required repairs due to freezing temperatures during January.
- Staff revised snow removal methods due to lower provincial salt supplies.
- Staff are processing water and wastewater treatment data collected by the SCADA systems, field testing and analytical sampling events from 2025.
- A non-functioning standpipe on Campbell Street Inverness was replaced.

- Several streetlights in Inverness were repaired. Additional streetlight repairs in other communities are pending contractor schedules.

(b) Erin Gillis, Operations

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- Due to the holiday on Monday February 16, a curbside collection was scheduled for February 13 to minimize the impact for residents.
- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is ongoing. Concerns with Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional (ICI) waste collection, storage, shipment, and marketing.
- Solid waste education continues with a new sort guide and social media posts.
- The training schedule for 2026/27 Occupational Health and Safety Program is being built.
- Regional Emergency Management Organization (REMO) update - Fire services review meetings were held in Truro with the Nova Scotia Department of Emergency Management and municipal leaders.
- Approximately 400 metric tonnes of Municipal Solid Waste/Construction & Demolition were transferred to GFL Environmental Inc., Guysborough, during January: approximately a 113% increase from same period as last year.
- Approximately 30 metric tonnes of recycling transferred to Camdon Recycling, Sydney.
- Approximately 75 calls received on the Solid Waste toll-free line from mid January until mid February. The higher call volume was primarily due to weather-related collection disruptions.
- Eight bylaw calls were received, with two issues closed and one open investigation.

(c) Krista MacInnis, Recreation and Community Wellness

Recreation Program Initiatives and Highlights:

- January 8 – Scorched Paint Craft – 16 attendees.
- January 29 – Snowshoeing event – nine attendees.
- February 5 – Escape Room – 16 attendees.
- Inverness Crib Play – in conjunction with Mill Road Social Enterprises.
- January 31 – Full Moon Snowshoe in Judique – 5 attendees.
- February 7- Feis Fuar Lantern Light Walk & Bonfire, Mabou – over 25 attendees.
- January 24 – Ski Margaree Try It Event – 30 attendees.
- There is a significant increase in rentals for winter equipment this season.
- Summer Camp Venues are confirmed for July 6-10 in Creignish and July 13-16 in Margaree.
- Additional projects include the Smart TV Program, Playfinder Online Rentals Booking Project, Inverness County Book Club, Margaree Forks Library Ground Trail and Playground, Dalbrae Basketball Tournament, Whycomomagh Teen Drop-in, Mabou Rugby, Inverness Wrestling, and Just Breathe Yin Yoga.
- The February Recreation flyer is attached to the February 19 Council meeting package.

- The March Recreation flyer will be posted on the Municipal website, shared on Facebook and emailed directly to all members of Council at the start of the month.

(d) Melanie Beaton, Capital Projects

Current Initiatives and Highlights:

- Jajikte Seawall Trail – The 40 % Design Report has been submitted.
- Kenloch Construction & Demolition Cell Closure Plan – The proposals have been evaluated and scored. The Municipality is seeking clarification from vendors on minor points.
- Port Hastings & Port Hawkesbury Infrastructure Planning – Municipal staff, along with Town of Port Hawkesbury staff will review the RFP submissions.
- Judique Dam – the 90% Design Report has been received.
- Inverness Water Source of Supply – The Drilling for Production Well # 1 is ongoing.
- Chéticamp Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) Digester – Work is expected to be completed in April.
- Development and Servicing – Water and wastewater service requests and inquiries for proposed developments were reviewed.
- Municipal Public Works Association of Nova Scotia (MPWANS) 2026 Conference – To be held this spring in Chéticamp. Local accommodations are being booked, and sponsorship details and promotional materials are being developed.

(e) Christina MacDonell, Finance

Department Highlights:

- The draft non-consolidated financial statements have been received from auditors and are under review. The County of Inverness Municipal Housing Corporation (CIMHC) portion of the audit is nearing completion.
- Meetings continue with department heads to review their respective budgets.
- Tipping fee collections continue on outstanding accounts.
- Department staff continue to work on tax sale files before scheduling the next tax sale.
- The insurance policy renewal should be finalized by late February or early March.
- The most recent water utility bills are due on February 21. Door hanger reminders will be distributed for any overdue accounts during the month of February.
- Purchase Order (PO) implementation is going well.
- Multiple requests for proposals, requests for quotations and tenders are either open, under evaluation or were recently awarded.

(f) Morgan Murray, Culture and Community Development (CCD)

Major Projects and Initiatives:

- Childcare – Staff recently met with directors and chairs of four county non-profit centres.

- Community Leadership and Capacity - Ongoing support to community and cultural organizations and halls across governance, funding readiness, and operations.
- Economic Development – Ongoing collaboration with the Cape Breton Partnership supporting business growth.
- Healthcare – Attraction and Retention activities are ongoing. The 2026 Healthcare awards nominations and sponsorship solicitation are underway.
- Heritage – The Heritage Property Program modernization is underway.
- Inverness County Asylum – Connections have been made with neighboring municipalities to establish a working group.
- Libraries – The new Whycomomagh branch is opening later this winter.
- Newcomers – A successful newcomer event was recently held in Port Hood.
- Reconciliation – Collaboration continues with Mi'kmaw partners on infrastructure and community initiatives.
- Volunteers – The 2026 Volunteer Recognition Program planning is underway.

6. PRESENTATION: CHRIS BELLEMORE, Chéticamp Search and Rescue

The Chéticamp Search and Rescue Team has been in existence since 1972. They cover parts of Inverness and Victoria Counties from Ingonish, Cape North, Chéticamp, Margaree up to Hunter Mountain, along the Cabot Trail. The group is comprised of 38 active members. They have averaged seven searches per year over the last three years. Twenty-five training sessions were held in 2025 to support team building for effective searches. The group also provides a safety presence at four to six community events per year. Their infrastructure and equipment includes a Search and Rescue Hall, transport truck and command centre, and search and rescue equipment. Most of their revenue comes from local fundraising. Their financial request of the Municipality for 2026 is \$7500.

7. REGIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION (REMO) UPDATE, Erin Gillis

The Municipality is working on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with participating Municipal members (Victoria County, Richmond County, and the Town of Port Hawkesbury) to create a Regional Emergency Management Organization (REMO). A funding request has been submitted to the province and was recently approved. There is some documentation coming from the province for a template of bylaws and shared services agreement.

8. NOTICES OF MOTION

This is notice to Council that during future meetings the following bylaws and policies will be presented for Council's consideration and discussion. All the information needed will be in the Council meeting packages in advance of the discussions.

- Bylaw 42 - No Smoking Bylaw (suggesting repeal and replace with new Nuisance Bylaw)
- Bylaw 10 - Anti-Litter Bylaw (suggesting repeal and replace with new Nuisance Bylaw)
- Honorariums for Citizens and Advisory Committees Policy (suggesting repeal)

9. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANT APPLICATIONS:

- Regional: Chéticamp Area Residential and Educational Society (CARES) – Van Purchase
The Request of Council is \$10,000.
Recommendation to support this request in full with funds coming from the Regional CDC funds (1/3), District 1 Discretionary Funds (1/3) and District Discretionary Funds (1/3).
- Regional: Inverness/Victoria Federation of Agriculture – Agri Advance Initiative
The Request of Council is \$10,000.
Recommendation to invite members of the Inverness/Victoria Federation of Agriculture to present at a future meeting of Council.
- Emergency: Mabou & District Volunteer Fire Department – Generac backup generator
The Request of Council is \$5,000.
Recommendation to support this request in full with funds coming from the Emergency Measures Fund.
- District 3: Mill Road Social Enterprises – Community Garden Enhancement
The Request of Council is \$5,000.
Recommendation to support this request in full with funds coming from District 3 CDC funds.

10. NOVA SCOTIA POWER (NSP) PLANNED OUTAGES

Direction to staff: Following miscommunication from Nova Scotia Power regarding two planned outages February 9 and 17, the Municipality has requested a letter be sent to NSP flagging concerns, request certain information be included for clarity on future outage communication, and offer to provide clarity around affected areas going forward.

11. CORRESPONDENCE

- Correspondence recently issued to the Honourable John White, Minister of the Nova Scotia Housing Department, extending an invitation to discuss the advancement of housing opportunities in the region was provided to Council.
- The Eastern District Planning Commission January 2026 Building Statistics were provided to Council.

12. NEXT MEETING DATE

March 5, 2026 – 9:30 a.m.; Regular Meeting of Council

13. “IN CAMERA”

MOTION: *That Council move to "In Camera" at 11:26 a.m. to discuss a contract item and two human resource items.*
MOVED BY: Councillor Phillips
SECONDED BY: Councillor Poirier
MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: *That Council move out of "In Camera" at 1:07 p.m.*
MOVED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm
SECONDED BY: Councillor Poirier
MOTION CARRIED

14. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: *That Council adjourn at 1:07 p.m.*
MOVED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm
MOTION CARRIED