

Committee of the Whole Meeting
Thursday, March 26, 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
Councillor John MacLennan

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
Debbie Nicholson, Administrative Assistant to Council/CAO
Megan Wludyka, Chief of Communications
Siobhan Beaton, Communications & Digital Marketing Coordinator
Keshi Moonian, Administrative Assistant in Recreation

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. PUBLIC FEEDBACK OPPORTUNITY

- i. Rezoning Development Agreement: Request for a mixed-use residential development on 47 Upper Railway Street, Inverness, by SCD Planning and Design on behalf of Place Craft Properties Inc.

Eastern District Planning Commission Executive Director John Bain provided an overview of the proposed development for 47 Upper Railway Street, Inverness. An oral submission was provided by Ian MacMillan and James Ryan. No written submissions were received.

Recommendation that this file advance to Second Reading on April 2, 2026.

- ii. Development Agreement – request for a resort on 36 Chemin De L’Anse Des Bois Maries, Petit Étang, by Omar Gandhi Architects on behalf of Charlamara Holdings Inc.

Eastern District Planning Commission Executive Director John Bain provided an overview of the proposed development for 36 Chemin De L’Anse Des Bois Maries, Petit Étang. No oral submissions were provided. Three written submissions were received and forwarded to Council.

Recommendation that this file advance to Second Reading on April 2, 2026.

5. STAFF REPORTS

(a) Chestley Carr, Public Works

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- March 2: Crews responded quickly to minimize the loss of water at a watermain break on Forest St., Inverness.
- Snow removal efforts were successful during the winter months. Staff were diligent in clearing roads, sidewalks and around hydrants after the many snow events.
- Recent repairs to Port Hood lift station # 6 will improve pumping capacity and overall reliability.
- Work continues in conjunction with Lynk Electric to improve the monitoring capabilities of Lift Stations 4, 5 and 6 in Port Hood.
- Staff replaced an additional above ground lift station pump in Port Hood lift station 2 due to damage resulting from a freezing event during the winter.
- Public works crews responded to two non-functioning standpipes in Inverness. Both were emergency responses to residents with damaged service lines needing immediate repairs.
- Several streetlights in Inverness and Port Hood were repaired. Staff continue to work with our contractor to resolve any outstanding issues promptly.
- Calls received by the emergency line involved issues such as blocked culverts, collapsed driveways, water shut offs and flooding were addressed, or referred where necessary.

(b) Erin Gillis, Operations

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- The curbside collection route review is underway to address inefficiencies identified through driver feedback, missed collections and service delays.
- The 2026 Bulky Garbage Collection Program is currently in development.
- An updated Residential Sort Guide will be included in the Spring edition of the Participaper.
- Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP) has organized school visits in April at Whyccomagh Education Centre, Pleasant Bay School and Dalbrae Academy for Earth Month.
- “What goes where Wednesday” on Facebook will highlight new extended producer responsibility (EPR) blue bag items and top searches in Recycle Cape Breton’s Waste Wizard.
- The Regional Emergency Management Office (REMO) process is underway. A draft bylaw, shared services agreement, and advisory committees are being developed.
- A partnership with Red Cross is being developed to assist with emergency planning, resourcing, and shelter identification.
- Approximately 464 metric tonnes of municipal solid waste/construction & demolition material was transferred to GFL Environmental Inc., Guysborough, during this reporting period: which is an 11% increase from same period as last year.

(c) Keshi Moonian, Recreation and Community Wellness

Recreation Program Initiatives and Highlights:

- March 3 – Full Moon Snowshoe, Judique.
- March 6 - École NDA Job Fair, Chéticamp.
- March 7 – Teen Drop-in- PlayIRL, Whyccomagh.
- March 16 – 3 v 3 Basketball Tournament, Mabou.
- Recurring events include a Biweekly Games Night in Hillsborough, Sensory Skate in Mabou, March Through Winter Activity Challenge, Seniors Music Bingo in Whyccomagh and Mabou, Winter Wanderers Senior Snowshoe series, Inverness Cribbage, Escape Rooms in Whyccomagh and Judique, and the Inverness County Book Club.
- Anti-Bias training for Municipal staff was held on March 9.
- Facilities are being booked for the upcoming Get Active Summer Programming Season.
- Through a New Horizons Seniors Grant, the Municipality purchased emergency preparedness supplies (batteries, shovels, food hampers) for community halls/comfort centres for seniors and vulnerable people in the event of severe weather or emergencies.
- The April 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:

- Jajiktek Seawall Trail – The 60% Design Report has been submitted.
- Central Avenue Inverness Water and Wastewater Replacement/Complete Streets – The final version of the revised Phase 1 package and retender is under review.
- Port Hastings and Port Hawkesbury Infrastructure Planning - Proposals were reviewed and scored through a consensus process in collaboration with the Town of Port Hawkesbury. A bidder was recommended based on technical and financial criteria scores.
- Inverness Water Source of Supply – Drilling for Production Well 1 is complete with pump testing scheduled for late March.
- Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative (CEPI) Workshop helps to strengthen municipal relationships with Indigenous partners and increase Indigenous consultation to improve Etuaptmumk approach to municipal projects.
- The Foyer Père Fiset build continues in Chéticamp.
- Production Well 1 Replacement in Dunmore – Meetings were held with the contractor to coordinate tasks and schedules.
- Grand Étang and Margaree chargers – Parts are on order to repair chargers not working due to rust.
- The installation of two new bay doors by Iller Door Systems is complete at the Strathlorne Recycling Facility.
- Whycocomagh Wastewater Treatment Plant - Work is being separated into phases that spend available Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) funding in the short term, and a second phase for remaining works to complete the original scope. The tender package for Phase 1 is currently being prepared.

(e) Christina MacDonell, Finance

Department Highlights:

- Draft consolidated financial statements received from auditors and under internal review.
- Successful budget planning meetings held with all departments has supported the creation of a detailed budget to ensure accuracy and assist with invoice coding following budget approval for next fiscal.
- The Capital Investment Plan (CIP) reporting information has been issued to the province.
- The collection of outstanding accounts for tipping fees continues.
- Insurance renewal documents for next season have been submitted.
- Interest has been posted on Water Utility accounts for the month of February. Door knockers were distributed for severely overdue accounts which resulted in payments.
- Department staff continue to work on tax sale files before scheduling the next tax sale.
- Multiple requests for proposals and expressions of interest are either open, or under evaluation.

(f) Morgan Murray, Culture and Community Development

Major Projects and Initiatives:

- Healthcare Awards – April 22 in Chéticamp. Thirty-six nominations have been received across ten categories.
- Culture and Heritage- Provincial cuts are creating real pressure across county organizations, with active coordination underway to help groups manage the impact.
- Funding - The Community Impact Employment Program has launched, with a new Community Funding Policy framework also moving into implementation.
- Childcare – Sector coordination is underway across existing centres.
- Food – Support continues for organizations’ proposals to provincial food programs.
- Heritage – Plans are underway to convene culture and heritage organizations to investigate approaches to managing recent provincial cuts.
- Housing – Funding opportunities are being sought, and projects are being coordinated with community housing organizations.
- The Whycomagh Public Library is on schedule to open soon.
- Transportation – Staff are finalizing results of the Public Transportation Review.
- Municipal funding grants were issued to organizations throughout the county through the Recreation Facility Grant, Emergency Measures Fund, Regional Community Development Grant, and Community Development Grants.

6. PRESENTATION: MABOU ATHLETIC CENTRE (John Simon Beaton)

The Mabou & District Athletic Centre is a non-profit community commission run, inclusive facility that has been proudly serving Mabou & surrounding communities for over 50 years. Due to a smaller ice surface compared to other county arenas, the Centre has lost some practice rentals over the last few years. Anticipated improvements for the facility include concrete repairs, dressing room upgrades, a new Zamboni, heat pumps, new boards, as well as enhancements to the upstairs gym area. An all-ages ball hockey league, as well as a spring baseball camp are planned in the coming weeks. The Mabou Farmers Market operates out of the Centre from May to October. Approximately 30,000 visitors come through the facility annually.

7. PRESENTATION: TAIGH SGOILE NA DROCHAIDE (Kenneth MacKenzie)

Taigh Sgoile na Drochaide is a small Gaelic immersion school located in Mabou, serving students from primary to grade four. The first of its kind in North America and now in its fifth year of operation, their approach integrates language, culture and community-based learning, with a goal of helping children grow up connected to the heritage and identity of this region. As a developing community-based initiative, the school’s program has been developed through a combination of tuition and community support. Approximately 80% of the funding has come through fundraising

including private donors, corporate contributions and local community efforts. A financial ask of \$25,000 is being sought from the Municipality to help stabilize and strengthen the program.

8. PRESENTATION: INVERNESS/VICTORIA FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE (Jamie van den Hoogen, Rodney Beaton, Troy van den Hoogen)

The Inverness/Victoria Federation of Agriculture is a non-profit, volunteer run association serving the agricultural community for many years. Through the machine rental services program, member farms can access specialized farm equipment to increase productivity and encourage innovative farming methods. The Agri-Advance Initiative is a community-driven project by the Federation aimed at upgrading the farming equipment used by local farmers in the Municipalities of Inverness and Victoria. The Initiative will introduce a fleet of advanced agricultural machinery which will be made available to members through a shared-use model. The rental fees charged will allow for maintenance, repairs and eventual replacement of the machinery. A contribution of \$10,000 is requested of the Municipality towards this initiative.

9. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANT APPLICATIONS:

- Lake Ainslie Weavers & Craft Guild – Kitchen Renovations

The Request of Council is \$6,855.14

Recommendation to support this request in full with funds coming from District 3 CDC funds (pending Community Facilities Improvement Program (CFIP) funding).

- Glencoe Station Recreation Association – Barrier Free Facility Access/Upgrades

The Request of Council is \$4,000.

Recommendation to support this request in full with funds coming from District 5 CDC funds (pending Community Access Ability Program (CAAP) funding).

- Chéticamp Economic Council – Feasibility study for Chéticamp Waterfront

The Request of Council is \$6,000.

Recommendation to support this request in full with funds coming from District 1 CDC funds.

10. PROVINCIAL COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING CUTS (Morgan Murray)

A proposed list of Nova Scotia Government Grant and Program Reductions as a result of the 2026-2027 budget was provided to Council. A total of 286 Grants or Programs are affected, resulting in \$135,218,906 worth of reductions.

11. 2026 BULKY GARBAGE

Recommendation that the 2026 Bulky Garbage pickup occur during the week of May 19-25, 2026. A Request for Proposals will be posted soon.

12. FIRST READING: PRIVATE HYDRANT BYLAW

MOTION: *That Council give First Reading to the Private Hydrant Bylaw.*
MOVED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm
SECONDED BY: Councillor Poirier
MOTION CARRIED

A public feedback opportunity for the Private Hydrant Bylaw will be held on Thursday, April 16, 2026, during Committee of the Whole.

13. EASTERN DISTRICT PLANNING COMMISSION REVISED APPOINTMENTS – 2026

Recommendation to approve the following Eastern District Planning Commission appointments:

Building Inspection:

- Building Inspector: Luke Ross, Andre Samson and Sean Donovan
- Assistant Building Inspector: Todd Samson
- Alternates: David MacKenzie and Jonathan Martin

Development Officer: Brendan MacDonald

- Alternates: John Bain; Andrew Jones; Hetvi Joshi; Kristen Scanlan and Mikayla Tait
- Assistant Development Officers: Heike Bruckner, Luke Ross, David MacKenzie and Andre Samson

Fire Inspectors: Andre Samson and Sean Donovan

- Alternates: David MacKenzie; Todd Samson; Jonathan Martin and Luke Ross

Dangerous and Unsightly Premises:

- Administrator: Sean Donovan and John Bain
- Alternate: Luke Ross, David MacKenzie, Todd Samson and Andre Samson

Special Constables: Building/Fire Codes, Dangerous or Unsightly Premises, Land Use By-laws

- Sean Donovan and Jonathan Martin

14. CORRESPONDENCE

- The Eastern District Planning Commission February 2026 Building Statistics were provided to Council.

A response from Nova Scotia Power regarding the communication of planned power outages was provided to Council.

15. TEMPORARY BORROWING RESOLUTION

Consensus was given by Council to approve the following Temporary Borrowing Resolution:

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, 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 one million eight hundred forty nine thousand eight hundred and ninety two Dollars (\$1,849,892.00) for the purpose set out above, subject to the approval of the Minister of Municipal Affairs;

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 one million eight hundred forty nine thousand eight hundred and ninety two Dollars (\$1,849,892.00) 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 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.

Schedule A

ITEM	ESTIMATE \$\$
Purchase of Boom Truck	233,603
Multicourt Recreation Facility	1,616,289
TOTAL REQUEST CONTAINED WITHIN THIS RESOLUTION	1,849,892

16. NEXT MEETING DATE

April 2, 2026 – 9:30 a.m.; Regular Meeting of Council

17. “IN CAMERA”

MOTION: *That Council move to “In Camera” at 12:54 p.m. to discuss four contract items, four land items and one human resource item.*

MOVED BY: Councillor Poirier

SECONDED BY: Councillor Gillis

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: *That Council move out of “In Camera” at 2:03 p.m.*

MOVED BY: Councillor Poirier

SECONDED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: *That Council release any interest of the Municipality of the County of Inverness in the former Mabou Gulf Railway bed that lies within the boundaries of Lot 2 as shown on the Plan of Subdivision filed as Plan 4489.*

MOVED BY: Councillor Poirier

SECONDED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm

MOTION CARRIED

18. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: *That Council adjourn at 2:04 p.m.*

MOVED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm

MOTION CARRIED