

Regular Council Meeting  
Thursday, March 5, 2026  
9:30 a.m.  
Council Chambers

## MINUTES

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

Staff: Keith MacDonald, Chief Administrative Officer  
Melanie Beaton, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer  
Erin Gillis, Chief of Operations  
Morgan Murray, Director of Culture and Community Development  
Christina MacDonell, Director of Finance  
Debbie Nicholson, Administrative Assistant to Council/Chief Administrative Officer  
Siobhan Beaton, Communications & Digital Marketing Coordinator  
Michelle Coffin, Governance and By-law Researcher (online)  
Megan Wludyka, Chief Communications Officer (online)  
Crystal Jones, Director of Solid Waste

### 1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

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

### 2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**MOTION:** *That the agenda be approved as presented.*  
**MOVED BY:** Deputy Warden Chisholm  
**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Phillips  
**MOTION CARRIED**

### 3. 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.

### 4. PROCLAMATIONS:

#### i. INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY – MARCH 8

*The following proclamation was read by Warden Maclsaac:*

**WHEREAS** *in 1977, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution calling on member states to proclaim a day for women's rights and international peace; and,*

**WHEREAS** *following the United Nations' resolution, Canada chose March 8 as International Women's Day; and,*

**WHEREAS** *International Women's Day is acknowledged around the world to celebrate the achievements of women, raise awareness about discrimination, and encourage action to forge gender parity; and,*

**WHEREAS** *the Municipality of the County of Inverness is committed to encouraging and celebrating women 365 days a year through governance, hiring practices, and municipal programming; and,*

**WHEREAS** *the Municipality of the County of Inverness proudly celebrates the women of Council and staff who work tirelessly to serve the residents of Inverness County; and,*

**THEREFORE**, *be it resolved that I, Warden Bonny Maclsaac, on behalf of the Council of the Municipality of Inverness County, so hereby proclaim March 8, 2026 as International Women's Day in Inverness County.*

ii. **INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION – MARCH 21**

*The following proclamation was read by Warden Maclsaac:*

**WHEREAS**, *the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, observed annually on March 21, provides an important opportunity to reflect on the values of respect, inclusion, and understanding, and to celebrate the richness that diversity brings to our communities; and*

**WHEREAS**, *the Municipality of the County of Inverness recognizes the importance of standing against racism, xenophobia, and all forms of discrimination, and is committed to fostering a community where everyone feels safe, respected, and included; and,*

**WHEREAS**, *the Municipality of the County of Inverness recognizes the Mi'kmaq face racial discrimination in Unama'ki, their unceded traditional territory, and is committed to building respectful relationships that support meaningful reconciliation and reduce discrimination; and,*

**WHEREAS**, *Inverness County has a long history of welcoming people from around the world who have come to live, work, and contribute to the life of the community; and*

**WHEREAS** *Inverness County proudly welcomes newcomers from all over the world including Asia, Africa, the Americas, and Europe, alongside long-time residents whose families have called the*

region home for generations; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Municipality works with local partners, including the Community Belonging Working Group of the Cape Breton Local Immigration Partnership, to support efforts that promote equity, inclusion, and belonging across the region;

**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 March 21, 2026, as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in Inverness County.

## **5. RECOGNITION: MARIE MACDONALD & ST JOHN AMBULANCE THERAPY DOG EDDIE**

The following introduction was read by Warden MacIsaac:

*I'd like to take a moment to introduce two very special guests with us today, Marie MacDonald of Glenville and her wonderful pup, Eddie.*

*Eddie is an 11-year-old Border Collie who, over the past two and a half years, has proudly served as a St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog. This past fall, he passed his certification to support the Children and Special Needs Program, which is an incredible achievement.*

*Through St. John Ambulance's Therapy Dog Program, dedicated volunteers and their dogs visit hospitals, seniors' residences, nursing homes, and community organizations. Through simple acts like a wagging tail or quiet cuddle, they provide comfort and emotional support. The impact of that unconditional love can be truly profound.*

*Since becoming a therapy dog, Eddie has visited Inverary Manor, Dalbrae Academy, and Millroad Social Enterprises, among others, brightening the days of many.*

*He is also featured on the cover of the 2026 St. John Ambulance Therapy Dogs Calendar, a well-deserved spotlight!*

*Today, we recognize both Marie and Eddie for their meaningful contributions to our community.*

*While Eddie may happily accept a few well-earned belly rubs, we are pleased to present Marie with this certificate of recognition on behalf of Council.*

## **6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION:** *That the Regular Council meeting minutes of February 5, 2026 be approved as presented.*

**MOVED BY:** Councillor Poirier

**SECONDED BY:** Deputy Warden Chisholm

**MOTION CARRIED**

**MOTION:** *That the Committee of the Whole meeting minutes of February 19, 2026, be approved as presented.*

**MOVED BY:** Councillor Phillips

**SECONDED BY:** Deputy Warden Chisholm

**MOTION CARRIED**

**MOTION:** *That the Special meeting minutes of February 25, 2026, be approved as presented.*

**MOVED BY:** Councillor Phillips

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Poirier

**MOTION CARRIED**

**7. PRESENTATION: REBECCA SILVER SLAYTER, CABOT TRAIL WRITER'S FESTIVAL**

The Cabot Trail Writer's Festival is an annual event held in Unama'ki (Cape Breton) where writers and readers come together to celebrate literature and storytelling. The festival is typically held over three days in autumn, offering a rich selection of workshops, readings and discussions that connect authors with their audience. The first Cabot Trail Writers Festival was held in 2009 and over the years has relocated to a larger venue, the St. Anne's Gaelic College to accommodate an ever-growing audience and programming.

**8. PRESENTATION: JASON JARDINE, BOB MACEACHERN, MORA PURCELL, WENDY MACISAAC, CELTIC COLOURS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL**

The Celtic Colours International Festival is a unique celebration of Cape Breton Island's living traditional culture. For nine days each October, the festival hosts many of events and activities taking place in communities around Cape Breton Island. This year, from October 9-17, 2026, Celtic Colours International Festival will mark it's 30th annual festival celebrating with concerts and numerous cultural events in communities all over Cape Breton Island. Over the years, Celtic Colours has evolved to become one of Canada's premiere musical events where some of the world's finest musicians share the stage with Cape Breton's best musicians, singers, dancers, and storytellers in venues that range from community halls and churches to modern schools and theatres.

**9. PRESENTATION: RODNEY MACDONALD, KITCHENFEST**

KitchenFest is Cape Breton Island's largest summer music and culture festival, organized by Colaisde na Gàidhlig | The Gaelic College. This year's festival will take place over nine days, June 26 to July 4 in 2026, in communities throughout Cape Breton. 2026 marks the 13<sup>th</sup> year of Kitchenfest which offers both locals and visitors an immersive experience in the rich and vibrant Gaelic culture of Cape Breton Island through concerts, céilidhs, pub nights, and square dances. It is estimated that the

financial impact of the festival is over \$8 million annually. KitchenFest is requesting a \$7,500 sponsorship from the Municipality County of Inverness for the 2026 festival.

#### **10. PRESENTATION: TONY SAMPSON, STRAIT AREA SEARCH AND RESCUE**

The Strait Area Ground Search and Rescue Association has been in existence since 1980. The organization provides on-call search and rescue support 24/7. Their team responds to requests from the RCMP to locate lost individuals and assists in evidence searches. Their focus is on helping people in emergencies with professionalism and care. The organization serves communities in Antigonish County, Richmond County, and parts of Guysborough, Inverness, and Victoria Counties in Nova Scotia. They are also available to help with searches led by other groups across the province. They rely on donations for equipment and operate a mobile command unit during search missions.

#### **11. PRESENTATION: NEIL MACQUARRIE, DR. BERNIE MACLEAN CULTURAL AND RECREATION CENTRE**

Built in 1972, the Dr. Bernie MacLean Cultural and Recreation Centre is a multi-purpose facility that has served as a venue for a variety of events, including hockey, figure skating, concerts and community gatherings for over 50 years. Presently the governing structure is a volunteer non-profit arena commission. During the winter ice rentals for various activities range from \$100 to \$190. Summer event fundraisers include the Inverness Gathering Dance, a golf tournament, children's activities and merchandise bingos. Planned facility improvements over the next five years include an emergency exit stairwell, solar panels, and upgrades to dressing rooms, ice plant, stands and electrical system at an estimated cost of \$400,000.00

#### **12. PRESENTATION: JIM CAVANAUGH, STRAIT MUTUAL AID**

The Strait Area Mutual Aid Association (SAMAA) was originally established in 1976 by five local area volunteer fire departments with a mission of continuous improvements to Fire and Emergency Services in the Strait Area. Their current membership is 28 departments from Richmond, Inverness, Guysborough and Antigonish Counties, the Towns of Port Hawkesbury, Antigonish and Mulgrave. A Mutual Aid Agreement enables neighboring fire departments to respond to other coverage areas when requested. Shared resources include extrication tools, ladder trucks, ice and water rescue equipment, and gas testing equipment. Currently the association is solely supported through annual dues paid by individual volunteer fire departments.

#### **13. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FEBRUARY 19 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

i. **Regional: Chéticamp Area Residential and Educational Society (C.A.R.E.S) - van purchase**

The request of Council is \$10,000.

**MOTION:** *That Council support this request in full with funds coming from the Regional CDC funds (1/3), District 1 Discretionary Funds (1/3) and District 2 Discretionary Funds (1/3).*

**MOVED BY:** Councillor Poirier

**SECONDED BY:** Deputy Warden Chisholm

**MOTION CARRIED**

ii. **Emergency: Mabou & District Volunteer Fire Department- Generac backup generator**

The Request of Council is \$5,000.

**MOTION:** *That Council support this request in full with funds coming from the Emergency Measures Fund.*

**MOVED BY:** Deputy Warden Chisholm

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Phillips

**MOTION CARRIED**

iii. **District 3: Mill Road Social Enterprises - Community Garden Enhancement**

The Request of Council is \$5,000.

**MOTION:** *That Council support this request in full with funds coming from District 3 CDC funds.*

**MOVED BY:** Deputy Warden Chisholm

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Phillips

**MOTION CARRIED**

**14. FIRST READING: CONCURRENT REZONING AND DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT REQUEST BY SDC PLANNING AND DESIGN ON BEHALF OF PLACE CRAFT PROPERTIES INC. FOR A MIXED-USE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ON PID 50124676, 47 UPPER RAILWAY STREET, INVERNESS.**

**MOTION:** *That Council approve the proposed Development Agreement of PID # 50124676 (47 Upper Railway Street), Inverness, Inverness County, to develop a mixed-use residential complex.*

**MOVED BY:** Councillor Phillips

**SECONDED BY:** Deputy Warden Chisholm

**MOTION CARRIED**

**MOTION:** *That Council give First Reading and schedule a Public Hearing date.*

**MOVED BY:** Deputy Warden Chisholm

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Poirier

**MOTION CARRIED**

A public feedback opportunity for this file will be held on Thursday, March 26, 2026, during Committee of the Whole. Second Reading is scheduled for April 2, 2026.

**15. FIRST READING: DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT REQUEST BY OMAR GANDHI ARCHITECTS ON BEHALF OF CHARLAMARA HOLDINGS INC. FOR A RESORT ON PID 50271824, 36 CHEMIN DE L'ANSE DES BOIS MARIES, PETIT ÉTANG.**

**MOTION:** *That Council approve the proposed Development Agreement of PID # 50271824, 36 Chemin De L'Anse Des Bois Maries, Petit Étang, Inverness County, to develop a resort.*

**MOVED BY:** Councillor Poirier

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Phillips

**MOTION CARRIED**

**MOTION:** *That Council give First Reading and schedule a Public Hearing date.*

**MOVED BY:** Councillor Poirier

**SECONDED BY:** Deputy Warden Chisholm

**MOTION CARRIED**

A public feedback opportunity for this file will be held on Thursday, March 26, 2026, during Committee of the Whole. Second Reading is scheduled for April 2, 2026.

**16. DOG TAG REGISTRATION DATE**

*The following resolution was read by Councillor Poirier:*

***Whereas*** Section 172 of the Municipal Government Act authorizes municipalities to make bylaws respecting the licensing and regulation of dogs; and

***Whereas*** the Municipality of the County of Inverness currently has a Dog Bylaw which establishes April 1 as the annual due date for dog registration, aligned with the municipal fiscal year; and

***Whereas*** residents have demonstrated a preference for registering dogs on a calendar-year basis, with many voluntarily submitting payment in January and February; and

***Whereas*** aligning the registration period with the calendar year will improve administrative efficiency, reduce public confusion, and better align with resident expectations; and

***Whereas*** Council has the authority to establish and amend fees and administrative policies by resolution;

***Therefore be it resolved*** that the Council of the Municipality of the County of Inverness approves adjusting to the annual dog registration period from April 1 – March 31 to January 1 – December 31, effective January 1, 2026.

## **17. VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE CLOSURES**

The Provincial Government recently made the announcement to close most provincially operated visitor information centres, including the Port Hastings location.

*Direction to staff to write a letter to the Provincial Government regarding this closure announcement.*

The Municipality will work with Destination Cape Breton and neighboring Municipalities in light of this announcement.

## **18. NOTICE OF MOTION**

This is notice to Council that during a future meeting the following bylaw will be presented for Council's consideration and discussion. All required information needed will be in the meeting package in advance of the discussions.

- Bylaw 44 – Marketing Levy bylaw (at the request of Destination Cape Breton staff are suggesting amendments to require short term rental platforms like AirBnBs to collect and remit the marketing levy)

## **19. CORRESPONDENCE**

- Correspondence was received from the Provincial Department of Municipal Affairs regarding the reduction of discretionary grants in the recently released 2026-27 Budget.
- Correspondence was received from Engage Nova Scotia regarding the promotion of the Quality of Life Survey.

## **20. NEXT MEETING DATE**

March 26, 2026, 9:30 a.m.: Committee of the Whole

## **21. "IN CAMERA"**

**MOTION:** *That Council move to "In Camera" at 12:53 p.m. to discuss two land items, one human resource item and one contract item.*

**MOVED BY:** Deputy Warden Chisholm

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Phillips

**MOTION CARRIED**

**MOTION:** *That Council move out of "In Camera" at 1:57 p.m.*

**MOVED BY:** Councillor Poirier

**SECONDED BY:** Deputy Warden Chisholm

**MOTION CARRIED**

**MOTION:** *That the request from Mr. Doucet for potential compensation from the Municipality regarding the purchase of PID # 50127737 be denied.*  
**MOVED BY:** Deputy Warden Chisholm  
**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Poirier  
**MOTION CARRIED**

## **22. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** *That Council adjourn at 1:57 p.m.*  
**MOVED BY:** Deputy Warden Chisholm  
**MOTION CARRIED**