

Committee of the Whole Meeting
Thursday, April 16, 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 Operations Officer
Morgan Murray, Director of Culture and Community Development
Christina MacDonell, Director of Finance
Michelle Coffin, Policy Analyst
Debbie Nicholson, Administrative Assistant to Council/CAO
Megan Wludyka, Chief Communications Officer

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: Councillor Gillis

SECONDED BY: Councillor Poirier

MOTION CARRIED

4. PROCLAMATIONS

DAFFODIL MONTH

WHEREAS The Canadian Cancer Society annually recognizes April as Daffodil Month, to help raise awareness and funds for life saving medical care, transformative research, and essential advocacy for those living with cancer in Canada; and

WHEREAS April 2026 will mark the 69th annual Daffodil Month; and

WHEREAS the Canadian Cancer Society has pledged to match all donations to its organization during Daffodil Month, doubling their impact for Canadians battling cancer; and

WHEREAS nearly 50% of people living in Canada are expected to be diagnosed with some form of cancer in their lifetime; and

WHEREAS Cancer diagnoses in Canada are projected to rise by nearly 40% between 2020 and 2040; and

WHEREAS Inverness County's cancer care capabilities have advanced significantly in recent years, with the Cancer Care Clinic at Inverness Consolidated Memorial Hospital enabling Inverness County residents battling cancer to receive treatments closer to home;

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 April 2026 as Daffodil Month in Inverness County.

APRIL 22 – EARTH DAY

WHEREAS Earth Day, observed annually on April 22, has been recognized around the world since 1970 as a day to promote environmental awareness and inspire action to protect our planet; and

WHEREAS the natural environment is a vital part of the quality of life in Inverness County, supporting our communities, culture, economy, and overall well-being; and

WHEREAS the Municipality of the County of Inverness is committed to environmental stewardship through initiatives such as litter cleanups, waste diversion efforts, and programming that encourages appreciation and responsible use of our natural spaces; and

WHEREAS collaboration with valued partners, including the Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP), the Mi'kmaq Nation, and local sustainability-focused organizations, strengthens our collective efforts toward environmental protection and climate action; and

WHEREAS Earth Day provides an opportunity for all residents to reflect on their role in protecting the environment and to take meaningful action within their own communities;

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 April 22 as Earth Day in Inverness

County;

AND FURTHER encourage all residents to participate in local initiatives such as the One Bag Challenge and to take time to appreciate and protect the natural environment we are fortunate to call home.

APRIL 28 – NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING

WHEREAS the National Day of Mourning, marked annually in Canada on April 28, is a day dedicated to remember and honour those lives lost or injured due to a workplace tragedy; and

WHEREAS there were 22 people in Nova Scotia who died due to work related injury or illness in 2025; and

WHEREAS in 2023 there were 1,057 workplace fatalities in Canada. Among those deaths, 29 were between the ages of 15 and 24. In addition, there were over 18,000 disabling workplace injuries reported in Canada; and

WHEREAS The National Day of Mourning is an opportunity to collectively renew our commitment to improving health and safety in the workplace and remember workers killed, disabled, injured, and afflicted with industrial disease; and a call to protect the living and make work a place where people are safe and can thrive; and

WHEREAS The Municipality of Inverness County is committed to promoting safe workspaces for all people working in our county;

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 April 28th, 2026, as the Day of Mourning for Inverness County.

5. STAFF REPORTS

(a) Public Works

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- Over the last month department staff completed several water service leak repairs, primarily due to ground movement during this time of year.
- Six non-functioning standpipes in various communities were addressed. Several of these responses were emergency in nature, addressing damaged service lines for residents requiring immediate repair.
- Garbage pickup and bag replacement continues year-round at the Inverness Beach. Due to the large volume a backhoe is required to access the garbage from the underground bin.

- Water and wastewater maintenance staff performed an assessment of the equipment at the Port Hastings lift station #2 that resulted in a new valve and hole repair to prevent further corrosion.
- To prepare for the upcoming installation of permanent underground raw water supply piping for the replacement of Production Well 1 in Port Hood, staff installed temporary above-ground piping and power cabling connecting the existing Production Well 1 to the Dunmore Water Treatment Plant.
- The Municipality's snow removal season is nearing its conclusion. Staff will continue to monitor conditions through the end of the month to ensure sidewalks remain safe and reliable for residents.

(b) Operations

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- The 2026 Bulky garbage collection is scheduled for the week of May 19, 2026. The Request for Proposals (RFP) has been issued.
- Waste reduction activities are underway including a community litter clean up day on April 22 in Inverness, litter kit distribution, and One Bag Challenge.
- The Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Policy has been updated to enhance worker safety and ensure compliance with mandatory safety standards.
- The Occupational Health and Safety Team continues to provide support with snow removal, fire hydrant clearing, and worksite guidance.
- Updates to the Vending Permit and Dog Tag applications are now complete. The online process is live.
- A review of comfort centres is underway to standardize processes and supports offered.
- Over 200 metric tonnes of municipal solid waste/construction & demolition material was transferred to GFL Environmental Inc. Guysborough, during the reporting period.
- Nineteen pallets of electronic waste transferred to a receiving facility during the reporting period.
- Approximately 50 calls were received on the Solid Waste toll-free line during the reporting period.
- Notice of a bylaw to support the development of a Regional Emergency Management Organization (REMO) in partnership with the Municipality of the County of Richmond, the Municipality of the County of Victoria, and the Town of Port Hawkesbury was provided to Council.

(c) Recreation and Community Wellness

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- April 7- A Sensory Skate in celebration of Autism Acceptance Month was held in Port Hood. Nine children participated with the assistance of Dalbrae Academy student volunteers.
- March 24, 25- Indiana Jones themed Escape Room events were held in Port Hood and Inverness.
- April 13- A six-week acrylic painting program for students began in Port Hood.
- April 15 – Book club launch at various locations throughout the County.
- April 16 – Pickleball “Try it” event in Port Hood.
- April 17 – Movie Night in Hillsborough featuring Casablanca.
- April 25 – Inverness County Wide Cribbage Tournament at the Lake Ainslie Fire Hall.
- May 4 – Start of Get Active Summer Programming Leadership Team.
- May 11, 13, 14 – Start of Get Active Ball Hockey in Port Hood, Chéticamp and Inverness.
- May 23 – a Senior’s hike to MacIntosh Falls in partnership with Destination Cape Breton scheduled.
- March/April – meetings continue with the Seniors Advisory Committee and the Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- “Planting for Seniors” workshop series is in development.
- 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) Capital Planning and Projects

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- Jajikte Seawall Trail – The archaeological report approval by the province was received.
- Central Avenue Inverness Water and Wastewater Replacement/Complete Streets – The Phase 1 tender package is being finalized.
- Port Hastings and Port Hawkesbury Infrastructure Planning - A meeting was held on April 1 with CBCL, Inverness County and the Town of Port Hawkesbury staff.
- Inverness Water Source of Supply – Drilling results will inform planning for the 2026-2027 Inverness wellfield exploration program
- The Foyer Père Fiset build continues in Chéticamp. Construction financing has been obtained from the Nova Scotia Department of Growth and Development.
- Production Well 1 Replacement in Dunmore – Lynk Electric, KJH Contracting and Hill Top electrical work is to be completed by mid April.
- Port Hood Lift Station # 1 – the contractor work will begin in mid April.
- Electric Vehicle chargers – replacement parts will be installed at the Judique, Port Hood, Inverness, Margaree, Whycomomagh and Grand Étang locations.
- Bylaws – Private Hydrant Bylaw will be given Second Reading in May. The Sewer Discharges Bylaw is under review by legal consultants.
- Planning is underway for the 2026 Municipal Public Works Association of Nova Scotia (MPWANS) Conference to be held in Chéticamp from May 13-15.

(e) Finance

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- The draft consolidated financial statements are undergoing final partner level review at Doane Grant Thornton LLP.
- The finance department has received access to the Capital Project Claims portal.
- A draft 2026-2027 consolidated budget is under review internally.
- Tipping fees collection is ongoing.
- March interest has been posted to property tax accounts. Preparation for the next tax sale is underway.
- The insurance policy for Volunteer Fire Departments has been renewed.
- Fourth quarter water meter reads were completed, and the invoices were processed and issued.
- Multiple requests for proposals and expressions of interest are either open, or under evaluation.

(f) Culture and Community Development (CCD)

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- The 2026 Excellence in Healthcare Awards will be held on April 22 in Chéticamp.
- Community Spaces – A database of community halls has been established.
- Economic Development – Collaboration continues with the Cape Breton Partnership on business related initiatives.
- Culture and Heritage- Provincial cuts are creating real pressure across county organizations, with active coordination underway to help groups manage the impact.
- Heritage – Plans are underway to convene culture and heritage organizations to investigate approaches to managing recent provincial cuts.
- Nominations for the 2026 Volunteer Recognition Program closed on April 10.
- The Whycocomagh Public Library is scheduled to open soon.
- Public engagement sessions were held for the Cabot Trail 100 commemoration.
- Transportation – Staff are finalizing results of the Public Transportation Review.
- The Community Impact Employment Funding Program was launched to support organizations hiring seasonal employees with an application deadline of April 26.
- Funding was issued to various organizations through the Community Development Grants.

(g) Monica Ragan, Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP)

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- Community Environmental Outreach:

- January 31 – ACAP Cape Breton staff and the Municipality of the County of Inverness hosted a watershed walk in Hillsborough and featured local history from the Mabou Gaelic and Historical Society.
- March 31 – As part of the Riparian Zone Ready project, members of the We'koqmaq Cadets presented to the We'koqmaq Chief and Council on their riparian restoration work along the Skye River in Nevada Valley. During February and March 1,000 Acadian trees were planted as a reforestation project.
- Earth Month Activities:
 - School presentations on April 8 at Whycocomagh Education Centre and April 9 at Pleasant Bay School. Topics covered include plastics, climate change and waste education.
 - Earth Day Cleanup is planned for the Inverness Beach on April 22 in partnership with the Inverness Development Association.
 - Riparian Nature Walk is planned for Margaree on April 25 in partnership with the Margaree Salmon Association.
 - Community presentation on April 30 in Judique focusing on freshwater and watersheds.
 - Planning is underway for a tree planting event in Mabou in the fall.

(h) Lynne MacLennan, Cape Breton Partnership

January 1 to March 31 highlights:

- Events: Warm Your Bones Festival, February 10 in Port Hood; Coffee and Connect, February 11 at L'Arche Cape Breton Iron Mines; Gateways to an Intercultural Workplace Webinar, held virtually on February 23.
- Local Economic Development Initiatives:
 - Ongoing customized support and advice to businesses and entrepreneurs across Inverness County.
 - Ongoing collaboration with partner groups to ensure the Inverness County business community is well supported.
 - Unama'ki Cape Breton Business Insights Program – Interviews with the business community to understand challenges and opportunities.
- The Creative Economy: Film projects set to film in the fall (*Grip of the Kelpie Mother*, and *Bojangles*), Unama'ki Cape Breton Film Festival is tentatively scheduled for September 2026, Museum Celebration Project to launch in June, Inverness County will host the 2026 Cape Breton Creative Awards ceremony.
- Energy Sector Development: The Energy Sector Development Officer continues to participate in the Nova Scotia Department of Energy's Community of Practice with organizations undertaking engagement across the province.
- People and Labour Force Attraction: Initiatives include ongoing immigration services to the business community through the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, Connector Program and the Cape Breton Local Immigration Partnership (CBLIP) team members hosted workshops and launched a survey.

(i) Laura Emery, Eastern Counties Regional Library (ECRL)

Branch Highlights:

- The Alexander Doyle Public Library Tunneagan Beaga Gaelic Playgroup provided a weekly drop-in event for young children and their caregivers.
- The Coady & Tompkins Memorial Public Library in Margaree hosted numerous events during March Break including board games, clay sculptures, DIY comics, a scavenger hunt and story time.
- The Chéticamp Public Library welcome a new member to the team in March after a short closure.

Programming Highlights:

- The Read Coast to Coast Challenge runs from February 21 to April 30, challenging readers across the province to engage with Canadian content. Readers can collect stickers from five locations across the country and enter for a chance to win prizes.
- A Funding Advocacy website has been established by ECRL management: <https://ecrl.ca/about-us/advocacy/>
- Over 300 responses were received for ECRL's Community Engagement Survey. A follow up report will be produced with an overview of results.
- ECRL has once again partnered with the Municipality of the County of Inverness to assist in the distribution of litter kits.

(j) John Bain, Eastern District Planning Commission (EDPC)

Recent Updates:

- Organizational Review – currently wrapping up phase 2 (assessment of organizational structures, service models and governance practices).
- Municipal Land Use Planning Orientation and Information Session – October 15, 2026.
- Coastal Planning Support Program – funding application and scope of work was submitted.
- Le Cap Hotel by Development Agreement – Application for a development agreement for a 61,000 square foot hospitality development along De Lanse Des Boise Maries, Chéticamp.
- “Not for Residential Development” Lots, Inverness Subdivision Bylaw – Application to amend the Inverness County Subdivision Bylaw to increase the maximum land area requirement from 5,005 square feet for “not for residential development” lot which does not contain an on-site septic disposal system or any part thereof.
- Mixed-use residential development, 47 Upper Railway Street- Application to rezone from Institutional (I-1) zone to multi-unit residential (R-2) and for a concurrent development agreement to develop a mixed-use residential development.
- Dangerous and Unsightly Premises Overview Update: The Dangerous and Unsightly Premises add-in for the Commission's permit tracking software was activated April 10, 2026, and staff are now using it to input new complaints and track progress.

Activity January 1, 2026, to March 31, 2026:

Total Number of Cases – 14 (4 new, 1 closed due to voluntary compliance, 9 in progress).

6. PRESENTATION: ROB WADDEN; DOANE GRANT THORNTON

The non-consolidated financial statements for the Municipality to March 31, 2025, were presented to Council. The three main categories include the general fund, the water utility fund and reserve funds.

MOTION: *That the non-consolidated financial statements of the Municipality of the County of Inverness to March 31, 2025, be approved as presented.*

MOVED: Councillor Gillis

SECONDED: Deputy Warden Chisholm

MOTION CARRIED

The consolidated financial statements for the Municipality to March 31, 2025, were presented to Council. In addition to general government tax-supported operations and the water utility operations, the consolidated statements include the following: County of Inverness Municipal Housing Corporation (the Homes) and the Eastern District Planning Commission – 23%.

MOTION: *That the consolidated financial statements of the Municipality of the County of Inverness to March 31, 2025, be approved as presented.*

MOVED: Deputy Warden Chisholm

SECONDED: Councillor Phillips

MOTION CARRIED

7. PRESENTATION: DAVID PARKINSON, CABOT TRAIL RELAY ASSOCIATION

2026 will mark the 36th year the Cabot Trail Relay Race (CTRR) has taken place. Each year over 1,000 runners and team supporters consisting of 70 teams are invited to participate in the CTRR. The multi-stage race begins in Baddeck and continues through Victoria and Inverness Counties. Teams travel from across Canada and the United States to participate in the race. Almost \$2 million in economic activity is generated from the relay. Financial assistance of \$5,000 is requested of the Municipality from the Cabot Trail Relay Association with consideration to participate as a long-term sponsoring partner for the event.

8. FIRST READING: MARKETING LEVY BYLAW

The proposed amendments to the current Marketing Levy Bylaw, if adopted, will give the authority to Council to collect the marketing levy from short term rental Internet platforms, such as AirBnB. The amendments have been recommended by Destination Cape Breton. Since January 1, 2024, a three percent marketing levy has been charged on all short-term, fixed-roof accommodations, including hotels; motels; and cottages in the Municipality. This fee is collected by the Municipality and passed on to Destination Cape Breton to support tourism marketing efforts. The suggested

amendments are minimally invasive to the current bylaw by adding language to capture online rental platforms to the list of fixed-roof accommodations.

MOTION: *That Bylaw 44 – Marketing Levy Bylaw move to Second Reading at the next Regular Meeting of Council.*

MOVED: Councillor Gillis

SECONDED: Deputy Warden Chisholm

MOTION CARRIED

9. PRIVATE HYDRANT BYLAW – PUBLIC FEEDBACK OPPORTUNITY

Prior to voting on a new bylaw, Council seeks feedback from residents to ensure the bylaw reflects the priorities of the community. Residents may provide written or oral submissions—either in favour or opposition. No written submissions were received regarding the Private Hydrant Bylaw. The following oral submission was received from Mr. Marc Currie of 23 Reynolds Street, Port Hood.

In the event that ownership is in question, (e.g. death of the owner resulting in a court challenge or corporate bankruptcy resulting in a court challenge) functions that would otherwise be performed may be delayed for a substantial time. If a daily fine were imposed, the total fine owing could reach excessive levels. There were no provisions in the proposed bylaw to have the employees of the municipality perform flushing and certain other functions and then bill the new owner to recover costs while maintaining the hydrant(s). (Since coordination with municipal staff will be needed for flushing).

10. J CLASS ROADS COST SHARE AGREEMENT NO. 2026-013

The current three-year agreement for the paving of subdivision streets expires March 31, 2027. Council was provided with the new three-year agreement to be entered into with the Minister of Public Works to continue this program. This agreement applies to fiscal years 2027-28, 2028-29 and 2029-30.

11. NOTICES OF MOTION

Notice was provided to Council that during future meetings the following bylaw and policies will be presented for Council’s consideration and discussion. All required information will be in the Council package in advance of the discussions.

- Emergency Management Bylaw – repeal and replace (at the request of Chief Operations Officer)
- Respectful Workplace Policy
- Pregnancy and Parental Leave Policy
- Conditions of Employment Policy

12. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANT APPLICATIONS:

- Inverness/Victoria Federation of Agriculture, Agri-Advance Initiative

The Request of Council is \$10,000.

Recommendation to support this request in full with funds coming from the Regional CDC funds.

- Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Region Association – Community Engagement

The Request of Council is \$6,250.

Recommendation to invite members of the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Region Association to present to Council to speak further on the Community Engagement project.

- North Mountain Cultural and Recreation Association- Community Centre Flooring

The Request of Council is \$1,754.92

Recommendation to support this request in full with funds coming from District 6 CDC funds.

13. COMMUNITY FUNDING POLICY UPDATE

Council was provided a draft copy of the Municipal Community Funding Policy.

14. COMMUNITY IMPACT EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

The Community Impact Employment Program complements federal or provincial wage subsidy programs to help organizations create meaningful, short-term employment opportunities. It replaces the former Summer Employment Support Grant. Applications are reviewed on an ongoing basis. For summer employment positions, the application deadline is May 3, 2026.

<https://invernesscounty.ca/services/culture-and-community-development/community-impact-employment-program/>

15. CORRESPONDENCE

- The Eastern District Planning Commission March 2026 building statistics were provided to Council.

16. NEXT MEETING DATE

May 7, 2026, 9:30 a.m.; Regular Meeting of Council

17. "IN CAMERA"

MOTION: *That Council move to "In Camera" at 12:46 p.m. to discuss a land item and a human resource item.*

MOVED BY: Councillor Gillis

SECONDED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: *That Council move out of "In Camera" at 1:35 p.m.*
MOVED BY: Councillor Poirier
SECONDED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm
MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: *That Council declare PID 50112002 as surplus to the Municipality's needs.*
MOVED BY: Councillor Gillis
SECONDED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm
MOTION CARRIED

18. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: *That Council adjourn at 1:36 p.m.*
MOVED BY: Councillor Poirier
MOTION CARRIED