

Committee of the Whole Meeting
Thursday, May 21, 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
Morgan Murray, Director of Culture and Community Development
Christina MacDonell, Director of Finance
Chestley Carr, Director of Public Works
Debbie Nicholson, Administrative Assistant to Council/CAO
Megan Wludyka, Chief Communications Officer
Crystal Jones, Director of Solid Waste
Michelle Coffin, Policy Analyst (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. Warden MacIsaac introduced Jeremy Martell, the Municipal Advisor for North Eastern Nova Scotia with the Nova Scotia Department of Municipal Affairs.

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 Gillis
MOTION CARRIED

4. PROCLAMATION: ACCESSIBILITY WEEK

WHEREAS the week of May 31 – June 6, 2026 is celebrated as Access Awareness Week; and

WHEREAS 2026 marks the 40th year which Access Awareness Week has been celebrated in Nova Scotia; 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 year's theme, Disability Justice: Stronger Together, First Voice Leading Change for Collective Action, promotes the importance of equal access to communities and services; and

WHEREAS the Municipality is committed to identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to accessibility as outlined in the 2025 Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility Strategy; and

WHEREAS the Municipality is committed to ongoing collaboration with community members, partners, and the Accessibility Advisory Committee to make Inverness County more inclusive and accessible for all;

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 May 31 – June 6, 2026 as Access Awareness Week in Inverness County.

5. STAFF REPORTS

(a) Chestley Carr, Public Works

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- Service installations have begun throughout the municipality with productivity increasing as the weather improves.
- Repairs were completed to municipal infrastructure as the result of snow removal.
- Staff have serviced all summer maintenance equipment, ensuring it is fully operational and ready for use this year.
- A contractor and municipal staff completed the necessary work to connect the new well (PW1R) to the water system at Dunmore Rd., Port Hood.
- A flushing protocol was implemented in Whycocomagh due to high turbidity levels in municipal water.
- The Municipality's snow removal season has concluded with most snow removal equipment serviced and in storage.

- Staff continue processing water and wastewater treatment data collected by the SCADA systems.
- With the assistance of a contractor, work continues on municipal street light repairs.

(b) Erin Gillis, Operations

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- The 2026 Bulky garbage collection is scheduled for the week of May 19, 2026. Collection crews will only travel through each serviced area once.
- Residential household hazardous waste drop off event taking place June 11, 2026, from 4 p.m. – 7 p.m. at the Strathlorne Recycling Facility and Glendale Community Hall.
- As of May 1, 2026, Strathlorne Recycling Facility began accepting non-hazardous aerosols, plastic laminates, and styrofoam from residents as part of the expanded recycling program.
- Numerous community cleanups were held in various communities throughout the municipality. Many bags of litter were collected during these initiatives.
- The Occupational Health and Safety Team is currently designing a new, standardized process for reviewing workplace safety inspections. This process includes creating a formal “Workplace Inspection Review Procedure” document.
- Bylaw review and development continues in five key areas: Dog Control, Animal Control, Nuisances, Taxi, and Solid Waste.
- The Regional Emergency Management Office (REMO) process is underway. A draft bylaw, shared services agreement, and terms of reference for advisory committees are being developed.
- Approximately 667 metric tonnes of Municipal Solid Waste/Construction & Demolition were transferred to GFL Environmental Inc. Guysborough and approximately 22 metric tonnes of recycling were transferred to Camdon Recycling during the April 16 – May 15 reporting period.

(c) Department of Recreation and Community Wellness

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- The annual County-Wide Crib Tournament took place on April 25 in Scotsville with 28 teams from across the municipality participating.
- The Seniors Walking Group in partnership with Cape Breton University held various events during the months of April and May.
- A Movie Night was held on April 17 in Hillsborough. Twenty attendees watched Casablanca.
- The book club is ongoing throughout the county (Mabou, Whycomomagh, Inverness and Chéticamp. Plans are underway for the group to meet monthly going forward.

- The Jr. NBA program kicked off events in Inverness, Port Hood and Belle Côte.
- Ball hockey started May 11 in Chéticamp, Inverness and Port Hood.

Upcoming Events:

- May 28: Scotsville Pickleball Beginners Clinic at the Lake Ainslie Fire Hall.
- June 3: Access Awareness Week “Try-it” Celebration at Al MacInnis Sports Centre.
- May/June: “Planting with Seniors” workshop series in Chéticamp, Inverness and Judique.
- June/August: Weekend Guided Hikes throughout the municipality.
- July 9: Bike Rodeo at Inverness Education Centre/Academy.
- Late July: Wave Volleyball Camp at the Inverness Education Centre/Academy.
- July/July: Mabou & Whycomomagh soccer events.
- Program planning for the 2026 Get Active Summer Series is underway. Facilities are booked for week, day and half day camps.
- The May 2026 Recreation & Community Wellness Department flyer was provided to Council and is now available on the municipal website.

(d) Melanie Beaton, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

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- Inverness Wastewater Treatment Plant – the air distribution system for the treatment tanks should be completed by the end of May.
- Port Hood Lift Station Replacement – Next steps include trenching for pipe connection.
- Whycomomagh Wastewater Treatment Plant – staff continue to seek funding avenues.
- Municipal Public Works Association of Nova Scotia (MPWANS) Conference – hosted by the municipality from May 13 – 15 in Chéticamp.
- Pleasant Bay Whale Interpretive Centre roof is expected to be finished by June 15.
- Jajiktek Seawall Trail – the Glenn Group continues to lead the design process.
- Chéticamp Digester Platform Replacement - Brilun Construction Ltd. to confirm start date and resubmit Health & Safety plan.
- Central Avenue Water & Wastewater Replacement /Complete Streets – tender submissions are being evaluated.
- Inverness Water Source of Supply - EXP to submit a quote to reassess withdrawal approval based on operational data following increased withdrawal approval last year.
- Port Hastings & Port Hawkesbury Infrastructure Planning - wastewater flows study to begin in the spring.
- Foyer Père Fiset Construction - sewer connection work by completed by late June.
- Production Well 1 Replacement in Dunmore – bacteria sampling yielded successful results.
- Bylaws – Private Hydrant Bylaw and Sewer Discharges Bylaw are in development.

(e) Christina MacDonell, Finance

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- Municipal Audit - audited statements are now signed and complete for fiscal 2024-2025. Work is now beginning for the fiscal 2025-2026 audit.
- The Financial Information Return (FIR) has been completed and submitted to the province.
- Progress claim files have been completed for the Inverness and Whycomomagh Wastewater Treatment Plants and submitted to Capital Projects.
- A draft consolidated budget is under internal review before presenting to council for further deliberation.
- Collections continue on outstanding tipping accounts, water accounts and tax accounts. A Property Tax Sale is scheduled for August 11, 2026.
- Two tenders are currently open, one recently closed, one recently awarded, one under evaluation, and one was not awarded.

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

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- The 2026 Excellence in Healthcare Awards were held on April 22 in Chéticamp.
- Whycomomagh Public Library: the grand opening targeted for June 27.
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was recently signed between the municipality and Strathspey Place.
- Cabot Trail 100 public engagement sessions were held recently.
- Culture & Heritage Roundtable session was held on May 14 at Lake Ainslie.
- Inverness Childcare Facility: construction to begin in the coming weeks.
- Working with Mi'kmaw partners on library, culture, visitor projects, and healthcare recruitment.
- The Inverness County Asylum Intermunicipal working group initial meeting was held on April 28.
- The municipality hosted career events with Dalhousie medical students at three area high schools.
- Staff continue to support the work of West Isle and community groups to access funding for housing projects.
- The 2026 Volunteer Recognition Program is complete with 34 nominees received.
- Staff continue to work with Destination Cape Breton, the province, and community partners on next steps for the Port Hastings Visitor Information Centre.
- Funding was issued to six organizations through the Community Development Grants.
- Staff are currently reviewing 14 applications received under the Community Impact Employment Program.

(g) Terry Smith, Destination Cape Breton

Destination Cape Breton Strategy 2026 – 2029

Strategic Priorities

- Elevate the Visitor Experience
- Extend Length of Stay – campaign designed to extend the average length of stay: adding 1 day = \$125M
- Grow Year-round Visitation – Waterfall Season campaign, aimed at spring visitation.
- Enhance the Brand
- Lead in AI and Data Innovation - Visit Cape Breton mobile app with offline functionality
- Advance Sustainability and Inclusion
- Strengthen Governance and Collaboration

A proposal to operate the Port Hastings Visitor Information Centre for 2026 as a pilot project was introduced to Council. This would be a collaborative approach with Municipal Partners and the Province and would operate from June 22 to October 31.

6. PRESENTATION: GET ACTIVE 2026, MARISSA MACLELLAN, STUDENT COORDINATOR

Key events and initiatives planned for the 2026 Summer Season:

- Four-day camps (Cranton Crossing and Creignish) – ages 5-10 years.
- Day Camps (Orangedale, Inverness, Margaree and Chéticamp) ages 5-10 years.
- Half Day Camps (Port Hood, Judique and Whycocomagh) ages 5-10 years.
- Teen tournaments featuring volleyball and spike ball will be held weekly at beaches across the county.
- Additional teen and adult tournaments, including activities such as basketball, ball hockey, pickleball will be hosted at various community recreation spaces across the county.
- Jumpstart Girls Volleyball – new this season.
- Inverness Multicourt Events – Pickleball, Ball Hockey, Basketball, Ping Pong, Cornhole.
- Lizzi's Loop 3 Day Adventure Camp (Port Hood) – ages 3-5 years.

7. ACCOUNT WRITE OFFS

As part of the Municipalities regular collection efforts, accounts are evaluated on their likelihood of collection routinely. A list of water, tax and tipping accounts, were provided to Council as being doubtful for collection.

Direction to staff to develop a Collections Policy.

Direction to staff to continue efforts to collect those accounts classified as "Refusing to Pay"

Recommendation to write off the remaining accounts in the list provided.

8. FILE BOXES FOR DESTRUCTION

Recommendation from Council to proceed with the destruction of file boxes numbered 101 to 165.

9. HUMAN RESOURCE POLICIES

Pregnancy and Parental Leave Policy

Recommendation that Council agree to consider the adoption of the amendments to the Pregnancy and Parental Leave Policy at the next Regular Meeting of Council.

Respectful Workplace Policy

Recommendation that Council agree to consider the adoption of the amendments to the Respectful Workplace Policy at the next Regular Meeting of Council.

10. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIAL CONSTABLE AND BYLAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER POLICY

Recommendation that Council agree to decide on the amendments to the Special Constable and Bylaw Enforcement Officer Policy at the next Regular Meeting of Council.

11. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANT APPLICATIONS

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

The Request of Council is \$6,250.

Recommendation to defer a decision on this request to budget discussions and to inquire if contributions were received from Richmond and Victoria Counties.

- Cabot Trail Relay Association – 2026 Relay Event Funding

The Request of Council is \$5,000.

Recommendation to defer a decision on this request to budget discussions.

- Mabou Farmers' Market Cooperative Ltd. – Marketing Strategy

The Request of Council is \$3,965.

Recommendation to defer a decision on this request to budget discussions.

12. CAPITAL BUDGET ITEM: NEW TRAILER

Recommendation to Council to decide on the capital purchase of a new trailer via debenture in the amount of \$239,400 at the next Regular Meeting of Council.

13. CORRESPONDENCE

- The Eastern District Planning Commission April 2026 Building Statistics were provided to Council.
- Correspondence was received from the Minister of Justice Scott Armstrong informing Council that Ministerial Approval has been granted regarding the Joint Police Advisory Board's request to include representation from We'koqma'q First Nation.
- Correspondence was received from the Department of Emergency Management informing municipalities of the new requirements under the *Act to Provide Support for Fire Protection Services*.

14. NEXT MEETING DATE

June 11, 2026, 9:30 a.m.; Regular Meeting of Council

15. "IN CAMERA"

MOTION: *That Council move to "In Camera" at 12:24 p.m. to discuss three contract items and three human resource items.*

MOVED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm

SECONDED BY: Councillor Gillis

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: *That Council move out of "In Camera" at 2:50 p.m.*

MOVED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm

SECONDED BY: Councillor Gillis

MOTION CARRIED

16. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: *That Council adjourn at 2:50 p.m.*

MOVED BY: Councillor Poirier

MOTION CARRIED