

Committee of the Whole Meeting
Thursday, June 18, 2026
9:30 a.m.
Council Chambers

MINUTES

Council: Warden Bonny MacIsaac
Deputy Warden Lynn Chisholm
Councillor Claude Poirier
Councillor Blair Phillips
Councillor John MacLennan
Councillor Catherine Gillis (online)

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
Jason Calder, Physical Activity Coordinator
Debbie Nicholson, Administrative Assistant to Council/CAO
Megan Wludyka, Chief Communications Officer
Siobhan Beaton, Communications & Digital Marketing Coordinator
Ben MacKay, Communications Advisor and Community Liaison
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.

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 Poirier
SECONDED BY: Councillor Phillips
MOTION CARRIED

4. RECOGNITIONS:

Harlow MacNeil – Warden MacIsaac extended congratulations to Harlow MacNeil of Inverness on being named the Grade 5 Grand Prize Winner in Habitat for Humanity Canada's 2026 Meaning of Home contest.

Terry and Craig Gillis- Warden MacIsaac extended gratitude and recognition to Terry and Craig Gillis for their many years of dedicated volunteer service to the Whycocomagh Waterfront Centre and the wider community.

5. PRESENTATION: Mitchell Heyens, Fire Protection Specialist, Fire Underwriters Association

The Fire Underwriters Survey connects Canadian municipalities to the insurance industry. It is a provider of data, underwriting, risk management and legal/regulatory services focusing on community fire-protection and fire prevention systems in Canada. The intent of the system of fire insurance grading is primarily to provide insurers with accurate information to base underwriting decisions on. Information collected from individual volunteer fire departments will be made available to the insurance industry via a new online portal.

Correspondence was provided to Council regarding changes to the response boundaries impacting residents of Richmond County where fire protection services are currently provided by the West Bay Road Volunteer Fire Department.

6. STAFF REPORTS

(a) Acknowledgement: Lynne MacLennan, Cape Breton Partnership

Warden MacIsaac acknowledged Lynne MacLennan on the occasion of her retirement as Inverness County's Economic Development Officer with the Cape Breton Partnership.

(b) Chestley Carr, Public Works

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- Service installations continue in collaboration with the Capital Projects and Planning team.
- Many water line repairs were conducted over the past month, with notable issues addressed near the Mabou Service Station and Maple Street, Mabou.
- Summer maintenance activities have begun at all municipal facilities (lawn mowing, flowers etc.)
- The Whycocomagh leak detection program resulted in approximately 50 – 60 gallons per minute of water loss recovery.

- A boil order advisory was implemented in the community of Whycocomagh. Cracks discovered in the Production Well # 2 (PW2) casing were causing turbidity, therefore PW2 was removed from service. Production Well # 1 (PW1) remains the sole production well for the Whycocomagh water supply.
- Several issues were addressed through the emergency line including concerns related to clogged sewer lines, road conditions, and water meter leaks.

(c) Erin Gillis, Operations

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- An increase in solid waste and recycling volumes is anticipated due to the return of seasonal residents.
- The Strathlorne Recycling Facility continues to accept non-hazardous aerosols, plastic laminates, and Styrofoam through the expanded recycling program, which has been well received by county residents.
- Waste reduction activities continue including school presentations in partnership with ACAP, and community cleanups in various locations.
- Solid waste education initiatives continue to be promoted through the municipal website and social media channels.
- Training for Confined Space Theory, Fall Protection, Lockout/Tagout, and Hoisting and Rigging were completed between April 30 – June 5.
- Approximately 142 calls were received on the Solid Waste toll-free line during the reporting period. The majority of calls were related to our services, seasonal residents returning, collection scheduled, sorting requirements, facility hours of operations, and general/special program information.

(d) Department of Recreation and Community Wellness

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

Pickleball Clinic on May 28 in Scotsville, Seniors Music Bingo on May 28 in Judique, “Try-it” event for adaptive equipment on June 3 in Port Hood, Seniors Waterfall Hike on May 23 at MacIntosh Brooks Falls, launch of the Get Active Summer Programming, six week after school art program in Port Hood, launch of Get Active Ball Hockey, Jr. NBA program held at three county schools, Fiddlers Run in Inverness, Antigonish Special Olympics, Inverness County Book Club (various locations), Escape Room project in Cheticamp and Creignish, and Movie Night at the Mabou Hall.

Upcoming Events:

Advertising of vacancies on the Accessibility Advisory Committee and Seniors Council, Planting with Seniors workshop, Seniors Community workshop, Seniors/Accessible pickleball, Age Well Ice Cream Social, Basketball Nova Scotia Camp, Inverness Wrestling Camp, Inverness Bike Rodeo, Inverness Wave Volleyball Camp, Beach Box and Playbox Project, Bike Repair Project in four county locations, Family Campout Weekend in Whycomagh and expansion of the Equipment Loan Program (available to rent through Playfinder).

(e) Melanie Beaton, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- Inverness Wastewater Treatment Plant – electrical wiring has been delivered to the site, and installation of the wiring and transformer is the last step required to achieve power.
- Port Hood Lift Station Replacement – installation of concrete structures, valve chamber, and electrical/control panel monument have been completed.
- Meat Cove Beach Road – ditching/pothole repairs completed to improve drainage.
- Inverness Water Source of Supply – awaiting a geotechnical analysis.
- Whycomagh Wastewater Treatment Plant – staff support consultant’s review of capital upgrades within the existing Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) budget.
- Municipal Accessibility Grant - \$31,500 was received to upgrade the entrance doors at the Municipal Administration Building.
- Kenloch Construction and Demolition Cell Closure Plan – review of package underway.
- Whycomagh Active Transportation Planning – early design drawings review by staff.
- Municipalities (FCM) Climate Risk Assessment and Adaptation Plan – in late summer/fall.
- Bylaws – Sewer Discharges Bylaw is under review by department staff.
- Development and Servicing – review of connection fees among other municipalities.
- Source Water Protection – a committee to lead this initiative is in development.
- Jajiktek Seawall Trail – operations planning is ongoing.
- Meat Cove Community Project, Part 2 – scheduling of tasks for community improvements.
- Destination 252 Signage – an updated sign package by the consultant was reviewed, and feedback shared for incorporating requested changes.

(f) Christina MacDonell, Finance

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- Accounting Software Transition – staff are exploring an alternate to the current accounting software (Diamond Municipal Solutions).
- Financial Information Return (FIR) reporting – all requests for further information were completed.
- Progress claim files have been completed for Inverness Active Transportation.
- The 2026-27 draft budget is in development.

- Collection continues on all outstanding tipping fee and water utility accounts.
- Preparations are underway for the August 11 tax sale.
- Two procurement project tenders are currently open, one was recently awarded, one is under evaluation, and one was not awarded.

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

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- Construction has begun at the site of the new Inverness Childcare Facility.
- Ongoing support continues for community organizations across governance, funding readiness, and operations.
- Notices are being sent out to heritage property owners re: updates to the provincial program.
- Ongoing collaboration with Cape Breton Partnership and Ignite to support business growth.
- Supporting the work of At Your Table and community groups to deliver food security work.
- Supporting the work of West Isle Community Development Society and community groups to access funding for housing projects.
- Supporting operations at existing Eastern Counties Regional Library branches.
- Supporting community initiatives including Mabou, Chéticamp and Orangedale waterfronts, Inverness boardwalk and Raceway.
- Working with Destination Cape Breton, province, and community partners on next steps for the Port Hastings Visitor Information Centre.
- Working with Recreation and Community Wellness on expanded volunteer resources and programs.
- Funding was issued to four organizations through the Community Development Grants.
- Staff are currently reviewing fourteen applications received under the Community Impact Employment Program.

7. CIEP (COMMUNITY IMPACT EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM) (Morgan Murray)

Fourteen applications were received for the Community Impact Employment Program. This program replaces the former Summer Employment Support Grant. Applications were assessed in three stages: eligibility screening, financial assessment, and qualitative assessment. Scores from the financial and qualitative assessments were combined to produce a final score out of 47 points.

8. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANT APPLICATIONS

- Margaree Area Development Association – Oil Tank at Margaree 12 Step Club

The Request of Council is \$2,240.50.

Recommendation to fund this request in full with funds coming from District 2 CDC funds.

- Mabou Farmer's Market – Marketing Strategy

The Request of Council is \$3,965.

Recommendation to fund this request in full with funds coming from the Regional Funds.

9. CORRESPONDENCE

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

10. NEXT MEETING DATE

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

11. "IN CAMERA"

MOTION: *That Council move to "In Camera" at 11:03 a.m. to discuss one land item and one human resource item.*

MOVED BY: Councillor Phillips

SECONDED BY: Councillor Poirier

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: *That Council move out of "In Camera" at 11:10 a.m.*

MOVED BY: Councillor Poirier

SECONDED BY: Councillor Phillips

MOTION CARRIED

12. ADJOURNMENT

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

MOVED BY: Councillor Poirier

MOTION CARRIED