

Committee of the Whole Meeting
Thursday, July 16, 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

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
Siobhan Beaton, Communications & Digital Marketing Coordinator
Emery Ferrero, Trails Coordinator
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: Deputy Warden Chisholm
MOTION CARRIED

4. PROCLAMATION: ACADIAN HERITAGE MONTH – AUGUST 2026

Read by Councillor Poirier

***ATTENDU** que la Municipalité du comté d'Inverness est fière que des communautés acadiennes dynamiques dont l'histoire, la langue, les traditions et la culture ont enrichi notre comté soient chez elles ici; et*

***ATTENDU** que, depuis plus de 400 ans, les Acadiens et les Acadiennes font preuve d'une résilience remarquable, apportant une contribution durable au tissu social de la Nouvelle-Écosse et du comté d'Inverness; et*

***ATTENDU** que le Mois du patrimoine acadien nous offre l'occasion de mettre en valeur et de célébrer le riche patrimoine du peuple acadien, tout en rendant hommage à l'héritage durable qu'il a transmis de génération en génération; et*

***ATTENDU** que la Fête nationale de l'Acadie, célébrée chaque année le 15 août, offre aux résidents comme aux visiteurs l'occasion de rendre hommage à la culture acadienne par la musique, la langue, la gastronomie, les traditions et des événements communautaires; et*

***ATTENDU** que la Municipalité du comté d'Inverness s'engage à reconnaître et à célébrer la riche diversité de nos communautés et les contributions durables du peuple acadien à notre histoire commune et notre avenir.*

***PAR CONSÉQUENT, IL EST RÉSOLU QUE MOI**, Bonny MacIsaac, préfète de la Municipalité du comté d'Inverness, proclame par la présente le mois d'août 2026 « Mois du patrimoine acadien » dans le comté d'Inverness.*

Read by Warden Bonny MacIsaac

***WHEREAS**, the Municipality of the County of Inverness is proud to be home to vibrant Acadian communities whose history, language, traditions, and culture have enriched our county; and*

***WHEREAS**, Acadians have demonstrated remarkable resilience for more than 400 years, making lasting contributions to the fabric of Nova Scotia and the County of Inverness; and*

***WHEREAS**, Acadian Heritage Month provides an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the rich heritage of Acadian people while honouring the enduring legacy they have passed from one generation to the next; and*

***WHEREAS**, National Acadian Day, observed annually on August 15, offers an opportunity for residents and visitors alike to celebrate Acadian culture through music, language, food, traditions, and community events; and*

WHEREAS, the Municipality of the County of Inverness is committed to recognizing and celebrating the rich diversity of our communities and the lasting contributions of Acadian people to our shared history and future.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT I, Bonny MacIsaac, Warden of the Municipality of Inverness County, do hereby proclaim August 2026 as Acadian Heritage Month in Inverness County.

5. PRESENTATION: Alison Grittner, Cape Breton University

Homeward Bound is a research initiative aimed at supporting aging rural Nova Scotians (ARNS) to age how they decide is right for them. By 2030, a quarter of all Nova Scotians will be 65 or older, which requires a reimagining of healthcare, housing, and social support systems across our rural landscapes. Guided by community-based participatory research (CBPR) and grounded in values of equity, diversity, and inclusion, the team is working with aging rural Nova Scotians to envision what they need to age in the right place (AIRP). Together, they will build and deliver community actions and care practices that support aging rural Nova Scotians' wellbeing. In Inverness County the project is currently in the Listening & Mapping stage where team members will get to know the NORC (Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities) in the Eastern Health Zone; Margaree Valley and Chéticamp, identifying where Aging Rural Nova Scotians live, what supports already exist, and what's missing.

6. CHÉTICAMP CELL COVERAGE ISSUE

Concern was raised regarding the decline in cell service in the Chéticamp area, as well as Inverness County in general.

Direction to staff to issue a letter to Bell Aliant regarding this issue.

7. FIRST READING: REZONING REQUEST FROM AGRICULTURE POTENTIAL (AP) TO COMMERCIAL RECREATION (CR) BY DAI PHAM FOR LANDS IDENTIFIED BY PID # 50330547, REDBIRD DRIVE, BIG HARBOUR CENTRE, INVERNESS COUNTY FOR GEODOMES AS SHORT-TERM RENTALS.

MOTION: *That Municipal Council give First Reading and set a Public Hearing date of July 30, 2026 to approve the proposed rezoning of PID# 50330547, Redbird Drive, Big Harbour Centre, Inverness County, from the Agriculture Potential (AP) Zone to Commercial Recreation (CR) Zone.*

MOVED BY: Councillor MacLennan

SECONDED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm

MOTION CARRIED

8. FIRST READING: REZONING REQUEST FROM AGRICULTURE POTENTIAL (AP) TO COMMERCIAL RECREATION (CR) BY CHARYL O'QUINN-WETZEL FOR LANDS IDENTIFIED BY PID # 50064955, 12723 CABOT TRAIL, GRAND-ÉTANG, INVERNESS COUNTY FOR A CAMPGROUND AND ACCOMMODATIONS.

MOTION: *That Municipal Council give First Reading and set a Public Hearing date of July 30, 2026, to approve the proposed rezoning of PID # 50064955, 12723 Cabot Trail, Grand-Étang, Inverness County, from the Agriculture Potential (AP) Zone to Commercial Recreation (CR) Zone.*

MOVED BY: Councillor Phillips

SECONDED BY: Councillor Poirier

MOTION CARRIED

9. STAFF REPORTS

(a) John Bain, Eastern District Planning Commission

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- The 2025/2026 Annual Report and Financial Statements were provided to Council. Highlighted items include commission structure and staffing, major projects, new and ongoing files, dangerous and unsightly premises, and building permit statistics.
- A major initiative was the organizational review. The RFP was awarded to Davis Pier in December 2025. The recommendations report identified three key areas of focus:
 - Organizational (e.g. updated staffing model and job descriptions, with emphasis on the Director role).
 - Operational (process improvements, workflow efficiencies, and technology enhancements).
 - Governance (shift toward a more strategic, administrative, CAO-led Board model to reduce operational overlap and strengthen oversight).

(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 at Maple Street, Mabou and River Street, Inverness.
- Summer maintenance activities continue at all municipally owned properties while also maintaining the visibility and accessibility of fire hydrants.

- An isolation valve was installed at the intersection of Old Deepdale Road and the Celtic Shores Coastal Trail. This would allow for continued water service to the hospital and surrounding area in the event of a watermain break.
- Fournier Industries recently completed a no-cost pilot test of a Rotary Press sludge dewatering system at the Whycocomagh Wastewater Treatment Facility. The findings from the pilot will help evaluate the feasibility, operational requirements, and potential benefits of implementing Rotary Press technology as a long-term sludge dewatering solution for the Municipality.
- Several issues were addressed through the emergency line including concerns related to clogged sewer lines, road conditions, work on Central Avenue, and inquiries about service installation hookups.

(c) Erin Gillis, Operations

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- Recent improvements were completed at the Kenloch Waste Management Facility. The old scale house was successfully removed and preparations were completed to prepare for the replacement unit. Staff also completed a significant site cleanup by clearing debris from the scale area, residential drop-off area, and ditches leading to the transfer station and job trailer.
- Solid waste education initiatives continue to be promoted through the municipal website and social media channels. Recent activities include the return of Beach Bingo, attendance of solid waste staff at the Mabou Farmer's Market, and projects in conjunction with ACAP (Atlantic Coastal Action Program) including "Learning for Littles" and a Margaree community cleanup.
- A new process for reviewing workplace safety inspections is currently underway. Early implementation shows positive results, with key meetings producing actionable safety improvements.
- Over the last month approximately 750 metric tonnes of Municipal Solid Waste / Construction & Demolition was transferred to GFL Environmental Inc., Guysborough and approximately 14.5 metric tonnes of recycling was transferred to Camdon Recycling.

(d) Department of Recreation and Community Wellness

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

Book Club sessions were held in Inverness, Whycocomagh, Chéticamp and Mabou. The Inverness Multicourt Facility is now accepting bookings for team programs for all ages and abilities. The pop-up Bike Repair Program has travelled to five communities, performing repairs to over seventy

bicycles. Staff assisted Dalbrae Academy Safe Grad activities by hosting escape rooms for the graduating students as part of their activity night. Chéticamp Movie Night took place at the Cabot Trail Arena. The “Planting with Seniors” workshop took place in Judique on June 11. “Get Active” events were held in various county schools. Jr. NBA Basketball sessions were held in three communities with 171 participants. Department staff supported the Heartland Tour in Inverness on June 22 to promote healthy living in Inverness County.

Upcoming Events:

The grant application to the Nova Scotia Health Board for the Seniors – Age Well Ice Cream socials was approved. Planning is underway for August – November events. The Seniors’ walking group is hosting events every other Thursday through the summer months. Weekend guided hikes on county trails will take place throughout the summer. The Wave Volleyball camp is planned for the Inverness Education Centre/Academy for the end of July. The Playbox Project has been delivered to the Inverness Multicourt Facility, the Southwest Margaree Playground and is coming soon to the Whycocomagh Education Centre. The Inverness County Movie series will continue with shows in Mabou and Port Hood. The Inverness County tennis series will kick off on July 6 in Judique and the Inverness Beach Volleyball sessions will continue through the summer.

(e) Melanie Beaton, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- Inverness Wastewater Treatment Plant – Electrical work is progressing throughout the site, with permanent power expected by the end of July. The remaining work will consist of final grading, decommissioning, site cleanup, and completion of minor deficiency and restoration items.
- Port Hood Lift Station Replacement – Project completion is anticipated approximately two weeks after installation of the electrical control panel, with a tentative completion date in late July.
- Chéticamp Digester - Construction of the new Chéticamp Digester platform is nearing completion, with all major structural steel components installed. The remaining work consists of installing the floor grate clips and a kick plate on the existing platform.
- Jajiktek Seawall Trail - The project is in the final stages of design and related negotiations with the 100% Design Package expected to be submitted this week.
- Meat Cove Community Centre Improvements – Phase 2 improvements are underway (new water line connections, old deck removal, baby barn removal, shed construction, new storm door construction).
- Central Avenue Rebuild - Phase 1 construction was awarded to Brilun Construction Ltd. and the contractor mobilized to the site on Wednesday, July 8.
- Pleasant Bay Whale Interpretive Centre – Recent improvements include basement window replacement, roof replacement and fascia board replacement.

- Cabot Trail Washrooms (Margaree and Pleasant Bay) - Both facilities are maintained through partnerships with local community organizations to help provide clean, accessible amenities for residents and visitors.

(f) Christina MacDonell, Finance

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- 2025-26 Audit – Auditors will be onsite conducting fieldwork from July 13 -20.
- Accounting Software Transition – Navilign software has been selected as the replacement for the current accounting software (Diamond Municipal Solutions).
- Financial Information Return (FIR) reporting – The Financial Information Return has been reviewed and accepted by the province.
- A capital funding claim has been submitted for Whycomomagh Wastewater Treatment Plant and Inverness Active Transportation.
- Collections Policy – Department Staff are reviewing policies of other Municipal units as a guide for best practices.
- Collection continues on all outstanding tipping fee and water utility accounts.
- Preparations are underway for the August 11 tax sale.
- Four project tenders are currently open, one is under evaluation, and one was not awarded.

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

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- Construction continues 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.
- 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, the province, and community partners on next steps for the Port Hastings Visitor Information Centre.
- Funding was issued to ten organizations through the Community Development Grants.
- Twelve of fourteen applications received under the Community Impact Employment Program were approved for funding.

(h) Monica Ragan, Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP Cape Breton)

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- School Visits
 - May 27- Student Interns visited Bayview Education Centre and hosted 23 students in the grade 5/6 class with a session on microplastics.
 - Staff visited with 11 students from Taigh Sgoile na Drochaide on Friday, June 5, to talk about wetlands.
- Sunday June 7 – staff attended the Mabou Farmer’s Market and spoke with 44 individuals and shared information on bumblebee monitoring, pollinators, bats and waste diversion.
- Riparian Zone Ready- On June 19, ACAP Cape Breton staff, together with students from Dalbrae Academy, visited Nevada Valley to plant 1,166 trees along the Skye River.
- Upcoming events
 - July 10 and every Friday until August 21- Outdoor Learning for Littles at the Alexander Doyle Public Library in Mabou.
 - July 11- a birding walk will take place at Port Hood Station Provincial Day Park.

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

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

Alexander Doyle Public Library- The summer reading and craft club began recently. Local children can visit every Thursday morning to complete a new activity and discuss what they're reading. ECRL is partnering with ACAP Cape Breton again this summer to offer Outdoor Learning for Littles, who use the library space when the weather does not cooperate.

Chéticamp Public Library – Many tourists have arrived since the beginning of summer. A monthly book club is being held in cooperation with the Municipality. In June a local elementary school class was hosted for a library tour and story time.

Coady & Tompkins Memorial Public Library – continues to offer popular programming such as the French conversation group, fibre club, and the Margaree Sunflowers. Other highlights include our partnership with local author Maris Wicks to offer a monthly Comic & Cartoon Club, and a gardening in Unama'ki workshop.

June 27 – Whycocomagh Public Library Grand Opening, Whycocomagh Waterfront Centre.

(j) Terry Smith, Destination Cape Breton

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

Marketing Levy Administration- Onboarding accommodation operators to the new Levy reporting platform is progressing well. One-on-one support is being provided where necessary.

Marketing Campaign – the “Take your Time” campaign continues in key markets and has been performing very well. Fall campaign will launch in Ontario and Quebec shortly; in the Maritimes after Labour Day.

Destination Development – “Elevate the Cape”- An Investment Prospectus is in development to attract new investment to the Island’s industry. Cabot Trail 100th Anniversary - Community engagement project completed with 12 sessions (7 Trail communities and 5 Mi’kmaq communities).

Short-term rental unit nights sold are up 6% Year to Date. Short-term rental bookings for the season continue to pace well ahead well of 2025. The proposal to operate the Port Hastings Visitor Information Centre for 2026 as a pilot project was declined by the Provincial Government. Destination Cape Breton continues to explore short-term and longer-term options for visitor servicing at or near the Causeway.

10. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANT APPLICATIONS

- Inverness South Anglers Association – Miramichi Brook Habitat Restoration

The Request of Council is \$10,000

Recommendation to fund this request in full with funds coming from the following:

\$1250 from District 3,4,5 and 6 Discretionary Funds.

\$5,000 from the Regional Fund.

11. CORRESPONDENCE

- i. The Eastern District Planning Commission June 2026 Building Statistics were provided to Council.
- ii. Correspondence was received from Kathlene Farrell, Director, International Relations Nova Scotia Intergovernmental Affairs. The city of Inverness Scotland is proposing to be the UK City of Culture 2029.

Direction to staff to write a letter of support on behalf of the Municipality supporting this proposal.

12. NEXT MEETING DATE

July 30, 2026, 10:00 a.m.; Public Feedback Opportunity

13. ADJOURNMENT

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

Moved BY: Councillor Poirier

MOTION CARRIED