

Committee of the Whole Meeting
Thursday, September 17, 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 & Community Development
Jim Davis, Director of Finance
Debbie Nicholson, Administrative Assistant to Council/Chief Administrative Officer
Megan Wludyka, Chief Communications Officer
Siobhan Beaton, Communications & Digital Marketing Coordinator
Keshi MacDonald, Administrative Assistant, Recreation & Community Wellness
Krista MacInnis, Recreation Coordinator, Recreation & Community Wellness
Emery Ferrero, Trails Coordinator, Recreation & Community Wellness
Michelle Coffin, Policy Analyst

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 in 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: Catherine Gillis
MOTION CARRIED

4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: BRITISH HOME CHILD DAY

Read by Warden MacIsaac:

September 28 is recognized as British Home Child Day in Inverness County.

The day honours the lives and legacies of more than 100,000 British Home Children sent to Canada between the late 1800s and the 1970s. An estimated 300 arrived in Inverness and Victoria counties, particularly in Whycocomagh and surrounding communities.

Many of these children came from poor or marginalized families and were sent abroad under child migration schemes. Some endured difficult conditions and were placed in domestic service or agricultural labour. Their experiences, contributions, and lasting family connections remain an important part of Canadian history.

*Residents are invited to mark the day by participating in the **Beacons of Light tribute**, leaving a porch or outdoor light on in remembrance of the children who never made it home. The tribute honours their resilience and keeps their stories in the public memory.*

5. PROCLAMATION: TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION DAY

Read by Warden MacIsaac:

WHEREAS the Government of Canada has designated September 30 as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, a day to honour Survivors of residential schools, their families and communities; and

WHEREAS the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation provides an opportunity to reflect on the history and ongoing impacts of the residential school system and to recognize the experiences of Survivors and their families; and

WHEREAS the Municipality of the County of Inverness recognizes the importance of listening, learning and building respectful relationships with Indigenous peoples, including the Mi'kmaq, whose ancestral and unceded territory the Municipality is located on; and

WHEREAS September 30 is also recognized as Orange Shirt Day, a movement that raises awareness of the experiences of Indigenous children who attended residential schools and affirms that Every Child Matters; and

WHEREAS reconciliation is an ongoing process that requires continued learning, reflection and meaningful action from individuals, communities and governments;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Bonny MacIsaac, Warden of the Municipality of the County of Inverness, do hereby proclaim September 30 of each year as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in the Municipality of the County of Inverness.

6. STAFF REPORTS

(a) Public Works, Chestley Carr

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- Service Installations – several new services were completed over the summer, in conjunction with the Engineering and Planning Department.
- Repair/Replacement work – several large issues, notably in Mabou & Inverness.
- Summer Maintenance – regular inspections at all municipal facilities, including the new Inverness Multicourt Facility.
- Hydro Vac Truck Demo in Strathlorne & Inverness – well received.
- Whycocomagh UV Treatment System – now fully operational.
- Port Hood Wastewater Treatment Plant Programmable Logic Controller – soon to be replaced.
- UV System Assessments for wastewater and water completed at various locations. This will support future capital planning.
- Federal Wastewater Inspections – completed on July 7. No issues reported.

(b) Operations, Erin Gillis

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- Curbside collection reminders – keep garbage bins accessible and safe and free of pests.
- Efficiencies at Kenloch – new signage, relocation of sea can for used oils.
- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) – planning and implementation with Circular Materials and municipal staff is ongoing.
- Waste reduction activities – Beach Bingo was held throughout July 2026, 36 bags of trash were removed from the Melville illegal dumpsite.
- Solida Waste Education Initiatives – Mabou Farmer's Market/ ACAP programming/ social media posts.
- Occupational Health & Safety – monthly meetings and ongoing training sessions.
- Bylaw Development – areas of Dog Control, Animal Control, Nuisances, Taxis and Solid Waste
- REMO (Emergency Management Office)- draft bylaw, service agreement and terms of reference for the advisory committee are underway.

(c) Recreation and Community Wellness, Keshi MacDonald

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- Summer Event Highlights – Tennis, Pickleball, Pop-up Bike Repair, Judique Seniors Walk, Book Clubs in multiple locations, Movie Nights, Trail walk events, Meteor Watch Party, Dry-Stone Wall Building Workshop, Age Well Ice Cream Socials, Chestico Days Horse Racing.
- Upcoming Programming – Program Facilitators Initiative, Inverness County Book Club, Short Stories Collection series, Seniors Age Well Socials, CBU Centre of Excellence for Healthy Aging partnership, Free Beach Box project (for summer 2027), Learn to Skate, Seniors Week Music Bingo Celebrations, Halloween Movie Night, Halloween 5 and 2 km runs, Fall Escape Room Series, Escape Trail Walk, Murder Mystery Night.
- Get Active Summer Program Synopsis provided:
 - Over the course of the summer, 118 events were held across all districts, totaling 356.5 program hours and 2,919 participants. Events included Camp Days, Girls Volleyball, Inverness Multicourt programs, 16 tournaments, community support events, structured non-sport activities, as well as multiple partnerships with various events.

(d) Capital Planning and Projects, Melanie Beaton

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- Inverness Wastewater Treatment Plant – work is progressing. Permanent power/lighting is now available throughout the building.
- New Port Hood Lift Station – commissioned and is nearly operational.
- Chéticamp Digester – construction of the new platform is nearing completion.
- Jajiktek Seawall Trail – getting close to finalizing the construction agreement.
- Meat Cove Community Centre Improvements – door replacements/accessible ramp/single level deck.
- Central Avenue Rebuild – Phase 1 work continues with 250 m of forcemain installed to date.
- Ongoing initiatives include multiple infrastructure upgrades, bylaw development, source water protection committee promotion, signage initiatives, Port Hood Park project, and active transportation planning initiatives.

(e) Finance, Jim Davis

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- Auditors are currently preparing the 2025-26 consolidated statements.
- Work is ongoing to transition to the new accounting software system.
- Staff continue with the collection of outstanding tipping fee balances.

- \$15,000,000 was received during August 2026 in property tax revenues.
- The Municipal Collections Policy is in development.
- One tender is currently open, two are under evaluation and one has not been awarded.

(f) Culture & Community Development, Morgan Murray

Recent Initiatives/Accomplishments:

- The new Whycocomagh Public Library is seeing great attendance/participation.
- Construction continues on the Inverness Childcare facility.
- Community Funding Program roll-out: the new application system has been launched.
- Food Security – Supporting community food programs including pantries in Whycocomagh and Pleasant Bay.
- Healthcare – provided tours to potential healthcare workers.
- Literacy Council programming has begun for Fall 2026.
- Volunteers – recognition profiles are posted to social media.
- Community Funding Approved Requests – nine approved throughout six municipal districts, 2026 Celtic Colours Festival Contribution, three Visitor Information Centre Grants, two Grants to Organizations, as well as the 2026-27 Destination Cape Breton Festivals & Events Contribution.

7. PRESENTATION: KESHI MACDONALD AND EMERY FERRERO, RECREATION VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Volunteers have long been recognized as an essential asset within the Municipality. Despite resources often being limited, and distances between communities being extensive, the Municipality is making efforts to empower communities to meet their needs locally. Recreation in Inverness County covers a wide range of programs and initiatives for youth, seniors, adults, outdoor and accessible initiatives. As part of this newly created Program Facilitator initiative, a call for volunteers will soon go out seeking three distinct roles with varying responsibilities and expectations: support, facilitator and instructor. A structured application and screening process is in place for potential program facilitators, with onboarding and training provided. Community members are encouraged to reach out to the Recreation and Community Wellness Department to learn more about getting involved (1-866-258-02223, option 6/ recreation@invernesscounty.ca).

8. PRESENTATION: KRISTA MACINNIS, GET ACTIVE SUMMER RECREATION

Led by a team of five returning students (as well as additional student staff). Three program pillars highlighted: building relationships, creating trust and listening to communities. In the spring and summer of 2026, a wide variety of activities, programs and events were offered by the Get Active Team. During spring, the Get Active team provided afterschool programs at Cape Breton Highlands Education Centre, Bayview Education Centre, and Inverness

Education Centre Academy for ages 7-10, including art and multi-sport activities. The annual Jr. NBA and Ball Hockey programs were successful in Chéticamp, Inverness, and Port Hood. During summer, the Get Active Summer Camps were offered in all municipal districts. Nearly 500 children took advantage of these summer offerings with plans to expand in 2027. The goal of the Get Active program continues to provide places where children can participate, explore, belong and engage with others.

9. SEPTEMBER 4, 2026 RAIN EVENT (Keith MacDonald)

A major rain and windstorm affected Cape Breton and Eastern Nova Scotia over the Labour Day weekend. Over 200 millimeters of rain and strong winds resulted in power outages, severe flooding, and road and bridge washouts. As a result, a State of Local Emergency (SOLE) was declared for Inverness, Victoria and Richmond Counties on Sept. 5. An Emergency Command Centre was established in Port Hawkesbury for seven days. A temporary resident support phoneline was set up for impacted residents to report non-emergency issues. A larger post event storm update will follow at a future meeting of Council.

10. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANT APPLICATIONS

- i. Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Region Association (Community Engagement around the Bras d'Or).

Ask of the Municipality = \$6,250. → *Recommendation to support in full.*

- ii. Margaree Salmon Museum (Replacement of 5 windows)

Ask of the Municipality = \$5,000. → *Recommendation to support in full.*

- iii. Margaree Area Development Association (Community Beautification & Gardening)

Ask of the Municipality = \$1,000. → *Recommendation to support in full.*

11. J CLASS ROADS

Agreement 2026-013, Paving of Subdivision (J Class) Streets – Confirmation of receipt of the agreement by the Nova Scotia Department of Public Works was received by the municipality. The deadline to apply is October 31, 2026. The municipality can put in a submission of 10 roads total, two from each district excluding District 2 that has no J class roads.

12. CORRESPONDENCE

- i. The Eastern District Planning Commission July and August 2026 Building Statistics were provided to Council.

- ii. Bell Canada – the municipality issued a letter to Bell Canada earlier this year requesting a meeting to discuss a decline in cell service within the municipality. Bell representatives have since agreed to a virtual meeting to discuss the issue. Date to be determined.

13. NEXT MEETING DATE

October 1, 2026, 9:30 a.m.; Regular Meeting of Council

14. "IN CAMERA"

MOTION: *That Council move to "In Camera" at 11:50 a.m. to discuss one item re: Section 22.2(h) public security, one item re: Section 22.2(c) personnel, one item re: Section 22.2(a) acquisition, sale, lease and security of municipal property and one item re: Section 22.2(e) contract negotiations.*

MOVED BY: Councillor Gillis

SECONDED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: *That Council move out of "In Camera" at 12:31 p.m.*

MOVED BY: Deputy Warden Chisholm

SECONDED BY: Councillor Poirier

MOTION CARRIED

15. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: *That Council adjourn at 12:31 p.m.*

MOVED BY: Councillor Poirier

MOTION CARRIED