

**MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF**  
**ANTIGONISH**

**SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE AGENDA**

Tuesday, May 28, 2025, 5:30pm

Council Chambers

Municipal Administration Building

285 Beech Hill Road

Beech Hill, NS B2G 0B4

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1. Call to Order – Chair, Warden Nicolas MacInnis
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of May 27, 2025 Committee of the Whole Minutes
4. Business Arising from the Minutes
5. Delegations
  - a. There are no delegations
6. Continuing Business
  - a. Budget Deliberations
7. New Business
  - a. There is no new business
8. Additions to the Agenda
9. In-Camera Items
  - a. There are no in-camera items.
10. Adjournment

# **MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF ANTIGONISH**

## **Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, May 27, 2025, Following Asset Management  
Council Chambers  
Municipal Administration Building  
285 Beech Hill Road  
Beech Hill, NS B2G 0B4

Present were: Warden Nicholas MacInnis  
Deputy Warden John Dunbar  
Councillor Mary MacLellan  
Councillor Adam Baden-Clay  
Councillor Richelle MacLaughlin  
Councillor Shawn Brophy  
Councillor Wayne Melanson  
Councillor Gary Mattie  
Councillor Harris McNamara  
Councillor Sterling Garvie

Regrets: None

Staff Present: Shirlyn Donovan, CAO  
Beth Schumacher, Deputy Clerk  
Allison Duggan, Director of Finance  
Marlene Melanson, Director of Recreation (by Zoom)  
Tammy Feltmate, Director of Sustainable Communities (by Zoom)  
Daryl Myers, Director of Public Works (by Zoom)

Others Present: Jennifer MacDonald, Songwriters and Storytellers Society  
Gallery (online and in-person)

### **Call to Order – Chair Warden Nicholas MacInnis**

The meeting of the Committee of the Whole was called to order by the Chair, Warden MacInnis, at 6:52pm.

### **Approval of Agenda**

Warden MacInnis called for any additions or deletions to the agenda. Mrs. Donovan noted some modifications to the order of items on the agenda to move Budget Deliberations to occur after the other business.

Moved and Seconded

That the agenda be approved as amended.

**Motion Carried**

### **Approval of May 20, 2025 Committee of the Whole Minutes**

Warden MacInnis called for any errors or omissions in the Committee of the Whole minutes of May 20, 2025. Hearing none, the minutes were considered approved.

### **Business Arising from the Minutes**

There was no business arising from the minutes.

### **Delegations**

#### **Jennifer MacDonald, Songwriters and Storytellers Society**

Ms. MacDonald spoke regarding the history of the Songwriters and Storytellers Society, managing the Parish Hall in Pomquet as a presentation space after they made it available to them for their use during Covid. They have been allowed to renovate the space as they needed for their use. She reviewed several of the renovations that were made to improve the acoustics and update the appearance, as well as some of the features added to the space for food and drink to support their events.

Opportunities to engage youth in the operation of the centre were highlighted. Plans for the upcoming year were shared, including continuing to grow their concert series, community programming, and facility rentals. Mr. Benoit then said a few words in support of the facility and asked for members of Council to come a show.

The floor was then opened for questions from the committee. Councillor Mattie asked if accessibility was factored in the bathroom renovation. Councillor Melanson expressed his support for the facility. Ms. MacDonald noted that the building has not been renamed and is just known as the local parish hall or the old dance hall.

Questions were asked about advertising for the facility and event. Ms. MacDonald and her colleagues were thanked for their presentation.

### **Continuing Business**

#### **EMO Funding Discussion**

Mrs. Donovan noted that funds from ACOA for the installation of the generator at the Heatherton Community Centre, to support its role as an emergency shelter in the community, is coming back to the municipality. Staff is proposing to maintain these

funds for emergency management expenditures and suggested that they be redesignated for use at the new fire training facility. Consensus was given to redesignate these EMO funds for the new fire training facility.

### **New Business**

#### **Proclamation – Access Awareness Week**

Warden MacInnis read the proclamation to recognize the week of May 25-31, 2025 as Access Awareness Week in the municipality.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council approve the proclamation of May 25-31 as Access Awareness Week in the Municipality of the County of Antigonish.

**Motion Carried**

Deputy Warden Dunbar asked that a letter of congratulations be sent to Brendan Doyle for being the first recipient of the Jeffery Murray Award for Accessible and Inclusive Communities, which was awarded on Monday May 26<sup>th</sup>.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council send a letter of congratulations to Brendan Doyle for being the first recipient of the Jeffery Murray Award for Accessible and Inclusive Communities.

**Motion Carried**

Councillor Mattie shared that he would be participating in a presentation later in the week, where he would be speaking about his experiences on Council and advocating for accessibility in the community.

### **Community Events**

- Councillor Melanson shared that a community cleanup was held in Pomquet, followed by a barbeque for participants.
- Councillor MacLaughlin noted that the Dance for Morgan fundraiser was very successful. A breakfast will be in St. Josephs on the first weekend of the month, and the dinners in Lochaber are expected to begin shortly.
- Councillor Baden-Clay shared that a community cleanup was held along Highway 245, with residents from Districts 1 and 2, and a pizza party was held at the Four Valleys Fire Department afterwards.
- Councillor Brophy shared that a cleanup was held along the Back Road Brierly Brook. An information session about hemlock and insects that are affecting the trees in the province was held in his district.

## **Reports from Inter-Municipal Boards, Committees, and Commissions**

### Heritage Museum

- The next meeting is scheduled for June 2<sup>nd</sup>.

### Antigonish Arena Association

- Nothing to Report – meeting again in August.

### Eastern District Planning Commission (EDPC)

- Nothing to report.

### Eastern Regional Solid Waste Management (ERSWM)

- Nothing to report – next meeting June 19<sup>th</sup>.

### Pictou Antigonish Regional Library (PARL)

- Nothing to report.

### RK MacDonald Nursing Home

- The Board will be meeting on Thursday evening. The AGM will be taking place in June.

### County Paqtnkek Joint Steering Committee

- Nothing to report.

### Community Navigation & Physician Retention Services Association

- Warden MacInnis noted that a name change for the association is in the works.

### People for an Antigonish Rec Centre (PARC)

- Nothing to report.

### Antigonish County Adult Learning Association (ACALA)

- Next meeting will be on May 28<sup>th</sup>.

### Antigonish Community Transit Society (ACTS)

- Will be meeting in early June.

### Antigonish Regional Emergency Management Office (AREMO)

- Nothing to Report

### Antigonish Affordable Housing Society (AAHS)

- Board meeting was held on May 21<sup>st</sup>, and a new communications plan was adopted. The board approved a new plan, in principle, of offering a mix of market and non-market rents as a means to protect the long-term sustainability

of their operation and to reduce the stigma of affordable housing. The AGM is planned for June, and a summer intern started on May 26<sup>th</sup>.

### **Budget Deliberations**

Mrs. Donovan started with three items that needed to be discussed in advance of the budget discussion.

#### *PARC Request for \$25,000 for a Recreation Needs Assessment*

Warden MacInnis noted that in discussions with members of Council, it was expressed to him that it was felt that the needs assessment should be steered by Council and staff instead of an outside organization. Ms. Melanson spoke to a video that was shared with the PARC group earlier in the week, intended to give information about the importance of identifying needs in the community. Discussion about how staff envisions the needs assessment to take place followed. Staff recommends the creation of a steering committee to undertake the needs assessment.

Councillor McNamara noted that he felt that PARC should not be involved in the development of a needs assessment. Councillor Baden-Clay asked for clarification regarding the breakdown of the funding and staff's recommendation regarding the steering committee. A question was asked about whether the project could proceed if the Town did not contribute the funding, and Mrs. Donovan noted that a motion for this item would be sought so that a condition could be placed that it proceeding is contingent on the Town also providing funding. Discussion followed.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council approve the inclusion of \$25,000 in the 2025/26 budget for a Recreation Needs Assessment, subject to the Town of Antigonish also contributing \$25,000 to the project, and for the municipalities to take the lead on the assessment.

**Motion Carried**

#### *Mini Pitch Accessible Washrooms*

Mrs. Donovan noted that there was no clear consensus regarding the accessible washrooms at the Mini Pitch at the last Committee of the Whole meeting. Discussion followed.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council approve the inclusion of \$150,000 in the 2025/26 budget for an accessible washroom at the Mini Pitch.

**Motion Carried**

*Mini Pitch Second Surface Paving*

Mrs. Donovan noted that the last Committee of the Whole meeting, a desire was expressed to discuss the second surface paving further. Members of the committee felt that the recreation needs assessment would be appropriate to determine if the second surface is needed. Consensus was to remove the item from the 2025/26 budget.

A brief five-minute recess was held.

Mrs. Duggan then began her review of the budget, starting with the proposed rates, and then going through the pertinent details of the budget such as borrowing, reserves, and external funding. Mrs. Duggan was thanked for her work and that of her team in preparing the budget. Councillors were asked to review the handouts for the budget in detail, and the Committee will reconvene tomorrow at 5:30pm to review any further questions regarding the budget. Should the Committee feel comfortable with the budget, a Special Council meeting will be held to strike the tax rate.

**In-Camera Items**

There were no in-camera items.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, the Committee of the Whole meeting was adjourned at 8:46pm.

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Warden Nicholas MacInnis

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Shirlyn Donovan, CAO