

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

**Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday December 9, 2025, 5:30pm**  
**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 Richelle MacLaughlin  
                              Councillor Shawn Brophy  
                              Councillor Wayne Melanson  
                              Councillor Gary Mattie  
                              Councillor Harris McNamara

Regrets:                 Councillor Adam Baden-Clay  
                              Councillor Sterling Garvie

Staff Present:           Shirlyn Donovan, CAO  
                              Allison Duggan, CFO  
                              Meg MacInnis, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator

Others Present:         Gallery (online and in-person)

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**Call to Order- Warden MacInnis**

Warden MacInnis called the meeting to order at 6:03pm.

**Approval of Agenda**

Warden MacInnis called for approval of the Committee of the Whole meeting agenda. A request was made to add an item regarding a letter of congratulations for the new Chief and Council at Paqtnkek.

Moved and Seconded

That the agenda be approved as amended.

**Motion Carried**

### **Approval of the November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Committee of the Whole Minutes**

Warden MacInnis called for any errors or omissions in the minutes of November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Hearing none, the minutes were accepted as presented.

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

There was no business arising from the minutes.

### **Delegations**

There were no delegations

### **Continuing Business**

#### **2025 Boundary Review**

Mrs. Donovan presented staff presentation regarding the boundary review, summarizing the process and the next steps. She noted a change to the proposed area of District 4, where the Brierly Brook Road is to be left in District 4 instead of moving to District 3. The presentation included side-by-side comparisons of the existing boundaries and the proposed boundaries as previously presented to the Committee in November.

Councillor McNamara expressed a concern with the proposed configuration of District 9. He noted that he felt that there should be more electors added to that district, due to concerns about the population continuing to drop in that part of the County, to offset the growth happening in other districts. Staff noted that during the public consultation process, residents in areas that were proposed to move from District 8 to District 9 spoke at meetings and wrote in to express their concerns with the proposed change and asking to remain in District 8.

Deputy Warden Dunbar asked for confirmation whether, with the exception of District 5, the districts met the +/-10% of the mean number of electors guideline. Staff confirmed that this was the case. Councillor MacLellan expressed that she felt that the size of District 1 could be a challenge. Councillor Mattie shared that he received a lot of additional phone calls and comments from the public regarding the process, particularly where the fringe populations grow at a faster pace than the rural areas. Looking back, he felt that maybe more than ten districts would work better for the community. Councillor MacLaughlin shared how the process was interesting, and in her district the concerns that were raised were with respect to services instead of representation. She suggested that in advance of the next review enumeration should be done to capture more accurate elector numbers in the County.

Councillor MacLellan expressed a concern regarding how the Special District Grants are divided, particularly if some districts are larger and include more community centres than others. Mrs. Donovan noted that the Special District Grants policy is scheduled for review in early 2027, in advance of the new boundaries coming into

effect in October 2028. Deputy Warden Dunbar suggested that an increase in the number of councillors may be something that should be considered in the next review, to address the concerns with low populations in the east and in District 1.

Warden MacInnis expressed his thanks to the public that participated in the process. He noted that the written submissions were incorporated into the review and were important to the process.

**Moved and Seconded**

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council approve the proposed changes to the municipal polling districts, as shown on the attached map presented November 25, 2025, with the exception of Brierly Brook Road from the train tracks to Civic #27 remaining in District #4.

Motion Carried.  
7 in favour, 1 opposed.

#### Policy Review Policy

Mrs. Donovan noted that this was the second opportunity for the Committee to review and consider the policy. She invited any questions or comments from the Committee. Discussion followed regarding the review timelines, and whether policies could be reviewed or amended even if they weren't due for a review, should circumstances necessitate. Staff spoke to the process that staff has already begun to prioritize the existing policies for review.

**Moved and Seconded**

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council approves the Policy Review Policy as presented.

Motion Carried.

#### Communication Strategy

Ms. MacInnis noted that the agenda package included several documents related to the communication strategy and provided an overview of the purpose of the document and the process that was undertaken in its development. Warden MacInnis expressed that he was looking forward to the bi-monthly resident newsletter as a communication tool for the community. Staff was complimented on the work being done to improve the use of social media to communicate to the public. A suggestion was made to include information with the tax bills to encourage residents sign up for the newsletter.

**Moved and Seconded**

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council approves the Communications Strategy as presented.

Motion carried.

Councillor Garvie joined the meeting at the conclusion of this item.

### Housing Accelerator Fund Land Use By-law

Mrs. Donovan provided a brief background regarding the process that was undertaken to review the land use by-laws as part of the Housing Accelerator Fund project. She noted that there would be a recommendation coming from the Planning Advisory Committee meeting at Council but spoke to the proposed amendments regarding the Local Improvements By-law. Staff has concerns with the recommendations from the consultant regarding the Local Improvements By-law and feel that those proposed changes were not reviewed in sufficient detail with the Planning Advisory Committee. Staff will be recommending approval of the proposed changes to the Land Use By-law but will be recommending against the proposed changes to the Local Improvements By-law when the motion comes forward in the Planning Advisory Committee Report. Discussion followed.

### New Business

#### Water Budget

Mrs. Duggan presented the water budget to the committee for their consideration. She noted that the budget and rates are highly regulated by the NSUARB, and provided an overview of the revenue collected, the expenditures of the utility, depreciation of assets, and debt repayments and any interest charges. Discussion was held regarding specifics in the proposed documents. Mrs. Duggan noted that the debentures attributed to the utility have all been retired. She also provided the committee with the history of the utilities in the County, and how they were consolidated into one utility over time.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council approve the Water Budget as presented.

**Motion Carried**

### Community Events

- Deputy Warden Dunbar attended the Heatherton Group Home concert, the Nova Scotia Power information session regarding upgrades and reliability in Heatherton, the Paqtnkek meet and greet with the new Chief and Council, and the Santa Tour stop in Heatherton. He also attended the Pomquet Fire Department Christmas Party.
- Councillor MacLellan attended the Arisaig Santa Tour stop, attended a discussion at the library regarding their services and funding.
- Councillor Mattie attended the Tracadie Fire Department award evening where many members of the department and ladies' auxiliary were recognized. He also attended the meet and greet at Paqtnkek for their new Chief and Council.

- Councillor McNamara shared there is a Fireman's Breakfast coming later in December. He provided updates on social events that took place and are upcoming at the community centre, including dinners and Santa workshops. He also attended the meet and greet at Paqtnkek.
- Councillor Melanson shared that the community hosted a senior's dinner, there was a Santa Tour stop in Pomquet, and the fire department hosted a Christmas dinner but he could not attend that event due to illness.
- Councillor Garvie attended the meet and greet for the new Chief and Council at Paqtnkek. He was also involved with the Santa Tour.
- Councillor MacLaughlin shared Santa Tour was well received in both Lochaber and St. Joseph's, with complementary events taking place at each community centre to coincide with the tour. There is a children's Christmas Party taking place in James River, and Lochaber is hosting their monthly breakfasts starting in December.
- Councillor Brophy attended the meet and greet event at Paqtnkek.
- Warden MacInnis shared that there was a Christmas Dinner for the St. Andrews Volunteer Fire Department, as well a fundraising pub night is being planned in the community for Katie MacIntosh.

### **Additions to the Agenda**

#### **Congratulatory Letters for Chief and Council at Paqtnkek**

Deputy Warden Dunbar spoke to the recent election in Paqtnkek. Juliana Julian has been elected as the first woman to be Chief at Paqtnkek. Deputy Warden Dunbar shared the names of the other members elected to their council as well.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council send congratulatory letters to the new Chief and Council at Paqtnkek.

**Motion Carried.**

### **In-Camera Items**

The in-camera item was moved to the Council agenda.

**Adjournment**

Moved and Seconded

That Committee of the Whole meeting adjourn at 7:31 pm.

**Motion Carried**



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Warden Nicholas MacInnis



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Shirlyn Donovan, CAO