MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF
ANTIGONISH

Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 10, 2026, 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 (by Zoom) 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, Municipal Clerk Allison Duggan, CFO Marlene Melanson, Director of Recreation Blaise MacDonald, EMO Coordinator Meghan MacGillivray Case, Municipal Solicitor Meg MacInnis, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator
Others Present:	Gallery (online and in-person)

Call to Order- Warden MacInnis

Warden MacInnis called the meeting to order at 5:31pm.

Approval of Agenda

Warden MacInnis called for approval of the Committee of the Whole meeting agenda. Mrs. Donovan requested an addition to the agenda, for an item for the Acquisition, Sale, Lease, and Security of Municipal Property under In-Camera Items.

Moved and Seconded

That the agenda be approved as amended.

Motion Carried

In-Camera Items

Moved and Seconded

That the Committee move into an in-camera session to discuss Contract Negotiations and the Acquisition, Sale, Lease, and Security of Municipal Property at 5:32pm.

Motion Carried

Moved and Seconded

That the Committee adjourns the in-camera session at 6:30 pm.

Motion Carried

Consideration of the January 28, 2026 Committee of the Whole Minutes

Warden MacInnis called for any errors or omissions in the minutes of January 28, 2026. 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

Debenture Financing Follow-up

Mrs. Duggan provided members of the committee with an overview of the options that are available for dealing with the remaining debenture with the Municipal Finance Corporation (MFC), as discussed at the previous meeting.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council approve the CAO signing a commitment letter and resolution to refinance debenture 31-A-1 in the amount of $873,000 over a 5-year term.

Motion Carried
9 in favour, 1 opposed

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Update

Mrs. Donovan provided members of the committee with an update on the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program, giving an overview of contract negotiations with Circular Materials, changes in recycling drop-off facilities for Public Works, and ongoing education work being done for staff and the community. This includes information sessions at the Farmer's Market, as well as a one-page mailout.

A question was asked about how waste is being sorted, compliance with the changes with what is recyclable and what is not, and whether a community-based depot could be organized to assist residents that find it difficult to get to the established depots. A concern was raised with residents dropping off both recycling and waste at the landfill having to run over the scales twice. A suggestion was made to have information sessions out in other parts of the County as well.

New Business

Discussion Regarding Letter from the Antigonish Coalition to End Poverty

Councillor Baden-Clay spoke to a letter that was received from the Antigonish Coalition to End Poverty, sent to the Premier and copied to members of Municipal Council, looking the market basket measure and asking the province to look at increasing social assistance rates. Discussion followed. Some members of the committee felt that the issue of concern was a larger issue for the community, and writing a letter may not be the most effective way to advocate if it was just for the sake of sending a letter. Members of the committee talked about the challenges of balancing a budget while keeping tax rates affordable for residents, followed by further discussion regarding tax rates and the implications for government spending and support.

Overall, members of the committee expressed that they wanted to see those on social assistance being supported, but they acknowledged that this was within the jurisdiction of the province. A letter of support for those on social assistance was suggested, but caution was expressed about asking for a specific amount of an increase.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council send a letter to the Province, in support of the letter from the Antigonish Coalition to End Poverty, regarding an increase to social assistance, with the letter copied to the NSFM.

Motion Carried

Interest on Overdue Taxes, Sewer, and Local Improvement Charges

Mrs. Duggan provided the committee with an overview of the interest rates charged by the municipality on overdue accounts. Staff summarized interest rates of other municipalities across the province, and giving averages based on proximity, rural composition, and an average of the Town and County rates. Options provided to the committee was to stay status quo, look at a suggested rate, and directing staff to use a different percentage rate. Staff was asked what the interest rates translates to in terms of actual dollars. Staff noted that in the last two years, the interest charges have totalled between $100,000 and $110,000.

Concern was raised with looking at raising interest rates if assessments are continuing to rise and increase what residents are having to pay for taxes, particularly for residents whose rates are not under the provincial CAP. A question was asked about how many accounts remain outstanding after the annual tax deadline. Staff noted that approximately 85% of billed taxes are collected by the deadline, with around 15% remaining outstanding after that date for a variety of reasons.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council maintain an interest rate of 0.5% per month and 6% per annum for overdue balances for the Fiscal 2026/27 Operating Budget.

Motion Carried

Staff Report

Mrs. Donovan reviewed the staff report in the agenda package. She made note of the notice received from the NSUARB with respect to the hearing date booked for the boundary review, and staff has provided a copy of this hearing notice to each of the Councillors in addition to posting the information as directed by the Board.

Community Events

This item was deferred to the Council meeting.

Additions to the Agenda

There were no additions to the agenda.

Adjournment

Moved and Seconded

That Committee of the Whole meeting adjourn at 7:36 pm.

Motion Carried

Warden Nicholas MacInnis

Shirlyn Donovan, CAO