MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF
ANTIGONISH

Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 4, 2026,
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 (by Zoom) Councillor Mary MacLellan Councillor Adam Baden-Clay Councillor Richelle MacLaughlin (by Zoom) 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 Meg MacInnis, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator Denise Dunn, Housing Accelerator Fund Coordinator
Others Present:	Gallery (online and in-person)

Call to Order- Warden MacInnis

Warden MacInnis called the meeting to order at 7:32pm.

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 Contract Negotiations under In-Camera Items.

Moved and Seconded

That the agenda be approved as amended.

Motion Carried

Consideration of the February 10, 2026 Committee of the Whole Minutes

Warden MacInnis called for any errors or omissions in the minutes of February 10, 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

Strategic Priorities Quarterly Update

Ms. MacInnis provided the committee with the quarterly update on the strategic priorities that were set in February 2025, giving details about the status of each of the identified priorities including next steps. Questions were asked about specific initiatives during the presentation. Ms. MacInnis was thanked for her presentation.

Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) Program Update

Ms. Dunn provided members of the committee with an update regarding the progress on the eight initiatives that were identified for funding under the Housing Accelerator Fund. Discussion followed regarding the e-permitting program and the impact of recent provincial funding cutbacks on initiatives, with Antigonish Community Transit being mentioned as an example. Ms. Dunn was thanked for her presentation.

New Business

Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) Grant Award Recommendations

Ms. Dunn spoke to the staff memo outlining the grant process and recommendations for the Housing Accelerator Fund Non-Profit Affordable Housing Grant program. Questions followed regarding the different streams that could be applied for under the program, including pre-development, capacity building for organizations, and capital support for projects. Ms. Dunn noted that the two groups that applied have requested support under the pre-development stream of the grant program.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council awards a grant in the amount of $170,375.94 to the Antigonish Affordable Housing Society as part of

the Fall 2025 round of the Housing Accelerator Fund Non-Profit Affordable Housing Grant program.

Motion Carried

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council awards a grant in the amount of $29,624.06 to the Naomi Society as part of the Fall 2025 round of the Housing Accelerator Fund Non-Profit Affordable Housing Grant program.

Motion Carried

Discussion Regarding the Antigonish Affordable Housing Society Presentation

Mrs. Donovan provided a recap for the committee of the presentation that was made by Antigonish Affordable Housing (AAHS) regarding their most recent development. She noted that they had made four different requests for support: for $500k over five (5) years, property tax exemption for their units, support through the Housing Accelerator Fund Non-Profit Affordable Housing Grant, and support through the municipality applying for funding for infrastructure and servicing for the subdivision proposed.

In preparation for the discussion, it was noted that staff looked into all of the different kinds of support provided to AAHS since 2013. She spoke to the municipality's property tax exemption policy, providing members of the committee with a copy of that policy. She spoke to the contributions through the Community Partnership Grants program, land donations, and other supportive infrastructure work.

Mrs. Donovan spoke to the potential financial impact of providing a property tax exemption, noting that past requests from groups have been denied, and noting that when asking other units in the province, others noted that they had recently denied similar requests. Questions followed about the existing non-profit tax exemptions for the properties noted in the policy and their estimated amount of tax write-offs in comparison to the projected amount of tax write-offs of full build-out of the AAHS site. A concern was raised about setting precedent and the impact to municipal revenue for the services and infrastructure to support those units and residents.

A motion was put on the floor to deny the request for tax exemption and to defer a decision on the financial contribution until the current five-year contribution to support Appleseed Phase 2 was finished. Further discussion followed regarding the projected shortfall of housing units in the community. Staff provided figures from the HAF project of net new units through the duration of that project, noting that the current development numbers are at or exceeding the new housing unit targets for the program. Discussion followed regarding the other costs to the community through infrastructure that would be covered such as water, sewer, roads, and sidewalks, the per-unit costs estimated for the project, and the impact on the taxpayers of the community. A proposal was put forward to amend the proposed motion.

Moved and Seconded

To amend the proposed motion to read: The Committee recommends that Municipal Council deny the request from Antigonish Affordable Housing to provide an exemption from property taxes.

Motion Carried.

A suggestion was made to have staff evaluate what capacity there could be for any kind of tax exemption for Antigonish Affordable Housing, whether for the full project or a partial exemption. Staff expressed concern with being able to project possible valuations of development that could change in scope. Discussion followed regarding the request for the $500,000 over five years. Staff noted that where the funds to support AAHS has typically come from the Community Partnership Grants program, having the full summary of all grant requests being made of the municipality for the upcoming fiscal year would be prudent before making a decision on the single request.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council deny the request from Antigonish Affordable Housing to provide an exemption from property taxes.

Motion Carried
9 In favour
1 Opposed

Discussion Regarding Proposed Updates to the Noise By-law

Ms. Schumacher provided members of the committee with an overview of the steps taken to date in the process of reviewing the Noise By-law. She outlined the information gathered to date regarding the current by-law and comparable by-laws from units across the province. A summary of common complaints was discussed, and a request for feedback on the draft by-law was requested of the committee.

Questions were asked about enforcement concerns, examples of agricultural uses, and how uses are defined. Staff will continue with the review and bring a summary back to the committee with a plan for community consultation.

Adjournment

The remainder of the business on the agenda was deferred due to the late hour and will be addressed at the meeting on March 10, 2026.

Moved and Seconded

That Committee of the Whole meeting adjourn at 9:47 pm.

Motion Carried

Warden Nicholas MacInnis

Shirlyn Donovan, CAO