MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF
ANTIGONISH

Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 12, 2026, 5:30pm
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 (by Zoom) Councillor Harris McNamara Councillor Sterling Garvie
Regrets:	Councillor Adam Baden-Clay
Staff Present:	Shirlyn Donovan, CAO Allison Duggan, CFO Beth Schumacher, Municipal Clerk
Others Present:	Gallery (by Zoom and in-person)

Call to Order- Warden MacInnis

Warden MacInnis called the meeting to order at 5:32pm.

Approval of Agenda

Warden MacInnis called for approval of the Committee of the Whole meeting agenda.

Moved and Seconded

That the agenda be approved as presented.

Motion Carried

Consideration of the May 7, 2026 Committee of the Whole Minutes

Warden MacInnis called for any errors or omissions in the minutes of May 7, 2026. Hearing no concerns, the minutes were accepted as presented.

Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

Delegations

Chelsea Ash & Gillian Sampson - Pomquet Beach Road Concerns

The representatives from the Pomquet Beach Road provided members of the committee with a presentation outlining their concerns with the conditions of the roadway. Photographs in the presentation identified specific areas of concern and showed images of the severity of the potholes on the roadway, and concerns with the responses from grader operators was shared. The impact of the roadway conditions on the tourism businesses and the access to the Pomquet Beach were also raised. Residents requested consideration of paving or chip-sealing on the roadway, enhanced maintenance, and better communications with local residents regarding their concerns. A suggestion was made to do a traffic count in the area to get an idea of the volume of vehicles using the roadway. The delegates noted that they have reached out to the Department of Transportation on numerous occasions, have filed a FOIPOP request for maintenance logs with the province, and have reached out to their local MP to have a letter written to the Provincial Minister of Public Works asking for their attention to the road conditions.

Warden MacInnis thanked the delegates for their presentation. Members of the committee shared their sympathies with the challenges experienced on this roadway, noting similarities with road conditions in their districts. Discussion followed regarding the advocacy role that the municipality can serve in working with the Provincial Department of Public Works, including through correspondence and copying the Minister of Communities Culture Tourism and Heritage, expressing the concerns with the road conditions. Comment was made that the roadway seemed like a good candidate for the RIM program that the Province has for their gravel roads, to rebuild the roadway. Including Colton LeBlanc, Minister of Acadian Affairs, and Minister Masland, Minister of Natural Resources, on any correspondence sent about the roadway was requested. A suggestion was also made to reach out to the Department of Public Works Local Area Supervisor regarding the way that residents were treated by the grading operator.

Ms. Donovan suggested the wording of a motion for the committee's consideration. She also suggested that the presenters reach out to Minister Thompson and request a meeting to present their concerns.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council send a letter to the Minister of Public Works, Minister of the Department of Natural Resources, the Minister of Acadian Affairs, the Minister of Communities Culture Tourism and Heritage, Minister of Education, Minister of Justice, and the local MLAs regarding concerns with the condition of the Pomquet Beach Road.

Motion Carried.

Kathleen Robertsson and Betty Rose Landry – Imagination Library Updates

The delegates provided an update on the Dolly Parton Imagination Library and its operations over the past year. They noted that since 2023, the program has grown to have gifted over 22,000 books to children in the Town and County. They shared that the team recently were in Halifax to meet with provincial program representatives to discuss the success of the program in the community. They provided recognition of the support from the County, as well as from 98.9XFM for their coverage of the program. They noted that they have created reading tips to include in all 2026 Canadian books on the book list to help participants.

Members of the committee thanked the delegates and their volunteer team for the work that they have done in providing this program in the community. The spoke to the positive impact of the program on children in the community.

Continuing Business

Budget Deliberations – Sewer Rates

Mrs. Duggan spoke to the proposal to gradually increase the sewer rate over several fiscal years to bring it to a rate closer to revenue neutral after operating since fiscal 2018/19 with no change. Discussion followed regarding expectations for upcoming work on the sewer system and were in favour of providing for gradual increases instead of a dramatic increase at one time. Members of the committee provided comment that they were in favour of the proposed increase. The importance of communication to residents explaining the reasons for the proposed increase was discussed.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council approves an increase to the municipal sewer rates effective the approval of the Fiscal 2026/27 Operating Budget to give a new rate structure as follows:

- a residential flat unit rate of $325,
- a commercial square footage rate of $0.12/ square foot
- an industrial square footage rate of $0.15 per square foot.

Motion Carried.

New Business

There is no new business.

Community Events

Warden MacInnis shared information about the upcoming Lobster Dinner at the Legion. Additional details will be shared with staff, and Councillors were asked to contact Alisha at the office if they are interested in attending.

- Deputy Warden Dunbar shared that on Friday May 9th a concert was held at the Heatherton Community Centre to support new heating system there.
- Councillor McNamara shared that on May 17th there is a Firemen Breakfast at the Havre Boucher Community Centre from 8am-noon. On May 24th there will be the event called Hank's Jamboree, at the Havre Boucher Community Centre,

from 1pm -3pm. He also shared that in May the Havre Boucher Fire Department members are taking a MEDICAL FIRST RESPONDER COURSE to respond to medical emergencies in their district, which involves four days of training. Councillor McNamara noted that there is a need recognized by the fire department as the ambulance may take up to 40 minutes to get to the area, which is a concern with sporadic cell coverage and numerous accidents on the Trans-Canada Highway, as well as a large percentage of seniors in the district. The potential for the Causeway being closed due to accidents or weather conditions such as high winds was also a factor.

- Councillor Melanson shared that a community barbecue took place on Saturday, May 9, 2026, as part of the Pomquet Community Clean Up event.
- Councillor MacLaughlin shared details about the St. Joseph's Community Centre planning an indoor/outdoor yard sale on Sat May 30th
- Councillor Brophy shared details about the Back Road Brierly Brook Cleanup that took place earlier in the month.

Further discussion followed regarding the bulky waste pickup that is scheduled for later in the month. Updates were provided regarding the community cleanups that had taken place in the county.

Additions to the Agenda

There were no additions to the agenda.

Adjournment

Moved and Seconded

That Committee of the Whole meeting adjourn at 6:31 pm.

Motion Carried

Warden Nicholas MacInnis

Shirlyn Donovan, CAO