MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF
ANTIGONISH

Special Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 19, 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 Tammy Feltmate, Director of Public Works (Acting) and Sustainable Communities Marlene Melanson, Director of Recreation (by Zoom) John Bain, Director, EDPC Laura Graham, Solicitor (by Zoom)
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 12, 2026 Committee of the Whole Minutes

Warden MacInnis called for any errors or omissions in the minutes of May 12, 2026. Hearing no concerns, the minutes were accepted as presented.

Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

Continuing Business

A Motion to Reconsider the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law Amendments Regarding Wind Turbine Setbacks

Ms. Schumacher read out the motion that was considered by Municipal Council on May 12th and is under reconsideration by the committee. Members of the committee were provided with an opportunity to ask any questions, and the Warden provided his feedback on the issue after having met at the end of last week with the parties that had spoken at the Statutory Public Hearing. Members of the committee expressed that they appreciated the information and discussions from the community on the subject.

Moved and Seconded

That Municipal Council approve a proposal to amend the County of Antigonish Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law as follows:

County of Antigonish Municipal Planning Strategy

1. Subsection 4.6.2 of the Energy Section of the Municipal Planning Strategy is amended by adding the following text to the preamble immediately before Policy 4-39:

   In March 2025, the Province of Nova Scotia amended the Provincial Minimum Planning Requirements Regulations to establish maximum allowable setbacks for wind turbines within municipalities. Under the amended regulations, municipal planning documents are restricted with respect to certain wind turbine regulations to allow for a uniform approach to turbine development across the Province. The Municipality reviewed and amended their policies in alignment with these minimum planning regulations in 2026.

   Policy 4-39: Council shall adopt wind turbine regulations consistent with the Minimum Planning Regulations of the Province of Nova Scotia to help encourage a uniform approach to wind turbine development across the Province.

2. Renumber Policies 4-39 to 4-49 accordingly.

The Land Use By-law for the Municipality of the County of Antigonish

1. Section 7.4.2(a) of the Land Use By-law is amended by removing the text shown in strikethrough and adding the text shown in bold:

   a. *"Minimum setback from all residences, except residences located on the same lot as the wind turbine, shall be ~~600 metres (1969 feet)~~* **four (4)**

times turbine height. There is no setback requirement from residences located on the same lot."

2. Section 7.4.2(b) of the Land Use By-law is amended by removing the text shown in strikethrough and adding the text shown in bold:

   b. *"Minimum setback for larger turbines or wind farms requiring environmental assessment from all residences, except residences located on the same lot as the wind turbine, shall be ~~1000 metres (3280 feet)~~* **four (4) times turbine height. There is no setback requirement from residences located on the same lot."**

3. Section 7.4.2(f) of the Land Use By-law is amended by removing the text shown in strikethrough and adding the text shown in bold:

   f. *"The minimum setbacks from public* ***roads*** *~~highways~~ shall be ~~60 metres or two~~* ***1.1*** *times the height of the turbine~~, whichever amount is greater~~."*

4. Section 7.4.2(g) of the Land Use By-law is amended by removing the text shown in strikethrough and adding the text shown in bold:

   g. *"Minimum setbacks from watercourses shall be ~~30 metres plus the blade length~~.* **60 metres."**

5. Section 7.4.2(i) of the Land Use By-law is amended by removing the text shown in strikethrough and adding the text shown in bold:

   i. *"The mean value of sound pressure level from a wind turbine shall not exceed 40dBA or above the existing background noise, whichever is greater, ~~at the nearest residence~~* **from the exterior of a residential dwelling."**

6. Section 30 of the Land Use By-law is amended by removing the text shown in strikethrough and adding the text shown in bold in the alphabetical order they should appear within the definitions section:

   Height of Wind Turbine refers to the distance from the bottom of the turbine to the height of a rotor blade in vertical position.

   Height of Rotor refers to the diameter of the swept area of the rotor blades.

   Public Road means ~~a public street or road as defined in the Subdivision By-law of the Municipality of the County of Antigonish~~. ***any street accepted and maintained by the Province of Nova Scotia or the Municipality as a public thoroughfare.***

   Residence refers to a structure used for human habitation, whether for seasonal or permanent occupancy, and is assessed for taxation purposes.

   Setback Wind turbine is measured from the base of the wind turbine tower.

   Supporting structure of a wind turbine includes all structures accessory to the turbine itself, including guy wires.

Wind Farm refers to a grouping of more than one interconnected wind turbines on one lot or abutting lots used for the purpose of converting wind power to produce electricity. These typically require a central computerized monitoring system that monitors the operation of the turbines.

Motion Carried.

Ms. Graham and Mr. Bain left the meeting, along with several members of the gallery.

Budget Deliberations – Operational Items

Members of the Senior Leadership Team provided members of the committee with an overview of some of the operational items, starting with the Recreation Department. Discussion followed regarding the impact of the loss of provincial funding on the operational budget for Recreation, and questions were asked regarding the process to have more beaches with lifeguards in the community. A question was also asked about whether there were plans in the budget for the next steps following the Recreation Needs Assessment. A suggestion was put forward to look at installing portable toilets at the Mini Pitch as an interim measure until the permanent toilets are constructed.

Mrs. Donovan then reviewed a summary of some of the operational initiatives that are coming forward in the budget for Council's consideration. Questions were asked about the solar panels at the municipal office. Discussion regarding the fire training facility followed, and information about the fundraising efforts underway by the local fire departments were shared. Highlights for Administration, Finance, and Public Works were also reviewed. Questions were asked regarding the mandatory costs for Education, and staff was asked to explore whether a request could be made to get an update for Council from the Regional School Board.

Policy Review – Human Resources Policy

Mrs. Donovan noted that the policy was before the committee, with amendments as directed by the committee made to Appendix A. The committee was given the opportunity to review the policy and ask questions. Discussion followed regarding how the Public Works team members, who are on-call or working during the administrative office shut-down between Christmas and New Years, are compensated for their time. Members of the committee felt that there were features proposed in the policy that would be helpful to retain and acknowledge the dedication of the staff team.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council approves the proposed Human Resources Policy, as presented.

Motion Carried
(8 in favour, 1 opposed)

New Business

Policy Review – Harassment Prevention in the Workplace Policy

Mrs. Donovan spoke to the proposed policy and how it meets the legislated requirements for safe workspaces as outlined in updates to the Occupational Health and Safety Act as updated in the fall of 2025. She provided a general overview of the proposed policy, which addresses aspects that were covered in the previous HR Policy but pulled into a separate policy to keep both documents concise. She noted that the new policy is intended to work together with the HR Policy.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council adopts the new proposed Harassment Prevention in the Workplace Policy, as presented.

Motion Carried
(8 in favour, 1 opposed)

Heritage Museum Board Appointment

Ms. Schumacher spoke to the request from the Heritage Museum Board for Council to endorse an Antigonish Community member for a seat on the Board. She explained staff's reasoning for suggesting specifying a length of term for such appointments moving forward. Questions followed regarding the length of public terms on committees and how those related to the length of Council terms. Discussion followed.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council appoint Trevor Gould for the seat dedicated for residents of the Municipality who are ratepayers of the Municipality on the Antigonish Heritage Museum Board, for a three-year term (2026-2029).

Motion Carried

Additions to the Agenda

There were no additions to the agenda.

In-Camera Items

Moved and Seconded

That the Committee move into an in-camera session to discuss the Acquisition, Sale, Lease, and Security of Municipal Property and Personnel Matters at 6:41pm.

Motion Carried

Moved and Seconded

That the Committee adjourns the in-camera session at 8:30 pm.

Motion Carried

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council approve the sale of a 3.8-acre parcel of land from PID 10018570 to Ron Chisholm Hydroseed Inc. for $30,000 + HST (if applicable).

Motion Carried

Adjournment

Moved and Seconded

That Committee of the Whole meeting adjourn at 8:31 pm.

Motion Carried

Warden Nicholas MacInnis

Shirlyn Donovan, CAO