A Meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held in Baddeck on June 22, 2026, at 10:00am with Warden Organ in the Chair.

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

District #1 - Donna Matheson-LeFort

District #2 - Perla MacLeod, Deputy Warden

District #3 – Ian Nicholson

District #4 - Rosella Born

District #5 - Fraser Patterson

District #6 – Tim Donovan

District #7 - Jackie Organ, Warden

District #8 – Wanda Hennick

STAFF PRESENT

Leanne MacEachen, CAO

Alix Redden, CFO

Steff MacLeod, Municipal Clerk, Recorder

Ursula Melski, Manager of Communications

Jessica Klein, Digital Communications Administrator

ABSENT

SWEARING IN OF DISTRICT 3 COUNCILLOR

Councillor Ian Nicholson, the new Councillor for District 3 was sworn in.

CALL TO ORDER

Warden Organ called the meeting to order and presented the agenda for approval.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On Motion of Councillor Donovan seconded by Councillor Nicholson to approve the Agenda for June 22, 2026.

Motion Carried.

PRESENTATIONS

FOOD SECURITY PRESENTATION – ALIX REDDEN AND MARGARET VASSALLO

Representatives from Public Health and Victoria County presented findings from the Beyond the Bank study, highlighting rising food insecurity across Eastern Nova Scotia. The presentation emphasized that food insecurity is driven by income, cost of living, and access to food, not by a lack of budgeting or cooking skills.

- **Key Findings:** Food insecurity continues to increase, with growing demand on food assistance programs, uncertain funding, volunteer burnout, and additional barriers faced by rural communities. Municipal funding represents only a small portion of program funding, and municipalities were not being asked to solve the issue through increased financial contributions.
- **Municipal Role:** The presenters noted that municipalities can support food security by considering it in municipal decision-making, promoting existing community initiatives, and advocating to other levels of government for policy changes that address the root causes of food insecurity.
- **Request to Council:** Council was asked to formally endorse the Beyond the Bank report, advocate for sustained provincial and federal support for food assistance programs, promote local food initiatives, and appoint a Council champion to remain engaged with the working group.
- **Action Item:** Council discussed serving as a voice and advocate for food security initiatives and the recommendation to designate a Council representative to champion the work and maintain ongoing involvement with the Beyond the Bank Working Group.

WAYFINDING PRESENTATION – ADAM FINE

Fathom Studio presented the draft Victoria County Wayfinding Strategy, outlining its research process, key findings, and recommendations to improve visitor navigation and create a consistent wayfinding system across Victoria County.

- **Key Findings:** The study identified inconsistent and overly complex signage, a lack of a cohesive Cabot Trail identity, and the need for stronger regional coordination. Recommendations included standardized signage, improved trail and park signage, enhanced interpretation, and collaboration with neighbouring municipalities and the Province.
- **Council Discussion:** Council discussed the importance of community and business buy-in, asked whether a model similar to Prince Edward Island's provincially enforced signage program had been considered, and noted the overall lack of signage throughout Nova Scotia. Discussion also included opportunities for partnerships to help fund the project, such as with the Village of Baddeck, although it was noted the Village is pursuing its own signage initiative. It was also noted that the Province's dedicated road signage staff are based in Antigonish.

- MLA Timmins advised that the Province is developing a plan for signage; however, there have been no discussions regarding changes to provincial signage standards. He also noted that maintaining private business signage is the responsibility of business owners, and the Province is working with communities to improve compliance. Council also noted the strategy could align well with the upcoming Cabot Trail 100 anniversary, citing the Blue Ridge Parkway as a strong example of an integrated wayfinding system.
- **Action Item:** Council received the presentation and discussed working collaboratively with the Province, neighbouring municipalities, and community partners to explore future implementation of a coordinated wayfinding strategy for Victoria County.

COUNCIL REPORTS

DISTRICT 1

- Provincial Public Works matters brought forward by residents have been forwarded to the appropriate departments for review and follow-up to help ensure timely attention and resolution.
- Constituents have expressed their appreciation for the Pride Flag Raising Ceremony held on June 1. Many residents were pleased to see this event take place and have shared their interest in seeing it expanded in the future, potentially through the addition of a community Pride Parade.
- Oceans Week in Iona was a great success. The event continues to grow each year, and I look forward to seeing it become even bigger and better in the years ahead.
- While not exclusively a District 1 initiative, this announcement is important to many of our constituents. Prior to the Annual General Meeting of the Victoria County Memorial Hospital Charitable Foundation on June 10, a new ultrasound machine was officially unveiled at Victoria County Memorial Hospital. The machine was purchased by the Foundation through the generosity of donors and strong community support, representing an important investment in local healthcare services.
- Congratulations to all members of the Class of 2026 graduating from Wagmatcookewey School and Rankin School of the Narrows. I wish all graduates continued success in their future endeavours.

DISTRICT 2

On Motion of Deputy Warden MacLeod seconded by Councillor Born to send a letter to Irving regarding the parking lot. Following their recent renovation, the parking lot lacks proper signage and has become very crowded. Given the history of this gas station, which has been the site of several deadly accidents, it is crucial to have adequate parking signage and traffic flow for vehicles, especially with tourist season upon us. Additionally, we request an updated contact for government relations, as the current information is outdated.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Deputy Warden MacLeod seconded by Councillor Matheson-LeFort to take $2,000.00 from District 2 Budget for the Two Bays Landowners Association.

Motion Carried.

- Extended good luck to all the students writing exams and thanked the administration and teachers for all they do and to have a great summer.
- Requested to add wayfinding on the next COW agenda.

DISTRICT 3

- Canada Day celebration with firework hosted by the Baddeck Legion
- Jully 16 for grand opening of the new boardwalk, invitations will be sent out.

DISTRICT 4

- Wishing all students a safe, happy, and well-deserved summer break as another school year comes to a close. To all graduates, sincere congratulations on reaching this important milestone, your hard work and dedication have truly paid off. As you move forward, may you continue to pursue your goals and dreams with confidence and determination. Sincere appreciation is extended to teachers, school staff, school bus drivers, and parents and caregivers for their dedication and support throughout the school year, which plays a vital role in the education and development of our students. All the very best to everyone for a safe and enjoyable summer ahead!
- Councillor Born read a letter from North Shore & District Volunteer Fire Department Fire Chief Allister MacDonald outlining longstanding safety concerns with a section of the Cabot Trail between civic numbers 44611 and 44663. The letter described a recurring road depression that has led motorists to cross the centre line to avoid the hazard, creating the risk of a serious head-on collision, particularly during the busy tourist season. Councillor Born expressed support for the Fire Department's concerns, emphasizing the importance of a permanent solution rather than continued temporary repairs, given the risks to residents, visitors, commercial traffic, and emergency responders.
- Councillor Born also raised concerns regarding the administration and enforcement of Dangerous and Unsightly Premises files, noting the need for greater consistency, clearer communication, and improved public understanding of the process.

On Motion of Councillor Born seconded by Councillor Nicholson to send a letter to the Minister of Public Works supporting the Fire Department's request for immediate action to permanently repair the hazardous section of the Cabot Trail

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Councillor Born seconded by Councillor Donovan to invite the Eastern District Planning Commission to a future Council meeting to present on the administration and enforcement of Dangerous and Unsightly Premises, including current processes, timelines, roles, responsibilities, and enforcement challenges.

Motion Carried.

DISTRICT 5

- Expressed appreciation for the new sound system upgrades in Council Chambers.
- Canada Day celebrations at the Ross Ferry Marine Park.

On Motion of Councillor Patterson seconded by Councillor Matheson-LeFort to take $2,000.00 from District 5 Budget for the St. James Presbyterian Church for an AED.

Motion Carried.

DISTRICT 6

- Businesses are opening up.
- Senior lunches are well attended.
- July 17 is the 100th Anniversary of the Royal Canadian Legion in Ingonish, there will be celebrations.
- Following up with the Beach Crossing Road and Lakeview Road signage issues.

DISTRICT 7

- Councillor Born and I attended the 5th Anniversary of BOLD.
- Councillor Hennick and I had the privilege to attend the Cabot education center graduation supper, it was so nice to see how excited the graduating class was and the proud parents sitting with them. This week marks more than the end of your high school journey, it marks the beginning of a new chapter filled with possibilities, challenges, and opportunities waiting to be discovered. As you walk across the stage and receive your diploma, take a moment to reflect on how far you have come. Think of the lessons learned, the friendships built, the obstacles overcome, and the memories that will stay with you long after today. Every late-night study session, every success, every setback, and every moment of growth has helped shape the person you are becoming. The road ahead may not always be clear, and that's okay. You do not need to have all the answers right now. Life is not measured by how quickly you reach your destination but by the courage, kindness, and determination you bring to the journey. As you move forward, believe in yourself even when things seem uncertain. Embrace new experiences, learn from mistakes, and never underestimate the impact you can have on others. Stay curious, stay humble, and stay true to your values. The world needs your ideas, your talents, your compassion, and your unique voice. Remember that success is

not only found in achievements or titles. It is found in the lives you touch, the character you build, and the difference you make along the way. Congratulations, Class of 2026. Be proud of what you have accomplished and excited for what lies ahead. Your future is unwritten, and the possibilities are endless.

DISTRICT 8

- Welcomed District 3 Councillor Nicolson to Council. Looks forward to working with him.
- Thanked Council and Staff that came to District 8 for the COW meeting on June 8th at the Culture Center in Cape North, it was a pleasure to have you all there, sorry it was so cold.
- As the tourist season has started, seeing lots of campers on the go. DNR has informed me that they will be blocking off Dingwall Beach to keep the campers off the beach, hopefully there won't be a repeat off last year.
- I have received calls about aggressive dogs and that we don't currently have a dog catcher, but if you feel threatened by a dog, please call the RCMP. I was told that we are working on getting a dog catcher.
- Happy Graduation and Grading day to all the students in District 8 and all the rest of Victoria County.
- Happy Canada Day to everyone. get out and enjoy the festivities that's going on, we live in a wonderful county and Country.

RECESS

- An hour recess was called at 11:56am

COUNCIL DISCUSSION

a) INVESTOR SUMMIT – REQUEST FOR SUPPORT/SPONSORSHIP

On Motion of Councillor Patterson seconded by Deputy Warden MacLeod to sponsor the cruise for the Investor Summit for $3,250.00.

Motion Carried.

b) LIGHTING THE WAY VICTORIA COUNTY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL CHARITABLE FOUNDATION – REQUEST FOR SPONSORSHIP

Deputy Warden MacLeod brought up conflict of interest with herself and Councillor Matheson-LeFort as they are on the board. Also requested that this sponsorship be made a council special project and that the funds be taken from there and not district budgets.

On Motion of Councillor Born seconded by Councillor Donovan to sponsor the Lighting the Way for $2000.00 from Council Special Projects.

Motion Carried.

Warden Organ was against

c) MUNICIPAL HERITAGE GOVERNANCE HISTORY – COUNCILLOR MATHESON-LEFORT.

Councillor Matheson-LeFort addressed Council based on a recent discussion with Ken Donovan regarding heritage property designation in Victoria County and was hoping to better understand the history of the Municipality's heritage governance framework.
And requested the following:
* When the Municipality formed a Heritage Advisory Committee and when was it last active;
* How heritage designations have historically been identified, reviewed, and brought forward to Council;
* Whether there have been any changes to the Municipality's heritage governance structure over time;
* Any records, reports, or background information that would help Council understand the historical use of heritage designation tools within the County.

She is interested in understanding how the Municipality has approached heritage property designation historically and whether there are any gaps or changes in practice that Council should be aware of.

On Motion of Councillor Matheson-LeFort seconded by Councillor Hennick to receive a Municipal Heritage Report with the above information.

Motion Carried.

SUBMITTED REPORTS

a) CAO REPORT

Things of note from the report:

- IDS town hall June 24th at 6pm Councillor Donovan will be the presenter for the County.
- Cheque has been written to VHCC (Rink Committee) for the County's contribution.
- Tax bills have been sent to Horizon and should arrive in mailboxes shortly; emailed bills went out June 17. Due date is August 1.
- Grant cheques are being processed and will be mailed with accompanying letters once ready.
- Scheduling the capital budget and water budget meeting is still on the radar.

- The annual budget report will be published following the approval of the capital budget

Deputy Warden MacLeod requested that the Tourism Department meet with the Port of Sydney regarding the parking in the Village.

b) POST BY-ELECTION INFORMATION REPORT

Steff MacLeod, Returning Officer, provided Council with a post By-Election report.

MOTIONS

a. SECOND READING OF WASTEWATER CHARGES AND RATES BYLAW:

On Motion of Deputy Warden MacLeod seconded by Councillor Donovan to approve the Second Reading of the Wastewater Charges and Rates Bylaw.

Motion Carried.

Councillor Matheson-LeFort was against.

Councillor Patterson thanked the Warden and staff regarding the work that went into the Public Hearing and congratulated everyone on a job well done and supported the bylaw.

Councillor Donovan thanked the members of the public that sent in their questions and concerns.

b. SECOND READING OF WASTEWATER BYLAW:

On Motion of Deputy Warden MacLeod seconded by Councillor Donovan to approve the Second Reading of the Wastewater Bylaw.

Motion Carried.

Councillor Matheson-LeFort was against.

Council discussed that the Wastewater Bylaw establishes the foundational framework for the operation and management of the wastewater system, recognizing that amendments may be required as the system evolves.

Concerns were also raised regarding public confidence and the importance of ensuring residents clearly understand the costs, risks, and requirements of the bylaw. Questions were asked about whether some of the bylaw's more restrictive provisions are precautionary measures and whether they differ from those found in a typical wastewater bylaw.

c. IN-CAMERA RECOMMENDATION FROM JUNE 8, 2026, COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING:

On Motion of Deputy Warden MacLeod seconded by Councillor Born to approve the In-Camera recommendations from June 8, 2026.

Motion Carried.

c. MARKETING LEVY BYLAW AMENDMENTS

On Motion of Deputy Warden MacLeod seconded by Councillor Born to approve the First Reading Marketing Levy Bylaw Amendments.

Motion Carried.

d. RINK DEMO TIPPING FEES

On Motion of Councillor Nicholson seconded by Councillor Born to write off the Rink Demo Tip Fees for $1,934.60.

Motion Carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Deputy Warden MacLeod requested Council to respond to the poll for the VCT meeting.

Deputy Warden MacLeod Perla said the Canada Green Fund is now closed and requested that Councillor Patterson ask FCM to advocate to bring this funding back.

CORRESPONDENCE

Received and in the Council package.

QUESTIONS FROM GALLERY

No questions.

IN-CAMERA – MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT ACT (MGA), SECTION 22(2)(A): ACQUISITION, SALE, LEASE AND SECURITY OF MUNICIPAL PROPERTY, MGA SECTION 22(2)(F): LEGAL ADVICE ELIGIBLE FOR SOLICITOR-CLIENT PRIVILEGE AND MGA SECTION 22(2)(C): PERSONNEL MATTERS.

On Motion of Councillor Donovan, seconded by Councillor Hennick to go In-Camera under MGA, Section 22(2)(a), (c) and (f).

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Councillor Matheson-LeFort, seconded by Councillor Patterson to approve the recommendations made In-Camera.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Deputy Warden MacLeod seconded by Councillor Matheson-LeFort to appoint Jacques Dube, the CAO evaluator to be made recording secretary for the CAO Evaluation meetings.

Motion Carried.

NEXT MEETING

July 20, 2026, at 10:00am.

ADJOURN

Warden Organ moved to adjourn at 2:49pm