A Meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held in Baddeck on May 19, 2026, at 10:00am with Warden Organ in the Chair.

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

District #1 - Donna Matheson-LeFort

District #2 - Perla MacLeod, Deputy Warden

District #4 - Rosella Born

District #5 - Fraser Patterson

District #6 – Tim Donovan

District #7 - Jackie Organ, Warden

District #8 – Wanda Hennick

STAFF PRESENT

Alix Redden, Acting CAO

Steff MacLeod, Municipal Clerk, Recorder

Ursula Melski, Manager of Communications

Jessica Klein, Digital Communications Administrator

ABSENT

Leanne MacEachen, CAO

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Warden Organ noted that Municipal Grants would be removed from the agenda, as further discussion is required.

On Motion of Councillor Donovan seconded by Councillor Hennick to approve the Agenda for May 19, 2026, with the noted change.

Motion Carried.

PRESENTATIONS

L'ARCHE PRESENTATION – JOSEPHINE MACEACHERN

Ms. MacEachern gave an overview of the L'Arche Cape Breton Affordable Housing Initiative, below are some of the highlights:

- L'Arche Cape Breton is proposing an affordable housing project in Inverness County consisting of 4 modular three-bedroom homes (12 units total).
- The project would provide housing for adults with intellectual disabilities, seniors, essential workers, and other low-to-moderate income residents.

Asks to Council

- Letter of support for provincial and federal funding applications.
- Potential municipal financial contribution and/or assistance identifying grant opportunities.
- Awareness of a future housing development opportunity currently in the planning stage.

Key Facts

- Total project cost: $1.5 million.
- L'Arche has secured $180,000 in-kind contributions and plans a $1 million fundraising campaign.
- A longer-term housing expansion is being explored with $20,000 in provincial planning **funding** already secured.

Council deferred the financial ask to the Housing Committee and agreed to provide a letter of support.

On Motion of Deputy Warden MacLeod seconded by Councillor Matheson-LeFort to write a letter of support for L'Arche's Housing project.

Motion Carried.

SOLID WASTE PRESENTATION – MORGAN MACINNIS

Ms. MacInnis provided an overview as to what her role is with the County and answered some solid waste questions during her presentation. Some of the highlights included:

Sort It Out! – Waste Management in Victoria County

- Presentation by Morgan MacInnis, Solid Waste Educator, on waste collection, recycling, composting, and disposal programs in Victoria County.
- Victoria County operates transfer stations in Baddeck and Dingwall, recycling depots in Baddeck and New Haven, and provides curbside collection to over 4,000 residences.

- There is no landfill in Cape Breton; garbage from Victoria County is transported to the Guysborough landfill.
- Collection trucks have separate compartments for garbage, organics, and recycling.
- All recycling is hand-sorted at the New Haven and Baddeck facilities.
- Nova Scotia's new Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program shifts recycling responsibility to producers while maintaining curbside collection and expanding accepted recyclable materials.
- Depot drop-off programs accept items such as Styrofoam, plastic laminates, aerosols, electronics, tires, household hazardous waste, and construction materials.
- The ReUse Centre supports local non-profits and raised over $21,000 in 2025.

VOLUNTEER AWARDS – YVETTE ROGERS

Ms. Rogers went over the scoring of the volunteers, there were 9 nominations, 5 of which were youth submissions. It was encouraging to see all the applicants.

Based on results of the Councillors ranking, Mya MacLeod is the Volunteer of the Year Award for 2026.

Thank you to all the nominators.

RECESS

A 15-minute recess was called at 10:55am.

COUNCIL REPORTS

DISTRICT 1

- Provincial Public Works matters have been forwarded to the appropriate departments for review and follow-up to ensure timely attention and resolution.
- On April 25th, I had the pleasure of serving as a judge alongside Councillor Born at the Cape Breton Regional 4-H Rally held at Baddeck Academy. I evaluated Junior, Intermediate, and Divert speeches, and it was an enjoyable and engaging experience with the participants.
- On the evening of April 25th, I attended a recognition event for volunteers of the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 124 in Iona, both past and present. Thank you to Paul MacNeil for the invitation, and appreciation is extended to all Legion volunteers for their continued contributions.
- Along with several other Councillors, I participated in the Spring conference of the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities in Yarmouth. A key feature of NSFM conferences is the opportunity for engagement and networking with provincial and federal ministers, deputy ministers, senior officials, and municipal colleagues across the province. The conference agenda is available online for those interested in reviewing the full program of sessions and presentations.
- I attended the all-day Water Symposium on May 12th at Dalhousie University alongside Councillor Born. The symposium focused on water security and watershed management, including climate change impacts, infrastructure renewal, and long-term

planning for resilient water services. It also emphasized collaboration between municipalities, researchers, and Indigenous communities.

- I would also like to note that the 10th anniversary of Àros na Mara Ocean Week, in conjunction with World Ocean Day, will take place from May 31st to June 7th, 2026. The event will feature coastal, cultural, outdoor, culinary, musical, educational, and community-based programming. Activities include shoreline science demonstrations at the Port of Iona, Discovery Centre open houses, BlueROV2 underwater demonstrations, guided trail and beach programming at Iona Beach Trail and McCormack Provincial Park, Mi'kmaw and Gaelic cultural programming, Cape Breton music and ceilidh events, community meals featuring local seafood, school engagement with Rankin School of the Narrows and other partners, youth-led interpretation initiatives, and the World Ocean Day Forum.
- Finally, seasonal businesses within District 1 are now open and operating. Residents and visitors are encouraged to support local businesses, artisans, and tourism operators throughout the district as the summer season begins. Local support continues to play an important role in sustaining community strength and resilience.

DISTRICT 2

- Questioned and discussed when the trail at the Waste Treatment Site would be opened. Tourism and Recreation Manager, Dan Coffin explained the challenges and timelines with the gate installation.

DISTRICT 4

- On May 17, I attended the Blessing of the Fleet at Little River Wharf. It was a wonderful community gathering in support of our fishing families as they begin the season. We recognize and appreciate the dedication and sacrifices of our fishers and wish everyone across Victoria County, especially District 4, a safe and prosperous fishing season ahead.
- I would also like to recognize Captain Nancy Smith from the North Shore and District Volunteer Fire Department of 35 years of service. Captain Smith was the first female Fire Chief in Nova Scotia and among the province's first Medical First Responders in 1997. Her dedication and leadership are greatly appreciated.
- Regarding the Englishtown Ferry, I continue to follow up with the Province on the return of the Torquil MacLean. Repairs are nearing completion; however, some final work remains and are delaying the safe tow back to Englishtown.
- On May 12, Councillor Matheson-LeFort and I attended a Municipal Water Resilience and Planning Symposium focused on housing infrastructure, sustainable growth, and municipal water security. It was a very informative session that will assist us in future decision-making.
- I also attended the NSFM Spring Conference in Yarmouth from April 29 to May 1 with fellow Councillors. It was one of the most informative conferences I have attended, with valuable networking and learning opportunities.
- Spring clean-up efforts are now underway throughout the district. Thank you to everyone who has already volunteered their time to help beautify our communities. I also want to acknowledge the positive feedback received regarding the recent heavy garbage pick-up and thank the company and workers involved.
- Upcoming events include a public information session on Emergency Preplans at the Indian Brook Fire Hall on May 19 at 7 p.m.

- As well, Victoria County will host a free document shredding events for residents this May. The Baddeck event will take place May 23 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Baddeck Academy.

DISTRICT 5

- Ross Ferry Marine Park is open, official opening is July 1.
- Little and Big Wave will be held in July.
- Lunch and Learns are becoming more and more popular.
- Fisherpersons set their traps yesterday; we wish them a good season.
- St. James Church in Big Bras d'Or had requested a defibrillator through the grant process, but I could also possibly take the funding out of my district budget if not approved through the grant process.
- Visitors are welcome to the district to enjoy any of the festivities taking place.

DISTRICT 6

- Lobster season has opened.
- Restaurants and seasonal businesses are starting to open up.
- Highland Links is open.
- Read a letter from MLA Timmons entered as correspondence.

DISTRICT 7

- April was a busy month with many meetings and budget talks.
- I along with Councillors Hennick, Matheson-LeFort, Born and Patterson, attended the NSFM conference in Yarmouth. It was very informative and we got to represent Victoria County while speaking to numerous Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Wardens, Mayors and fellow Councillors from across Nova Scotia. I spoke with Deputy Minister Sandra MacKenzie on the issue of cell service in Victoria County. Honourable Scott Armstrong, Minister Department of Justice, was in attendance and will be visiting Cape Breton sometime soon, hoping to arrange a session with him.
- Councillor Hennick, MLA Dianne Timmins and I attended a meeting with the Girl Guide, Sparks and Embers troop to talk about municipal politics, our roles and what we do. It was quite entertaining.
- We met with the local RCMP to discuss any issues in our communities.
- Heavy Garbage Pick Up was very successful with just a few hiccups. Please remember to clean up any debris that may have been left.
- Community clean-ups have been taking place in many areas, thank you to all who showed up and continue to do so to keep Victoria County beautiful.
- I would like to give a personal shout-out to The Gordie Budge Memorial group for their amazing job and also to Mr. Stewart Best who picks up trash every day while on his walks from his home to the North Bay Wharf and to Broad Cove campground.

DISTRICT 8

- Attended the NSFM in Yarmouth with fellow Councillors and Warden Organ. Councillor Patterson spoke on several important topics. It was a very interesting conference, being

able to talk to Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Councillors, Wardens and Mayors from different municipalities, to share ideas as each municipality is different but the same in many ways.

- Attended a meeting with the RCMP with Warden Organ and Councillor Donovan, we really need to lobby for more officers with the increasing population in the summer with tourists and other officers leaving. The detachment is short for periods of time.
- The Health Fair at the Bay St. Lawrence Community Center was a great success and well attended.
- The washrooms at North Highlands Community Museum are open for the season, the hours are 10 am to 7pm.
- North Highlands Community Museum will be opening June 1st.
- Community clean up was done in Dingwall on Saturday, thank you to all the volunteers that came out to help.
- Bay St. Lawrence will be doing theirs's this week, please keep an eye on Facebook for date and time.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION

a) AROS NA MARA – REQUEST FOR SUPPORT/SPONSORSHIP

Staff will look into what was given in the past for sponsorship.

b) NOVA SCOTIA ASSOCIATION OF GARDEN CLUBS – REQUEST FOR SPONSORSHIP

On Motion of Deputy Warden MacLeod seconded by Councillor Donovan to sponsor the Garden Club for $500.00.

Motion Carried.

c) COURAGEOUS COMPANIONS - REQUEST FOR SPONSORSHIP

On Motion of Councillor Born seconded by Councillor Matheson-LeFort to sponsor the business card size for the Courageous Companions for $350.00.

Motion Carried.

SUBMITTED REPORTS

a. CAO Report

Things of note:

The REMO position has been posted.

May 23 shredding event from 10-1pm at Baddeck Academy

Advanced polling dates coming up, May 21 and May 26. Election Day is May 30th.

Tax bills are going out soon.

Second round of the Sustainable Tourism Growth Initiative is open for applications

b. By-election Report

Steff MacLeod, Returning Officer provided Council with a By-Election Progress update.

MOTIONS

a. FIRST READING OF WASTEWATER CHARGES AND RATES BYLAW:

On Motion of Councillor Donovan seconded by Councillor Hennick to approve First Reading of the Wastewater Charges and Rates Bylaw.

Motion Carried.

b. IN-CAMERA RECOMMENDATION FROM MAY 4, 2026, COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING:

On Motion of Councillor Born seconded by Councillor Matheson-LeFort to approve the In-Camera recommendations from May 4, 2026.

Motion Carried.

c. MAY 4, 2026, FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Acting CAO Redden said there was a typo in the commercial tax rate. The correction is that the new commercial tax rate (less the new fire protection) is $1.976, not $2.006.

On Motion of Councillor Born seconded by Councillor Donovan to approve the May 4, 2026, Finance and Audit Committee Recommendations with the noted correction.

Motion Carried.

d. BY-ELECTION PROGRESS REPORT

On Motion of Councillor Matheson-LeFort seconded by Councillor Born to accept the By-Election Progress Report.

Motion Carried.

e. RINK DEMO TIPPING FEES

On Motion of Councillor Donovan seconded by Councillor Born to write off the Rink Demo Tip Fees for $1,713.60.

Motion Carried.

The Cheticamp Search and Rescue also requested funds at the Committee of the Whole Meeting on May 4th.

On Motion of Councillor Born seconded by Councillor Hennick to approve the funding request of $5,000.00 to Cheticamp Search and Rescue.

Motion Carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

VCT meeting following Council.

CORRESPONDENCE

- Eastern District Planning Commission – Coastal Support Program
- Baddeck Public Library Society – Relocation Letter of Support

Deputy Warden MacLeod withdrew the motion on the table to support the Library Society with a letter of support and instead requested that they come before Council.

QUESTIONS FROM GALLERY

There were four members of the public present; however, they had no questions.

IN-CAMERA – MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT ACT (MGA), SECTION 22(2)(B): RELATING TO SETTING A MINIMUM PRICE AT A TAX SALE

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

Motion Carried.

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

Motion Carried.

Warden Organ requested that the correspondence from MLA Timmins be accepted as correspondence and added to the Council package.

NEXT MEETING

June 22, 2026, at 10:00am.

ADJOURN

Warden Organ moved to adjourn at 12:17pm