A Committee of the Whole meeting was held in Council Chambers in Baddeck, on May 4th, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. with Deputy Warden MacLeod 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

Leanne MacEachen, CAO

Alix Redden, CFO

Steff MacLeod, Municipal Clerk and Executive Assistant

CALL TO ORDER

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

On Motion of Councillor Matheson-LeFort seconded by Councillor Donovan that the Agenda for May 4, 2026, be approved.

Motion Carried.

APPROVAL OF APRIL 7, 2026, COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

On Motion of Warden Organ seconded by Councillor Donovan to approve the April 7, 2026, Minutes.

Motion Carried.

SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS PRESENTATIONS – CHRIS BELLEMORE

Mr. Bellemore provided Council with a presentation outlining the role of Cheticamp Search and Rescue and their involvement in rescue operations within Victoria County.

Discussion also took place regarding mental health supports available to rescuers. It was noted that some support services are available through mainland teams and, in some cases, through the RCMP.

Questions were raised regarding coverage of border areas and how deployment decisions are made. Mr. Bellemore advised that deployment decisions are made by the RCMP.

Councillor Born put forward a recommendation for the $5,000 funding request.

Mr. Bellemore also noted that additional support may be needed to assist with recruitment efforts and indicated that connecting with staff to help promote recruitment initiatives would be beneficial.

PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS UPDATE – STEVE MACDONALD

Provincial Public Works provided an update on ongoing capital and maintenance projects, including work on the Seal Island Bridge, gravel roads, message boards for weather and fire restrictions, and the Regional Integrated Maintenance (RIM) program (brush clearing, ditching, patching, and shoulder work).

The department reported that the maintenance budget is just under $400,000, while snow and ice costs are over $2 million beyond budget, placing significant financial pressure on operations. It was noted that rising costs of doing business are being absorbed within the maintenance budget, contributing to funding challenges.

Concerns were raised regarding road conditions, including dust control standards near residences, delays in line painting and paving, and general road maintenance issues. The Cabot Trail, particularly the stretch between Cape Smokey and Ingonish, was highlighted as a priority, with concerns noted about the lack of recent federal cost-sharing for paving. A request was made to send a letter to the Minister regarding funding for Cabot Trail infrastructure.

Additional issues discussed included water accumulation on roads, signage repairs and replacements (including beach access and lookout signage), guardrail repairs, ditching needs, culvert replacements, and concerns about winter plowing and grading quality on gravel roads. Specific maintenance items such as Big Harbour Road, exit 9 ramp, and Hunters Mountain were noted as being on existing or upcoming work lists.

It was also confirmed that some road safety issues, including overturned truck cleanup costs, are addressed through insurance recovery where applicable. It was indicated that there is a willingness to support efforts to advocate for improved funding, particularly in relation to major routes such as the Cabot Trail.

VOLUNTEER AWARDS – YVETTE ROGERS

Ms. Rogers went over the scoring process and asked for Councillors to submit their scores by May 12.

RECESS

Deputy Warden MacLeod called for a 15 Minute recess at 12:17pm.

IN-CAMERA

a) MGA SECTION 22(2)(e): CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

Council went In-Camera in accordance with Section 22 (e) relating to contract negotiations that is permitted to be discussed in a closed session.

Council will accept the recommendations made In-Camera at the May 19, 2026, Council meeting.

COW DISCUSSIONS

a) WASTEWATER BYLAW INTRODUCTION – CAO MACEACHEN

Council were given the draft of the bylaw for review and consideration for First Reading at a later Council meeting.

b) WASTEWATER RATES AND CHARGES BYLAW INTRODUCTION – CFO REDDEN

Council discussed the recommendation report and initial bylaw draft introduction.

Warden Organ made the recommendation to bring it to First Reading at the Council meeting on May 19th, 2026.

c) CIVIC SIGNS - CAO MACEACHEN

Council discussed the possibility of obtaining data on emergency calls where civic signs were not present to better understand the scope of the issue.

There was support expressed for a one-year pilot project to increase civic sign installation, including consideration of using district budgets and partnering with volunteer fire departments to assist with installation. Other members did not support using Council budgets for this purpose. Discussion also included the option of applying costs through tax billing in accordance with the bylaw.

Council agreed to launch another public awareness campaign encouraging residents requiring civic signs to contact the County. Staff will develop a proposal, including estimated costs and potential collaboration with local fire departments, while Council members will help promote the initiative within their communities.

IN-CAMERA – PERSONNEL

Council went In-Camera in accordance with Section 22 (c) relating to personnel that is permitted to be discussed in a closed session.

Council will accept the recommendations made In-Camera at the May 19, 2026, Council meeting.

NEXT MEETING

May 4, 2026, 10:00 am.

ADJOURN

Deputy Warden MacLeod adjourned the meeting at 1:25pm.