

Committee of the Whole Committee Report/Updates January Committee of the Whole 2024

Submitted by: Mayor Brenda Chisholm-Beaton

Submitted to Council for COW Jan 23rd, 2024).

AMANS (Association of Municipal Administrators Nova Scotia)

As past president of the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) I serve for the 2023-2024 term on the AMANS Board as an NSFM representative. Meetings have taken place November 23, December 15th (2023) and January 19th, 2024. Meetings are typically monthly (or more frequently as needed).

Allan J MacEachen Regional Airport

Allan J Airport Meeting: On January 10th, 2024: We reviewed work needing to be done on the runway, as well as a potential funding proposal to the Province and ACOA on integral infrastructure repairs to the runway. We received an operator's report, and manager's report for the airport, and the board asked questions based on those reports and the funding proposal. This important work will continue with our partners from Richmond County and Inverness County. (Note: Councillor Aucoin has stepped down from this committee, and is being replaced by the current alternate Councillor MacQuarrie).

(Chair: Brenda Chisholm-Beaton (Town of PH), Vice Chair: Melanie Samson (MCofRichmond)

NSFM Board Position

Board Meetings and related Engagement: We have been extremely busy with both full board meetings as well as executive board meetings on a variety of topics, regular board business, and as a measure to deal with issues/opportunities as they arise. (December 15, December 22, (2023); January 3, January 9th, 2024).

Spring Conference/Elections: There will be some by-elections for the NSFM Board vacancies, and these will be in place by the Spring Conference.

Cape Breton South Recruiting for Health (CBSRH)

Meetings of CBSRH were held November 30th, 2023; next meeting to be held January 25, 2024. I plan to share Gina's CBSRH report post meeting (Jan 25th) so council can get an update on the work in progress on the healthcare recruitment file.

Related CBSRH meeting: January 17th, 2024. The CBSRH executive met with NSHA representatives and other stakeholders (Chamber, Community Health Board, etc.) to discuss next steps in our pilot for Cape Breton South to "reimagine" what healthcare can look like in our region. We will focus on a strategy for this work as we continue to meet monthly in the new year to develop a plan for healthcare in the region.

(Chair – Juanita Mombourquette, Vice-chair – Amanda Mombourquette)

CEPI Senior Council

CEPI Senior Council meeting was held January 10th, 2024. Attendees are from different levels of government (Federal, Provincial, First Nation, Municipal) as well as Island stakeholders (First Nation groups/University groups)

to talk about the long term care and sustainability of the Bras D'or Lakes. I attended virtually due to the poor weather. The budget, work plans, and various topics/projects of interest were discussed during the day around important issues and opportunities around the Bras D'or Lakes.

Port Hawkesbury Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting

Our PHAAC Committee is still working on a re-schedule date for our two-hour in-person accessibility strategy session. Tentative dates are January 29 or February 12, 2024 (not yet determined) (Report on the accessibility strategy meeting to follow in the next COW report).

(Co-chairs: Matthew Higgins and Brenda Chisholm-Beaton).

Destination Cape Breton Association

Our meeting was held December 13th in the CBRM. Some great work is continuing re: the housing file under the leadership of DCBA for a housing project in Victoria County (this will of course help address tourism related housing shortages; if the project is successful its possible it can be replicated in different parts of the island). Also, as council knows, the MOU between all Municipalities and DCBA for accommodation levies, were reviewed/approved by our council, like all the municipalities who will adopt the new MOU.

Terry Smith shared some great stats on the tourism season and where we had growth and where we had set-backs. There were some issues around the weather events (forest fires and heavy rains) that impacted the tourism season, yet certain parts of the island did have some success comparable to pre-covid numbers, where others didn't go as well as last year.

Other related meetings: **Finance Committee:** This meeting is normally held the day before the DCBA board meetings – however the December Finance meeting was held just prior on December 13th, 2023. (Chair: Brenda Chisholm-Beaton; Vice-chair: Robert Bernard)

Strait of Canso Offshore wind Task Force (SCOWTF)

The SCOWTF executive continue to meet regularly (November 27th, December 11th, December 12, December 21 (2023), and January 3rd, January 8th, January 9th, January 10th, 2024). Additionally, the monthly meeting of the entire SCOWTF continues each month (December 12 2023, January 9th 2024) – these all-member meetings are used to discuss offshore wind, share updates, and over the next few months we want to revisit our Terms of Reference, as well as arrange a presentation to Inverness County.

Related Meetings: November 29th, 2023, I co-led a presentation (in the Town of Antigonish) on the opportunity around offshore wind in the Strait region with Warden Mombourquette on behalf of the SCOWTF, at a joint meeting of the Town of Antigonish and the County of Antigonish. There were great questions asked and positive reception. We hope they will assign one or more members to the SCOWTF to represent the Town and County of Antigonish.

(Co-Chairs: Amanda Mombourquette and Brenda Chisholm-Beaton).

Other Meetings, and Mayor-related Activities:

Port Hawkesbury Sports Wall of Fame Induction: This event was more of a weekend venue that began November 24th at an event to celebrate all the volunteers through the decades with the Strait Pirates Junior B Team. I was fortunate to be able to provide welcome remarks and express gratitude to the many volunteers throughout the long history of the team. Following this ceremony in the Shannon Studio, the volunteers were invited to watch a Pirates Game in the Town's sky boxes, it was a great time had by all!

The following day, November 25th – the sports wall of fame induction ceremony was held. It was again held in the Shannon Studio and a very big showing of family and friends of the inductees. Thanks goes out to both Council, the Sports Wall of Fame Committee, all the inductees, and supporters of this wonderful program acknowledging the sports, team, community builder and athletic excellence from the Town of Port Hawkesbury.

Green Hydrogen Sector Development Meetings: Several meetings to discuss ongoing development for the Green Hydrogen Sector with municipal, NRR staff/Province representatives to ensure the local municipalities in the Strait region are properly preparing and progressing on various files to support this emerging sector. (Specific municipal participants are staff/elected members from Richmond/Town of Port Hawkesbury/Guysborough). Date(s) of meeting at the time of this report (December 11th, 2023 and January 4th, and January 11th, 2024)

Everwind Fuels Community Liaison Committee: (reoccurring Monthly meeting) I sit as a community member on the Everwind Fuels Community Liaison Committee. Meeting dates November 22, December 14th, and January 17th. (Note: we use this venue to share information, and to ask questions regarding any updates or information on this important green hydrogen file. If council has any questions, I can take them to subsequent meetings – so please feel free to contact me with these and I can bring them forward. Also, if any citizens have questions, happy to take those forward as well).

Related Meetings (Everwind Fuels): I was invited to join an Everwind Fuels presentation with MLA Allan MacMaster and senior staff about current and future development plans on January 12, 2024 (in Point Tupper). It was a wonderful presentation and I invited Everwind Staff to consider coming to present to council in the “near” future.

Marine Renewables Canada Conference: (Held in Ottawa December December 4-6th 2023). This was an excellent conference that had a focus for industry partners on the first day, and the last two days included many presentations that outlined the opportunity for Canada (national), as well as the opportunity specific to Atlantic Canada (Nova Scotia and Newfoundland specifically). Its worth noting that there was a huge spotlight during a panel of industry players on the Strait region, which was great to see. More information on the conference can be accessed on the MRC website: <https://marinerenewables.ca/event/marine-renewables-canada-2023-conference-december-4-6-in-ottawa/>

Team Cape Breton Discussions: Ongoing monthly morning meeting conversations have been continuing (November, December and will be scheduled later this month) to review our REAP team's progress on our must win battles. We'd like to plan an in-person meeting early in the new year. (Note: as a reminder – some of the must-win battles are around the innovation centre, the offshore wind centre of excellence, making cape Breton/strait region a destination for innovation, and more).

Innovation Centre Discussions: Conversations continue and progress made on a Request for Interest (RFI) for the Marine Innovation Centre at the Port Hawkesbury Waterfront. Any new updates will be shared in future COW reports on the applications for the RFI.

Mayor's Skate: The annual family-friendly event was a success, thanks to the Barykin Bistro who donated hot chocolate and cookies! Also thanks so much to Jason MacMillan who dressed up as Santa and skated around with the kids. Special mention as well to Councillor Aucoin who joined the event to say hi to the families in attendance and to Michelle Farrow for setting up the music and Melissa Warner for her organizing excellence!

Austin Letcher Tribute Request: (as a reminder - Stephen Long brought forward a request to Council early Summer 2023 to consider how the Town can acknowledge/honour fallen Conservation Officer Austin Letcher – former resident of Port Hawkesbury – who lost his life in the line of duty. I spoke with Stephen Long about possible plans on November 28th, 2023, and the tentative plan still needs to be properly vetted with a key stakeholder.

Again I want to extend the invitation – that if anyone from Council wishes to help on this file/volunteer their time – please let me know. Happy to have your help. Ideally, it would be great to have the potential plan vetted in time for council consideration for budget discussions (hoping to do some more follow-up/work on this file this month.

Island-wide Call – Cape Breton-Unama'kik: Virtual meeting organized by the Cape Breton Partnership which includes all levels of political representation on the Island (MPs, MLAs, Chiefs and Mayors/Wardens). Important topics of discussion was around housing shortages that impact all areas of the island – like health care retention / attraction, workforce retention/attraction, and student housing challenges. Other topics were around renewable energy, airports, and port development (January 12, 2024).