

**PORT HAWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
Shannon Studio
January 20, 2026
Minutes of Meeting**

Present

Mayor, Brenda Chisholm-Beaton
Deputy Mayor, Todd Barrett
Councillor, Iaian Langley
Councillor, Paula Hart
Councillor B, MacQuarrie
Chief Administrative Officer, Terry Doyle
Director of Finance, B. Luciano
Director, Marketing, Recreation, Tourism, & Culture, Michelle Farrow
Manager, Facilities and Operations, Gordie Snook
Manager, Water Resource – Jason MacMillan
Acting Manager of Engineering and Public Works – Sajin John
Administrative and Communications Officer - Melissa Warner

Regrets

Councillor, B. MacQuarrie

1. Call to Order

A meeting of the Committee of the Whole was held in the Shannon Studio, Tuesday, January 20, 2026, and called order at 7:08 p.m. by Mayor, B. Chisholm-Beaton.

2. Additions to Agenda

- Request Letter of Support from Town of Antigonish – Mayor, B. Chisholm-Beaton
- Request Letter of Support from Town of Mulgrave – Mayor, B. Chisholm-Beaton
- Add In Camera Session before adjournment – Deputy Mayor, T. Barrett

3. Approval of Agenda

MOVED by Councillor, P. Hart and SECONDED by Councillor, I. Langley “to approve the agenda as amended.” MOTION CARRIED.

4. Presentations

There were no presentations.

5. Council Reports on Assigned Committees

Deputy Mayor, T. Barrett

November 25th - Audit Advisory Committee Meeting
December 3rd - Growing Port Hawkesbury Committee Meeting
December 16th –At Home Housing Association & MP Battiste Meeting
January 7th – Chaired the Grow Port Hawkesbury Committee
January 13th – Joint Police Advisory Board Meeting

January 15th – Offshore Wind Integration and Transmission
January 15th – Sports Wall of Fame Committee Meeting
January 16th – Met with members of the Growing Port Hawkesbury Committee
January 20th – Quest Canada Workshop on community energy and emission plan

Councillor, P. Hart

December 2nd – Public Meeting of Council
December 7th – Christmas Parade
December 12th – Strait Area Transit
December 15th – Special Public Meeting
December 16th – Meeting MP Jaime Battiste
December 17th – Mayor's Skate
December 21st – Participated in the Seasonal Services Christmas Box Deliveries
January 6th – Public Council Meeting
January 7th – Community Development Committee
January 13 – Police Advisory Community Development
January 15th – Eastern District Planning Commission

Deputy Mayor, I. Langley

Deputy Mayor I. Langley will circulate his report for the minutes following the meeting.
[LINK TO REPORT](#)

Mayor B Chisholm-Beaton

Mayor, B. Chisholm – Beaton provided Council with a written report prior to the meeting. She noted that the report she and Councillor Langley submitted to Council in December had a number of recommendations coming forward from the Marine Renewables Conference.

Council reviewed the recommendations from the report, noting that the discussion had been brought forward to the Grow Port Hawkesbury Committee for their input. Recommendation 1 was confirmed as completed with no further action required. Council was asked to consider Recommendation 2, which involves striking a small working group of Town staff, Councillors, local partners, and community members to develop a marine energy strategy for Port Hawkesbury, assess port capacity, identify gaps, and recommend infrastructure or planning investments; the Grow Port Hawkesbury Committee supported this approach and expressed interest in additional advisory input, with general support voiced for initiatives that advance the waterfront. Recommendation 3 regarding the Oceans Innovation Centre was noted as closely aligned with the proposed working group and could be progressed either through the existing committee structure or a new group, as determined by Council. Remaining recommendations—including engaging key partners, continuing discussions with Indigenous communities, advocacy for policy support, seeking funding opportunities, and promoting local awareness—were identified as items to be advanced as the strategy develops, with no immediate Council action required at this time.

Council was advised that the Town may wish to consider Marine Renewables Canada membership and was presented with two upcoming participation opportunities: the WindEurope 2026 mission in Madrid (April 20–24, 2026; \$2,000 + HST plus travel;

deadline January 31, 2026) and the Marine Renewables Energy Sector Vision 2050 event in Ottawa (February 9, 2026; RSVP deadline February 5, 2026). Staff will gather additional cost details and circulate them to Council so a delegate can be considered before the deadlines.

CEPI council meeting was held on January 14th.

Cape Breton Leadership meeting was also held on January 14th. Regional Leaders had an opportunity to hear from other levels of government as well as the provincial priorities and current challenges and issues. Grow Port Hawkesbury meeting was held on January 5th.

QUEST Canada CEEP Workshop – January 20th.

[LINK TO REPORT](#)

6. CAO REPORTS

Finance

Director, B. Luciano, reported on the initiatives within his department including:

- Audit Process
- Assessment Notices
- Water Utility
- Budget Update
- Landrie Lake Water Utility

Director B. Luciano noted the audit process is underway for the end of 2026 and that preliminary review work has begun. Assessment notices issued as of January 12 reflect the market value of housing as of January 2025, with the appeal process open until February 12; it was noted the Municipality has no control over assessments. Water bills will be issued at the end of January, and budget preparation will begin soon, with staff asked to compile a list of considerations.

Facilities, Parks and Operations

Manager, G. Snook reported on the initiatives within his department including:

- Port Hawkesbury Civic Centre
- Pools
- Waterfront
- Parks/Fields
- Firehall
- Foodbank
- Airport
- IDEA Committee

Manager G. Snook noted that the application for summer students has been submitted. He provided an overview of the newly constructed active transportation paths at the

fields. He also reported that efficiency upgrades have been started at the Firehall, staff will continue to support the Food Bank, and the Airport is still addressing asphalt-related issues. It was further noted there has been a change in consultants, and the IDEA Committee recently completed a tour around town.

Marketing, Recreation, Tourism and Culture

Director, M. Farrow reported on the initiatives within her department including:

- Recreation Programming
- Sports Wall of Fame
- Upcoming Shows/Events
- Marketing/ Media

Director, M. Farrow noted that hosting the Sensory Friendly Santa – event served 26 children and families. There was over 40 entries in the Christmas parade this year – safety was carried out by RCMP, Fire department, Public Works, and SAERC High school students. She noted the Civic Centre hosted the U15A, U15AA, and the U13AAA Billy Joe MacLean Memorial Tournament and that the U13A tournament is coming up this weekend. Over the Christmas season there was 3 sold out shows. Upcoming concerts include Matt Minglewood on February 20th. She indicated that she is the Town representative that will serve on the Inverness Asylum Regional project.

Engineering and Public Works

Manger of Engineering and Public Works, S. John provided Council with an update from the Department:

- TOPH202314 – Public Works Building
- TOPH202401, TOPH202302- Water System Upgrades Project, Pitt St Water Tank
- Spruce Street Sewer Extension
- Clean Leadership Summer Intern Program – Clean Foundation
- Municipal Services Study
- Public Works Activity
- Fleet Upgrade – Tandem Truck

Public Works Building has been completed, and the building is fully occupied. Large building sign has been ordered. The Water System Improvement Project is completed. Spruce Street Sewer Extension is funded through the GRID program to expand the water and services on Spruce Street. He also noted the Municipal Services Study, and the fleet update.

7. Other Business

- i. Request from Richmond Boxing Club – CAO, T. Doyle
CAO, T. Doyle noted that there is a request from the Richmond Boxing Club. There is no request for an amount, they provided a budget for the event. This event will not

take place for a few months. He would like to have more conversation with the club and find out what they are looking for.

ii. PVSC Assessment Roll Comparison – Director, B. Luciano

B. Luciano reviewed the assessment profile for the Town of Port Hawkesbury shows overall positive year-over-year growth. Residential assessments increased by \$13 million, representing a 7% increase, slightly below the provincial average of approximately 7.5%. Capped properties continued to limit assessment growth, with the cap set at 2.6% for 2025 due to higher inflation. Commercial assessments grew by \$4.5 million, a 7.3% increase, outperforming the provincial commercial average of 6.7% and marking stronger growth than in previous years. Resource assessments declined by 3.7%, though this category remains relatively small and fluctuates year to year, often due to land transitioning to residential or commercial use. Ten-year trend data shows residential and commercial assessments were largely stagnant between 2017 and 2021, followed by notable growth over the past three years driven by increased property turnover, higher sale values, and new development, indicating a positive upward trend for the Town.

There was a Q& A following the meeting.

iii. Municipal Finance Indicators – Director, B. Luciano

B. Luciano reviewed the Municipal Financial Indicators Report provided by Municipal Affairs, which summarizes the municipality's financial condition using reported financial data, noting that the report reflects a two-year data lag, though future releases are expected sooner. The 2023–24 indicators showed Port Hawkesbury in the low-risk (green) category for most measures, with two exceptions: undepreciated assets slightly below the low-risk threshold and a three-year change in tax base rated yellow, narrowly missing the benchmark due to CPI comparisons. Preliminary results for the 2024–25 fiscal year indicate improvement across all indicators, with the Town now rated low risk (green) in all categories, including tax base growth and asset condition, reflecting recent infrastructure investments. Compared to other similarly sized towns, Port Hawkesbury is among a small group achieving fully green indicators, demonstrating overall strengthening financial health. Council noted the value of this information ahead of budget deliberations and acknowledged continued positive trends, with only minor, non-risk increases in reliance on a single business or institution. There was a Q&A following the meeting.

iv. Planning Advisory Committee Appointment – CAO, T. Doyle

Noted that there have been two committee members that have resigned from the committee. One role will be filled by the Economic Development Officer. There was a submission to council from Maris Freimanis to join the committee.

Consensus to Move forward to the Public Meeting of Council.

v. Granville Street Bridges – CAO, T. Doyle

Manager, J. MacMillan provided Council with an update on progress toward the Granville Street Bridge Repair Project. Staff have completed their review of the repair design and tender package prepared by WSP and confirmed it addresses the bridge's critical structural and public safety issues. WSP's environmental team has been engaged to support the required Watercourse Alteration Permit application with Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change, with consultations involving regulators and DFO expected within one to two weeks and permit submission anticipated in early February. Planned repairs include replacement of the damaged pier cap, repair of a damaged timber pile, replacement and addition of pile bracing, stabilization of the west abutment, and replacement of necessary fasteners and steel plates, providing a short-term extension of the bridge's service life. Traffic control and signage measures continue to be monitored daily and have received positive feedback from Nova Scotia Public Works. Subject to permitting, staff anticipate issuing the tender in early to mid-February, awarding it in mid-March, and commencing construction as early as April, with timing potentially adjusted to align with the dry season if required by regulators.

Councillor, I. Langley – asked if the timber replacement would be treated with cresol. He also asked about the timeline based on the Pirate Harbor Bridge Supply Materials– J. MacMillan – don't think that they use that product anymore. The majority of the products would be readily available. The consultant does this work often. The Pier Cap is the largest piece and not sure about supply issues. There are companies that supply these types of materials.

Deputy Mayor, T. Barrett asked if the pedestrian bridge is being salted and cleared. J. MacMillan noted it is used quite often and that it is being maintained . He will follow up that staff

Councillor, P. Hart asked about is there had to be measure put in place to dewater the site.

I. Approved Additions

- Request from Town of Antigonish – Mayor, B. Chisholm-Beaton

The Mayor reviewed the request from the Mayor of Antigonish. The ask was for a letter of support from Council requesting a secondary entrance to Saint Marthas Hospital. Staff to circulate draft once available. Councillor, Langley indicated that a fully staff Strait Richmond Hospital is essential to support access issues to Saint Marthas Regional Hospital, which should be included in the letter.

Fully staffed physician support at the Strait Richmond hospital. Ratify motion at the February Public Meeting.

Consensus to move forward to the Public Meeting of Council.

- Request from Town of Mulgrave for letter of support

Mayor, B. Chisholm-Beaton reviewed the request from the CAO of the Town of Mulgrave, David Gray, for the Town to provide a letter of support to the MP Battistean behalf of the Town of Mulgrave, recognizing the importance of the road for industrial development and acknowledging shared infrastructure challenges. It was noted that Mulgrave has indicated it cannot bear a 50/50 cost-sharing requirement at this time. Subject to Council's support, staff will draft a letter for Council review and, once approved, submitted to the Province in support of Mulgrave's request.

Consensus to Move forward to the Public Meeting of Council.

MOTION TO MOVE In Camera was made at 8:20 pm

II. Future Meetings

- Public Meeting of Council February 3, 2026
- Committee of the Whole February 17, 2026

III. Adjournment

MOVED by SECONDED by Councillor, that "the Committee of the Whole be adjourned at 9:07p.m." MOTION CARRIED.

February 5, 2026



Date

Approved
CAO, Terry Doyle
Chief Administrative Officer

Recorded by:
Melissa Warner
Communications &
Administrative Officer