

**PORT HAWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
Shannon Studio
March 17, 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 – Virtually
Manager, Facilities and Operations, Gordie Snook – Virtually
Manager, Water Resource – Jason MacMillan
Acting Manager of Engineering and Public Works – Sajin John
Administrative and Communications Officer - Melissa Warner

Guests

G. MacDonald – Cape Breton South Recruiting for Health

1. Call to Order

A meeting of the Committee of the Whole was held in the Shannon Studio, Tuesday, March 17, 2026, and called order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor, B. Chisholm-Beaton.

2. Additions to Agenda

There were no additions to the agenda.

3. Approval of Agenda

MOVED by Deputy Mayor, T. Barrett and SECONDED by Councillor, P. Hart “to approve the agenda as presented.” MOTION CARRIED.

4. Presentations

Cape Breton South Recruiting for Health - G. MacDonald
(enter what Gina had presented)

Council received an update outlining ongoing healthcare recruitment and community engagement efforts over the past year, including initiatives such as awards programs, student placements, community outreach, and professional recognition activities. It was noted that new collaboration has been established with Nova Scotia Health leadership, supported by local MLAs, with recruitment staff scheduled to visit the region for a multi-day tour to better understand local facilities and strengthen recruitment strategies. This was identified as a positive step toward improving recruitment outcomes tailored to the region’s unique needs.

Significant concerns were raised regarding a 20% reduction in provincial funding for healthcare recruitment initiatives, along with delays in the application and approval

process. These challenges may impact on the ability to deliver key programs and events, including the Community of Care Awards and Business of Medicine course, which may need to be scaled back or modified. Despite these constraints, efforts will continue through direct engagement with healthcare staff, development of new recruitment materials, and exploration of alternative initiatives, including targeting international recruitment opportunities.

There was a question and answer following.

Councillor, I. Langley encouraged Gina to reach out should she needs any assistance from the Town. Councillor, P. Hart thanked Gina for her presentation and commended her for finding ways to continue to succeed. Deputy T. Barrett – positive to have the provincial recruitment coming down to the area. March 31st and April 1st. Mayor, B. Chisholm-Beaton reiterated that Town council is more than happy to help out.

5. Council Reports on Assigned Committees

Deputy Mayor, T. Barrett

February 18 – Virtual Fire Service Modernization Planning

February 18 – Defense Build discussion with Grow Port Hawkesbury Executive

March 4th – Grow Port Hawkesbury Committee Meeting

March 6th – Attended Landrie Lake Water Utility Board Meeting

March 6 – Along with Mayor Chisholm-Beaton met with two former VIC Employees

March 7th – Met with the MLA Kyle MacQuarrie & Mayor Chisholm-Beaton

March 9th – Meeting with Town staff to prep for the Joint Committee Meeting

March 11th – Attended a Joint Meeting between Grow Port Hawkesbury and Community Development

March 11th – Met with Cactus with update along with Grow Port Hawkesbury Executive

March 12th – Attended a virtual meeting with MP Jaime Battiste

March 12th – Attended a virtual At Home Housing Association Meeting

Councillor, P. Hart

January 30 – Strait Area Transit Meeting

February 3 – Policy and Bylaw Meeting

February 26 – Met with staff to discuss combined meetings of Growing Port Hawkesbury and Community Development

March 3 – Public Meeting

March 4 – Community Development

March 9 & 11 – Met with staff to discuss combined meetings of Growing Port Hawkesbury and Community Development

March 12 – Eastern District Planning Commission Board Meeting

Councillor I. Langley

February 17, 2026 17:00 In Camera Session (Virtually)

February 17, 2026 18:00 Public Hearing (Virtually)

February 18, 2026 15:00 Grow Port Hawkesbury Defence Investment Investigation Discussion

February 18, 2026 16:45-18:00 EverWind CLC
February 20, 13:00 13:45 Grow Port Hawkesbury - Virtual with Potletek Economic Development Officer
February 26, 2026 Defence Investment Review Meeting with Grow Port Hawkesbury
March 03, 2026 10:00 review Wind Europe Material with Staff
March 03, 2026 19:00 Public Meeting of Council
March 04, 2026 Growing Port Hawkesbury Meeting
March 06, 2026 Landrie Lake Water Utility Board Meeting
March 11 2026 Growing Port Hawkesbury – Local Business to Explore Defence Opportunities
March 11 2026 Community Development & Growing Port Hawkesbury Joint Meeting
March 12 2026 Growing Port Hawkesbury Virtual with Member of Parliament
March 13 2026 Wind Europe Promo Material Review

Councillor, B. MacQuarrie

March 4th – Community Development
March 11th – Joint Grow Port Hawkesbury

Mayor B Chisholm-Beaton

Mayor, B. Chisholm – Beaton

Mayor, B. Chisholm-Beaton and B. Luciano advised Council of a meeting that was held on March 3 with a representative of the MacLean family to review the Civic Naming Policy and Commercial Naming Rights. The meeting was described as positive and resulted in identifying key areas requiring clarification within the Civic Naming Policy.

Two main issues were highlighted: the relationship between commercial naming rights and other naming considerations, including timelines for Council to assess commercial opportunities, and the lack of defined participation thresholds for public engagement during naming processes. Staff will review these items and bring forward recommendations to establish clearer parameters and improve the policy for future decision-making.

There was a meeting with the MLA and former staff of the Visitor Information Center. The actual building was donated by the Town of Port Hawkesbury back in the day.

6. CAO REPORTS

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

Council received a departmental update from General Manager, G. Snook, outlining ongoing operations and upcoming activities. Budget planning for the upcoming year has commenced, and while arena ice operations are beginning to wind down, several events remain, including the U18 Girls Provincial Championships in early April. Both pools continue normal operations, and recent upgrades, including the installation of a new accessibility ramp, are now complete and in use. Improvements at Dan Willie Field are ongoing, with clubhouse upgrades nearing completion and parking lot paving scheduled for the spring. Preparations are also underway for spring maintenance of fields and green spaces.

Additional updates included progress on fire hall efficiency upgrades, which are expected to begin shortly and be completed by mid-June, as well as ongoing support for the local food bank. Work continues at the airport to address infrastructure deficiencies, with further reporting to follow. An application has been submitted for playground accessibility improvements, and the IDEA Committee is advancing initiatives such as social media planning, community engagement efforts, and a future truth and reconciliation event.

Councillor, I. Langley asked work at the firehall – readiness state of the equipment – will work is underway G. Snook indicated that operational readiness will not be affected.

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 indicated that the annual S'mores Night Trail Hike was well attended, with approximately 80–90 participants, and appreciation was extended to the Strait Area Trails Association, sponsors, and volunteers and Manager of Active Living, Corene Gillis-Dorey for all of their work. At the Strait Area Pool, a new accessibility ramp has been installed, swimming lessons are concluding for the winter session, and bookings remain strong with increased demand expected in the coming months. Upcoming programs include Swim to Survive for local schools, March Break activities (with camps fully subscribed), and the annual Jim Roussey Memorial Swim Meet in April.

Arena operations remain active with recent and upcoming minor hockey events, including the U11A Coastal Clash tournament and U18 Girls Provincial Championships. Planning is also underway for spring recreation programming and the Granville Green summer concert series, with dates set for July through August.

Additional updates included steady growth in social media engagement and progress on a new sign for the Dan Willie MacDonald Ballfield

Engineering and Public Works

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

- TOPH202601-Spruce Street Sewer Extension
- Clean Leadership Summer Intern Program – Clean Foundation
- Municipal Services Study
- 2026 Capital Paving Project – Preliminary Planning
- Granville Street Bridge Repair
- Department Initiatives
- Active Transportation Granville Street
- Public Works Activity
- Residential Curbside Cleanup

Acting Manager of Engineering and Public Works reviewed some key items which included the Spruce Street Sewer Extension project being tendered with closing scheduled for March 19, and progress on recruitment for a summer intern position. The municipal survey study evaluation has been completed, with CBCL recommended, and preliminary planning is underway for the 2026 Capital Paving Program using a priority-based approach. The Granville Street Bridge Repair project is advancing, pending approval of a watercourse alteration application, while active transportation projects on Reeves Street and Granville Street remain in the design phase with construction anticipated this year.

Operational updates highlighted ongoing winter maintenance activities, including snow clearing and drainage management. Preparations for the annual Spring Cleanup Program are complete, scheduled for May 11–15. Council also discussed the importance of improving public communication on infrastructure projects. CAO, T. Doyle noted that additional updates will be shared and can be communicated with the public as projects progress.

Finance

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

- Audit Process
- Budget Update
- Housing Development
- Tesla Super Charge Stations
- Strait IT
- Landrie Lake Water Utility

Director B. Luciano provided Council with a financial and administrative update, noting that preliminary audit materials have been submitted and auditors will be on site April

21, with an audit plan to follow for the Audit Committee. Budget development is underway, with most departmental submissions received and a draft budget expected in the coming weeks. On the housing front, a purchase and sale agreement has been sent to New Dawn Enterprises for the transfer of the former arena site, and an agreement has been executed with Tesla Motors Canada for the installation of eight superchargers at the Civic Centre.

Additional updates included efforts to expand Strait Area IT Services to new municipal partners to help offset costs, and confirmation that the water rate application for Landrie Lake has been submitted to the Regulatory and Review Board, with a public hearing scheduled for May 20. Council was also advised that applications for summer student funding have been submitted through federal programs, consistent with previous years.

Mayor, B. Chisholm- asked about summer students. CAO, T. Doyle, noted that the application is for a federal program and we have been successful each year. G. Snook noted that the federal application was submitted in late December and is awaiting on response.

7. Other Business

i. ROC Society – Mayor, B. Chisholm-Beaton

Mayor, B. Chisholm-Beaton noted that Council forego this agenda item as the funding for the affected program have been reinstated.

ii. Local Procurement Study – Director, B. Luciano

B. Luciano noted that Council has an opportunity to participate in a Local Procurement Study led by the Centre for Local Prosperity and New Dawn Enterprises. The initiative aims to analyze municipal spending patterns to better understand how much is directed toward local suppliers and identify opportunities to increase local procurement. It was noted that improving local spending could support businesses, create jobs, and strengthen the local economy, while also potentially leading to cost efficiencies.

The study requires a \$2,500 contribution and in-kind staff participation, with Council expressing general support for the initiative and recognizing its potential benefits. It was noted that only a small number of organizations have been invited to participate. Next steps include bringing forward a formal motion for Council approval and incorporating the initiative into the upcoming budget.

Consensus is to move forward to the next Public Meeting.

iii. Spring Debenture – Public Works Building – Director, B. Luciano

B. Luciano provided Council with an overview of the process for issuing long-term municipal debt through the Provincial Treasury Board, noting that debenture issues occur twice annually. It was explained that, as part of the approved budget for the Public Works building reconstruction, the Town intends to finance a portion of the project through long-term borrowing.

Council will be asked to approve two resolutions at the next public meeting: one for temporary borrowing authorization and another to establish borrowing parameters. The total project cost is estimated at \$2.7–\$2.8 million, offset by approximately \$990,000 in insurance proceeds and \$175,000 from reserves. Staff will seek approval to borrow up to \$1.7 million, with repayment terms and borrowing limits to be defined.
Consensus is to move forward to the next Public Meeting.

Councillor, I. Langley noted that he would like to plan to host an event at the new Public Works Building for residents to view.

iv. Tamarac Education Centre Donation Request – CAO, T. Doyle
Council received a request from a Tamarac Education Centre teacher seeking support for extracurricular sports programs, specifically for team uniforms. It was agreed that the request be referred to Manager of Recreation and Active Living, Corene Gillis-Dorey to explore existing funding avenues and consider it as part of the upcoming budget process.

v. Port Hawkesbury Waterfront Destination Development – CAO, T. Doyle
Additionally, Council was asked to consider bringing forward a motion at a future public meeting to award a \$15,000 contract to Adam Langley Consulting for waterfront destination development planning, with costs to be shared among funding partners.

Consensus is to move forward to the next Public Meeting.

9. **Approved Additions**

There were no additions to the agenda.

10. **Future Meetings**

- i. Public Meeting of Council April 7, 2026
- ii. Committee of the Whole April 21, 2026

11. **Adjournment**

The Committee of the Whole was adjourned at 8:02p.m.

April 7, 2026



Date

Approved
CAO, Terry Doyle
Chief Administrative Officer

Recorded by:
Melissa Warner
Communications &
Administrative Officer