

**PORT HAWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL
PUBLIC MEETING
Shannon Studio
Minutes of Meeting
March 3, 2026**

Present

Mayor, Brenda Chisholm-Beaton
Deputy Mayor, Todd Barrett
Councillor, Iaian Langley
Councilor, Paula Hart
Councillor, Blaine MacQuarrie
Acting Chief Administrative Officer, Director of Finance, Brian Luciano
Communications and Administrative Officer, Melissa Warner
Water Resource Manager, Jason MacMillan

Regrets

Chief Administrative Officer, Terry Doyle

Guests

Molly Foster, Community Navigator – Clean Foundation
Martin Thomsen – Manager of Energy Sector Development – TOPH & MCOR

1. Call to Order

A Public Meeting of the Port Hawkesbury Town Council was held in the Shannon Studio and virtually on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, and called to order at 7:00p.m. by Mayor, B. Chisholm-Beaton.

2. Additions to Agenda

There were no additions to the agenda.

3. Approval of Agenda

**MOVED by Councillor, I. Langley and SECONDED by Deputy Mayor, T. Barrett
“THAT the Town of Port Hawkesbury approve March 3, 2026, Public Meeting
Agenda as presented.” MOTION CARRIED.**

4. Gallery Presentations

Community Climate Capacity Program – Molly Foster and Patrick Lauter – Clean Foundation. M. Thomsen

Council received a presentation on the Community Climate Capacity (CCC) Program, delivered by Molly Foster from the Clean Foundation and the Manager of Energy Sector Development, Martin Thomsen. The program, funded by the Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Climate Change, supports municipalities in advancing climate and sustainability initiatives at no cost to the community. Through the Town’s successful application, a dedicated Community Navigator, Molly Foster, has been assigned to work with Port Hawkesbury and Richmond County until March 2028. The program provides access to a team of specialists and resources to assist with climate planning, funding

applications, infrastructure resilience, and community engagement. Province-wide, the program has supported numerous initiatives, including funding applications and climate-related projects, demonstrating measurable impact across participating communities.

The presentation also outlined key priority projects for the Town, where the program is already providing support. These include exploring a community solar project, enhancing water utility monitoring, addressing infrastructure needs at the Strait Area Marina, and advancing the Community Energy and Emissions Plan. Additional areas of focus include climate readiness planning, flood risk assessment, and infrastructure resilience projects such as the Reeve Street Bridge and Unity Drive in the industrial park. Early successes were noted, including securing funding for infrastructure assessments and supporting regional applications. Council was advised that the program is flexible and will continue to provide capacity, funding support, and technical expertise to advance local climate initiatives as opportunities arise. There was a Q&A following the presentation.

Councillor, I. Langley had questions around Granville Street Bridge – M. Thomsen noted that he will share that information with CBCL. Looking forward to the LLWU information.

Councillor, P. Hart – indicated that she would love for Molly to attend a Community Development Committee meeting to help assist with work around the waterfront and what opportunities may be available for construction of a breakwater along the waterfront.

Deputy Mayor, T. Barrett – noted that it is important to be proactive to be prepared for the future with climate change.

5. Acknowledgements

Mayor, B. Chisholm-Beaton made the following acknowledgements for the month of March:

- Irish Heritage Month
- March 8 - International Women's Day
- March 11 - National Day of Observance for COVID-19
- March 14 - Commonwealth Day
- March 15 - International Day to Combat Islamophobia
- March 21 - International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- March 31 - International Transgender Day of Visibility
- March 31 - National Indigenous Languages Day

Councillor, I. Langley acknowledged the passing of Carl David Burlock, a native of Port Hawkesbury who was raised on Prince Street and went on to achieve significant academic and professional success. Mr. Burlock held advanced degrees, including an advanced diploma in management from Columbia University, and had a long career with Export Development Canada in Ottawa. He was also remembered as a devoted husband and father.

Members highlighted Mr. Burlock's lasting impact on the community, particularly his role as a co-founder of the Port Hawkesbury Thunderbolt Aquatic Club alongside Gerald Doucet Jr. Their early leadership established a competitive swimming program that has continued without interruption to this day. Council extended condolences to his family and recognized his meaningful contributions to the local swimming community.

6. Approval of Council Minutes

i. Public Meeting of Council – February 3, 2026

There were no errors or omissions.

ii. Public Hearing – February 17, 2026

There were no errors or omissions.

iii. Special Public Meeting of Council – February 17, 2026

There were no errors or omissions.

Councillor, I. Langley noted that he was travelling during the meetings and was going through security, so connection was not strong during those meetings.

7. Business Arising from Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

8. Council Committee Reports

i. Report from Committee of the Whole

i. MOVED by Deputy Mayor, T. Barrett and SECONDED by Councillor, I. Langley "That the Town of Port Hawkesbury strike a working group, under Grow Port Hawkesbury, to focus on a Marine Energy Strategy and to progress the Oceans Innovation Centre." MOTION CARRIED.

ii. Quad County U18AA Whitecaps Request

MOVED by Deputy Mayor, T. Barrett and SECONDED by Councillor, P Hart "That the Town of Port Hawkesbury supports the U18AA Quad County Whitecaps with a \$1,000 Gold Sponsorship Donation." MOTION CARRIED.

i. Approval of the Committee of the Whole Minutes

MOVED by Councillor, B. MacQuarrie and SECONDED by Deputy Mayor, T. Barrett "That the Town of Port Hawkesbury approve the Committee of the Whole meeting as presented." MOTION CARRIED.

9. Motions from In-Camera Session

There was no In Camera Session.

10. Correspondence

The following correspondence was reviewed and was included in the package:

i. Department of Municipal Affairs – Budget 2026/2027

Acting CAO B. Luciano presented correspondence from the Department of Municipal Affairs regarding the 2026–2027 budget, outlining significant provincial funding cuts affecting municipalities. Four core municipal funding programs—the Flood Risk Infrastructure Program, Provincial Capital Assistance Program (PCAP), Municipal Innovation Program (MIP), and the Growth and Renewal and Infrastructure Development (GRID) Fund—have been suspended for new applications until further notice. While previously approved funding will remain in place, the Town will no longer be able to access these programs moving forward, which will impact future capital planning and budgeting.

In addition, Council was advised of broader provincial cuts totaling approximately \$130 million, impacting several other grant programs commonly used by the Town. These include funding related to recreation, accessibility, trails, tourism, community development, planning, and student employment. Council acknowledged that while existing funding commitments remain unaffected, the loss of future funding opportunities will create challenges during upcoming budget deliberations. Staff will continue to pursue any remaining or available funding sources and adjust priorities to maximize municipal resources.

11. Proclamations/Resolutions

The following proclamation was reviewed:

i. International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

MOVED by Councillor, P. Hart and SECONDED by Councillor, I. Langley “THAT the Town of Port Hawkesbury proclaims March 21st, 2026, as the International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination in the Town of Port Hawkesbury.” MOTION CARRIED.

12. Other Business

i. Port Hastings Visitor Information Centre – Acting CAO, B. Luciano

Acting CAO B. Luciano reviewed correspondence received on February 19 from Darlene MacDonald, Executive Director of Tourism Nova Scotia, regarding the permanent closure of four Visitor Information Centers across the province, including the Port Hastings location.

Mayor B. Chisholm-Beaton and B. Luciano advised that discussions have taken place with Warden MacIsaac and CAO Keith MacDonald, and that staff will explore ways the Town of Port Hawkesbury can provide support. This includes reaching out to the Town’s representative on Destination Cape Breton and contacting MLA Kyle MacQuarrie to gather further information. Council indicated support for meeting with the MLA and revisiting the matter at a future Committee of the Whole meeting.

Council members expressed concern about the impact of these closures on tourism and visitor services, noting the importance of in-person interaction within the tourism sector.

Deputy Mayor T. Barrett emphasized the need to advocate for the region, particularly given Cape Breton's growing international tourism profile, and to identify actions to support Inverness County moving forward.

- ii. Scleroderma Atlantic Request – Mayor, B. Chisholm-Beaton
Council was advised of a request from a local volunteer involved with the Scleroderma Society (Atlantic Branch) seeking in-kind municipal support for a proposed “Move for Scleroderma” event in June 2026. The event would primarily utilize community trails, with the walking track identified as an alternate venue if required.

Council was asked to consider supporting the initiative by directing staff to provide in-kind assistance for the event, and a motion to that effect was introduced for consideration.

MOVED by Councillor. P. Hart and SECONDED by Councillor, I. Langley “That the Town of Port Hawkesbury direct staff to support the Make a Move for Scleroderma Event in June of 2026.” MOTION CARRIED.

- iii. Council Expenses – CAO, T. Doyle
Acting CAO, B. Luciano, reviewed the expenses for the month of February. He noted that Council's Expenses are posted on the Town's website.

13. Approved Additions

There were no additions to the agenda.

14. Future Meetings

The future meetings of the Town Council are scheduled as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| i. Committee of the Whole | Tuesday, March 17, 2026 |
| ii. Public Meeting | Tuesday, April 7, 2026 |

15. Public Question Period

Council heard a presentation from Rosie Weiman, former Senior Travel Counsellor at the Port Hastings Visitor Information Centre, who highlighted the critical role visitor centers play beyond basic tourism information. She emphasized that the center serves as a key information hub for visitors and residents alike, offering bilingual (including French) services, travel guidance, redirection during emergencies, and promotion of local businesses, attractions, and events. The center also supports smaller operators who may not have strong online visibility and provides personalized assistance that cannot be replicated through digital platforms. Approximately 40,000 visitors were served annually, demonstrating the significant reach and impact of the service.

Weiman expressed concerns about the closure of visitor information centers, noting potential negative impacts on tourism, local businesses, and employment, including the loss of 10 positions and valuable student work opportunities. She highlighted the importance of in-person interactions in shaping visitor experiences and influencing travel decisions within the region. Council members acknowledged the value of the service, expressed concern over the closures, and indicated interest in incorporating this feedback into upcoming discussions with the MLA to better advocate for the region’s tourism needs.

M. Warner to collect contact information from Rosie.

16. Adjournment

**MOVED by Deputy Mayor, T Barrett and SECONDED by Councillor, B. MacQuarrie
“the meeting was adjourned at 7:57pm” MOTION CARRIED.**

April 7, 2026



Date

Approved by:
Brian Luciano CPA, CMA
Acting CAO

Recorded by:
Melissa Warner
Communications and
Administration Officer