

**PORT HAWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL
PUBLIC MEETING
Shannon Studio
Minutes of Meeting
April 7, 2026**

Present

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

Regrets

Guests

Michele Tabensky – Port Hawkesbury Square Roots Program
Yvonne MacDonald – Port Hawkesbury Square Roots Program

1. Call to Order

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

2. Additions to Agenda

There are no additions to the agenda.

3. Approval of Agenda

MOVED by Councillor, I. Langley and SECONDED by Councillor, P. Hart “THAT the Town of Port Hawkesbury approve April 7, 2026, Public Meeting Agenda as presented/amended.” MOTION CARRIED.

4. Gallery Presentations

Port Hawkesbury Square Roots Program – M. Tabensky & Y. MacDonald

Michele Tabensky and Yvonne MacDonald provided a presentation for Council. The presentation reviewed that Square Roots is a community-driven initiative focused on reducing food waste and improving food security by redirecting surplus or “imperfect” produce to local residents at affordable prices. The program sources fresh fruits and vegetables—often just cosmetically imperfect or excess supply—from farms and distributes them through market-style sales, allowing customers to buy only what they need. Since launching in Port Hawkesbury in March 2025, Square Roots has already distributed over 25,000 pounds of produce locally, while ensuring that any unsold food is donated to community organizations such as food banks and support groups.

The program operates on a cost-recovery model, keeping prices significantly lower than grocery stores to ensure accessibility for everyone in the community. However, recent changes now require Square Roots to absorb the cost of any unsold produce, creating financial pressure and limiting its ability to continue operating sustainably. To address this, the group has proposed establishing a community market at the Civic Centre, where vendor table rentals would provide a steady source of income. This initiative would not only support the long-term viability of Square Roots but also enhance community engagement, support local vendors, and increase access to affordable, healthy food

Mayor, B. Chisolm-Beaton – talked about the Ceilidh Market and how she would love to see a market come back to the Port Hawkesbury Civic Centre. The revived market helps resolve something that we need. The Mayor added that if they have a surplus to reach out to a couple local businesses.

Councillor, P. Hart indicated that it is important initiative that Council support. She also asked if the waterfront was considered as an alternate location. M. Tabensky noted that it is hard to move around that much produce in such a short amount of time and they need access to refrigeration.

Deputy Mayor, T. Barrett, asked where does the produce come from. M. Tabensky noted that the produce is sourced locally and comes from the valley – NS, PEI or sometimes Quebec. They buy from local farms.

Councillor, B. MacQuarrie asked about the change in operations. M. Tabensky noted that they had a funding change and now they no longer get a credit back from what was donated but now have to pay for.

Councillor, I. Langley – asked if preorder sales would help. M. Tabensky noted that was how they started off but it takes 8-10 hours to sort the produce and it is very labour intensive for such a small group of volunteers.

5. Acknowledgements

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

- Easter Weekend
- Sikh Heritage Month for the month of April
- Genocide Remembrance, Condemnation and Prevention Month
- April 9 - Anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge
- Second Wednesday of April - International Day of Pink

She extended congratulations to the U18AA White Caps for hosting a successful provincial tournament this past weekend.

6. Approval of Council Minutes

- i. Public Meeting of Council – March 3, 2026
There were no errors or omissions.

7. Business Arising from Minutes

Councillor, B. MacQuarrie asked about agenda item number 12 from the Public Meeting with respect to The Port Hastings Visitor Information Centre (VIC) and asked if there was any update on where things are with the County of Inverness? Mayor Brenda Chisholm-Beaton noted that Inverness staff will bring forward from their Committee of the Whole in two weeks. She indicated that Town staff will need to find out a little bit more information on what they are doing and the work that would need to happen to establish a VIC would be the impacts and the costs. Destination Cape Breton is working with Cape Breton Municipalities.

8. Council Committee Reports

i. Report from Committee of the Whole

i. Local Procurement Study

MOVED by Councillor, B. MacQuarrie and SECONDED by Councillor, I. Langley “That the Town of Port Hawkesbury enter into a participate agreement for the Cape Breton Local Procurement Cohort with the Centre for Local Prosperity at a cost of \$2,500.” MOTION CARRIED.

ii. Spring Debenture – Temporary Borrowing Resolution

MOVED by Deputy Mayor, T. Barrett and SECONDED by Councillor, P. Hart “That the Town of Port Hawkesbury approves a temporary borrowing resolution for the Public Works building reconstruction in the amount of \$1,700,000.”MOTION CARRIED.

MOVED by Councillor, B. MacQuarrie and SECONDED by Deputy Mayor, T. Barrett “That the Town of Port Hawkesbury approves the issuance of a debenture not to exceed \$1,700,000, over a period not to exceed 20 years, at an average interest rate not to exceed 7%, for the Public Works building reconstruction.” MOTION CARRIED.

*Councillor I. Langley declared a conflict on the next item and indicated he would not be voting. *

iii. Waterfront Destination Development Agreement

MOVED by Councillor, P. Hart and SECONDED by Deputy Mayor, T. Barrett “That the Town of Port Hawkesbury enter a service agreement with Adam

Langley Developments Inc. at a total cost of \$ 15,000 with contributions from the Strait Area Yacht Club and Coastal Business Opportunities Incorporated for the Port Hawkesbury Waterfront Destination Development Project Brief." MOTION CARRIED.

- i. **Approval of the Committee of the Whole Minutes
MOVED by Councillor, B. MacQuarrie and SECONDED by Councillor P. Hart
"That the Town of Port Hawkesbury approve the Committee of the Whole meeting as presented." MOTION CARRIED.**

9. Motions from In-Camera Session – March 17, 2026

Regional Emergency Management Organization

CAO, T. Doyle noted that the Memorandum of Understanding is the first component related to the Emergency Management Organization, with additional items to follow, including a draft intermunicipal agreement for review and an amended Emergency Measures Bylaw that will come forward following:

MOVED by Councillor, I. Langley and SECONDED by Councillor, P. Hart "That the Town of Port Hawkesbury enter a Memorandum of Understanding with the Municipalities of the County of Victoria, Inverness, and Richmond to support the implementation of the Regional Emergency Management Organization." MOTION CARRIED.

10. Correspondence

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

- i. **Eastern District Planning Commission Appointments
MOVED by Councillor, P. Hart and SECONDED by Deputy Mayor, T. Barrett
"That the Town of Port Hawkesbury accept the Eastern District Planning Commission Appointments for 2026 as presented." MOTION CARRIED.**

11. Proclamations/Resolutions

There were no Proclamations or Resolutions.

12. Other Business

- i. **Strait Area Womens Place Flag Raising Request – Mayor, B. Chisholm-Beaton
MOVED by Councillor, I. Langley and SECONDED by Councilor, P. Hart "That the Town of Port Hawkesbury accept the request of Strait Area Womens Place and fly their flag during the month of April to increase awareness on sexual violence against women." MOTION CARRIED.**

