

January 6, 2025

The Municipal Council for the Municipality of the County of Pictou met in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Administration Building by videoconference and teleconference on Monday, January 6, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.

## **PRESENT**

Dist:

- 1 Clr. Joe MacDonald
- 2 Clr. Deborah Wadden
- 3 Clr. Darla MacKeil
- 4 Clr. Ronald Baillie
- 5 Deputy Warden Wayne Murray
- 6 Warden Robert Parker
- 7 Clr. Donald Parker
- 8 Clr. Larry Turner
- 9 Clr. Peter Boyles
- 10 Clr. Randy Palmer
- 11 Clr. Andy Thompson
- 12 Clr. Chester Dewar

## **IN ATTENDANCE**

Brian Cullen, CAO Municipal Clerk-Treasurer  
Sueann Musick, Director of Corporate Services/Deputy Clerk  
Karen Cornish, Deputy Municipal Treasurer  
Logan McDowell, Director of Public Works & Development  
Evan Hale, Director of Emergency Services  
Shellie Pettipas, Administrative Assistant  
Adam MacInnis, Communications Officer

## **CALL TO ORDER & LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Warden Parker called the meeting to order and invited Councillors to pray or reflect, as may be their preference, to help Council focus and properly do the work of the Municipality and to remember our Indigenous communities. He acknowledges that we are on the ancestral territorial lands of the Mikmaq people and would like to thank the Mikmaq people today for their ancestors sharing these precious lands with all our ancestors, whether they arrived here 400 years ago or four years ago. May we all live in peace and harmony together.

## **AGENDA**

It was moved by Clr. Boyles and seconded by Clr. Turner that the agenda be approved as presented. **Motion Carried**

## **EMERGENCY RESOLUTIONS**

There were no emergency resolutions.

## **ERRORS AND OMISSIONS/CORRECTION OF MINUTES**

The minutes of November 6, 2024, Council Meeting were reviewed by the Municipal Council. Warden Parker proclaimed the minutes of the meeting of December 2, 2024, as the official record of the meeting.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

- a. Nova Scotia Association of Realtors letter congratulating Council on election.

Clr. Wadden said requesting a presentation from the Nova Scotia Association of Realtors would be a good idea. Warden Parker said the lineup of presenters could be looked at and this could be considered.

## **PRESENTATION – RURAL COMMUNITIES FOUNDATION OF NOVA SCOTIA**

Mr. Hugh MacKay, Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia (RCFNS), presented to Council to describe the foundation's community efforts throughout rural Nova Scotia.

Mr. MacKay said that Dave Gunning took over the foundation following Bruce Guthro's passing. With the presentation, the hope is to raise awareness by sharing information throughout communities and through social media posts. Mr. MacKay said that food insecurity is a huge problem.

Clr. Boyles questioned the difference between this program and the breakfast and backpack programs in the schools. Mr. MacKay said the programs are similar and are not competitive to those.

Clr. Parker said the RCFNS is a great initiative and asked if there were contributions made to Northumberland Regional High School. Mr. MacKay said there were over 80 applications this year, and the board tries to ensure coverage throughout the province. The schools not receiving help last year will move up the list the following year.

Clr. MacDonald asked if the funds raised in Pictou County stay here, and Mr. MacKay said that when a concert is held here, the money raised stays in the county.

Clr. Wadden expressed appreciation for the work being done to help children with nutrition. Clr. Wadden said having worked with the Pictou East Food Bank, the problems with child poverty are scary.

Warden Parker said that Pictou County is a strong supporter of Dave Gunning and expressed congratulations and thanks for the efforts made for the people across the province.

## **BUSINESS ITEMS NOT REQUIRING ACTION**

### **CLIMATE CHANGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE COMMUNITY MEETINGS**

Clr. Turner said the Climate Change Advisory Committee's Action Plan Subcommittee is going to the communities to hold citizen engagement meetings in January. The meetings will be held in River John, Caribou, Merigomish, Eureka, Durham, Hillside, Little Harbour and Abercrombie to seek community input.

Mr. Kennedy explained that he got involved in the committee because of concerns about what life would be like for his grandchildren. A slideshow was presented to discuss ten impacts of climate change.

Mr. Kennedy said that the municipality was selected as one of 19 municipalities in the province to join the Community Capacity Program through the Clean Foundation, which provides access to climate change experts. This will provide access to funding opportunities to support these ideas.

Based on the research, Pictou County faces the most significant risks from erosion, flooding, and wildfires in the province. The Department of Natural Resources now has some coastal data available, but not at the level that allows people to compute the risk accurately.

Mr. Kennedy said the committee wants to communicate the message, invite feedback from the communities, and integrate that feedback as the plan's development continues.

## **BUSINESS ITEMS OR ITEMS REQUIRING ACTION**

### **MUNICIPAL SERVICE GRANT**

#### **MOTION**

It was moved by Clr. Dewar and seconded by Clr. Thompson to approve a \$3,000.00 Municipal Service Grant for the Eureka Fire Department for District 12.



**RESOLUTION**

BE IT RESOLVED by the Municipality of the County of Pictou that the following Municipal Service Grant be approved:

- 1. District 12 Eureka Fire Department - \$3000.00 – Ongoing projects at the fire hall.

DATED at Pictou NS this 6<sup>th</sup> day of January 2025.

Sgd \_\_\_\_\_

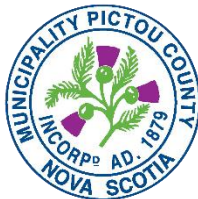
\_\_\_\_\_

**Motion Carried  
Clr. Chester Dewar  
Clr. Andy Thompson**

**ANTI-LITTER AWARENESS COMMITTEE**

**MOTION**

It was moved by Clr. Wadden and seconded by Clr. MacDonald to approve the following citizen appointments to the Anti-Litter Awareness Ad-Hoc Committee:



**RESOLUTION**

BE IT RESOLVED by the Municipality of the County of Pictou that it approve the following citizen appointments to the Ad-Hoc Anti-Litter Awareness Committee:

**Monica Rivers, Abercrombie  
Larry Tyldsley, Plymouth Park**

DATED at Pictou NS this 6<sup>th</sup> day of January 2025.

Sgd \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Motion Carried  
Clr. Deborah Wadden  
Clr. Joe MacDonald**

**MOPC GRANTS REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**MOTION**

It was moved by Deputy Warden Murray and seconded by Clr. MacDonald to approve the following appointment to the Grants Review Committee:



**RESOLUTION**

BE IT RESOLVED by the Municipality of the County of Pictou that it approve the following appointment to its Grants Review Committee:

**Clr. Larry Turner**

DATED at Pictou NS this 6<sup>th</sup> day of January 2025

Sgd \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Motion Carried  
Deputy Warden Murray  
Clr. Joe MacDonald**

**AFFORDABLE ACCESS PLAN**

**MOTION**

It was moved by Clr. Turner and seconded by Clr. Boyles to approve the Affordable Access Plan Policy:



BE IT RESOLVED by the Municipality of the County of Pictou that it adopt the following policy:

## **Affordable Access Plan Policy**

**Policy # 2025-01-06**

### 1. Purpose

To ensure affordable high-speed internet access for individuals and households with limited financial resources, promoting digital inclusion and equal opportunities.

### 2. Benefits of an Affordable Access Plan

- **Bridging the Digital Divide:** Increases internet access for low-income communities, improving opportunities for education, employment, and healthcare.
- **Enhanced Quality of Life:** Provides access to essential services such as telehealth, e-learning, and e-commerce.
- **Economic Mobility:** Promotes equal access to economic opportunities, including job searching, remote work, and small business development.

### 3. Eligibility Criteria

- Must reside within an area served by an MOPC Network service
- Have a gross household income per the attached table each year
- Property must be your primary residence and property taxes are paid in full at time of application
- Must be the registered owner or co-owner of the property
- The Affordable Access Plan does not reimburse individuals who have already paid for service

- MOPC reserves the right to limit access when deemed necessary

#### 4. Required Documentation

- Completed AAP application annually
- Valid personal identification (NS Provincial ID or Driver's License)
- Notice of Assessment showing total income on line 15000 for all adult members of the household over 18 years of age & Canadian Child Benefit for children and youth under 18 years showing the named children if applicable.

#### 5. Service Package & Pricing

- Free Standard Installation as per policy
- Speed: Up to 1Gbps for fibre-served areas
- Speed: Up to 25 Mbps for wireless served areas
- Price: \$34.99/month
- Additional WIFI mesh units available at regular price if required

#### 6. Important Information

1. Once an application has been approved, the Affordable Access Plan is applied to the customer account for one calendar year from the approval date.
2. Application to the program can be made anytime and must be completed on an annual basis.
3. Customers must comply with all other applicable MOPC policies and terms of service.
4. MOPC commits to providing a minimum 6-month notice before any significant modifications or termination of this policy.
5. Incomplete applications will be automatically denied.

#### 7. Program Evaluation and Feedback

- MOPC will conduct annual surveys of program participants to gather feedback and assess the program's effectiveness.
- Key performance indicators (KPIs) will be established to measure the program's success, including:

- Number of households served
- Internet usage patterns
- Customer satisfaction rates
- Impact on educational and employment outcomes
- An annual report on the program's performance will be published and made available to the public.
- A feedback mechanism will be implemented to allow participants to provide ongoing input and suggestions for improvement.

8. Implementation and Outreach

- A dedicated support team will be available to help applicants navigate the application process and answer questions.
- This policy is effective immediately and will be reviewed annually or as needed.

For further information or clarification, please contact MOPC Customer Service.

**Table A: Income Eligibility Thresholds**

MOPC Network - Affordable Access Plan				
Table A	Income Threshold	Qualifying AAP Plan		
Program Year	Per Household	Fibre	Wireless	AAP Price
2024-25	\$30,000	1Gbps	25Mbps	\$34.99/mth

**REPEAL**

All former policies and or practices of Council with respect to the Affordable Access Plan are repealed.

DATED at Pictou NS this 6<sup>th</sup> day of January 2025.

Sgd \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



**Motion Carried**  
**Clr. Larry Turner**  
**Clr. Peter Boyles**  
**Nay Vote: Clr. Peter Boyles**

Clr. Dewar asked if there was an idea of the number of people who would be involved. CAO Cullen said there were 250 applicants for the tax exemption program, and it could be expected to be the same as that program.

Clr. Boyles questioned that the residents of Hillside are not getting the internet, but now there will be breaks for low-income residents. Clr. Boyles said something is desperately wrong with this and must be remedied. Clr. Boyles feels this is discrimination. Warden Parker explained that to receive the federal and provincial funding, the unserved areas had to be completed first.

Clr. MacDonald asked if renters could be included in this program. CAO Cullen said they are not eligible as renters.

### **ISED FUNDING**

At the last meeting with the internet group, one of Clr. Wadden's concern was the inability to read the maps and the legends well. Clr. Wadden said that a copy of the map was distributed, making it easier to see where the internet would be run. Clr. Wadden said it was a surprise that all Pictou Landing and Pictou Landing First Nations were left out for Phase I. Clr. Wadden noted that other areas of District 2 were also left out.

Clr. Wadden is very concerned and does not feel this is fair; there is fibre that runs through Pictou Landing, and they are being treated as a served area, but they are not served. Clr. Wadden suggested writing a letter to the Federal Minister that looks after ISED to let them know the concerns with who is considered served and who is not served with this project.

Clr. Wadden said that following a discussion with CAO Cullen, information was shared that new wireless technology is being considered for this project and that, hopefully, those areas will get service. Clr. Wadden wanted to make all Councillors aware of this and asked each council member to look at the maps and see what areas that were thought to be getting it in Phase I and what areas would not be.

Warden Parker said the government sets rules for funding, and there are many communities like those with fibre lines running through, with no way to get service off them. The people who are doing the work for the project are consultants. Warden Parker said that once the work that must be done under the program is completed and the money is spent, the hope is to return to those other communities. Clr. Wadden said that if the

Councillors had been made aware of the discrepancies in the ISED mapping, it may have been easier to understand.

### **LETTER TO NOVA SCOTIA HEALTH AUTHORITY FOR INCREASED SECURITY**

Clr. Boyles said that with every shift change, the healthcare workers must walk out to the back of the hospital, which has very poor lighting, and if something happens, nobody is there.

### **MOTION**

It was moved by Clr. Boyles and seconded by Clr. Baillie to write a letter to the Nova Scotia Health Authority requesting that security be in the area where employees park at the rear of the hospital 15 minutes before and 15 minutes after shift changes to ensure their safety.

**Motion Carred**  
**Nay Votes: Clr. Baillie**  
**Clr. Wadden**  
**Clr. Palmer**  
**Clr. Thompson**

Clr. Palmer asked if Clr. Boyles was approached and asked to do this. Clr. Boyles has not had anybody come directly to bring this request but feels this should be looked at and it could save somebody from getting hurt.

Clr. Thompson said he feels it is an operational item for the hospital and the Town Police.

Clr. Wadden said this is overstepping the role of Councillors, and if this is done for one business, then it would have to be done for others. This is a concern for the hospital, staff, and union and is not a place for Council.

Clr. Parker said it is good to be proactive and request this issue be looked at.

### **CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS**

There was no deferred business.

### **COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Community announcements were given.

### **MOTIONS OF RECONSIDERATION**

There were no motions of reconsideration.

### **ADJOURN**

There being no further business to come before the meeting, the Warden declared the meeting adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

---

WARDEN

---

MUNICIPAL CLERK