

February 2, 2026

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, February 2, 2026, 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

ABSENT

Evan Hale, Director of Emergency Services

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
Shellie Pettipas, Administrative Assistant
Adam MacInnis, Communications Officer
Heather Murphy, MacDonald & Murphy Inc.

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 Mikmaqi people and would like to thank the Mikmaqi 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. MacKeil that the agenda be approved as presented. **Motion Carried**

EMERGENCY RESOLUTIONS

There were no emergency resolutions brought forward.

ERRORS AND OMISSIONS/CORRECTION OF MINUTES

Warden Parker asked if there were any errors, omissions, or corrections in the minutes for the January 12, 2026, Council Meeting. The minutes of the January 12, 2026, Council Meeting were reviewed by the Municipal Council. Warden Parker proclaimed the minutes of the meeting of January 12, 2026, as the official record of the meeting.

Warden Parker asked if there were any errors, omissions, or corrections in the minutes for the January 12, 2026, In-Camera Meeting. The minutes of the January 12, 2026, In-Camera Meeting were reviewed by the Municipal Council. Warden Parker proclaimed the minutes of the In-Camera meeting of January 12, 2026, as the official record of the meeting.

PROCLAMATION

AFRICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Warden Parker read the following proclamation recognizing February as African Heritage Month:



**PROCLAMATION
AFRICAN HERITAGE MONTH**

WHEREAS this year's African Heritage Month provincial theme is ***"Strength in Unity: Moving Forward with Purpose, Prosperity, Power, and Progress."*** The theme speaks to the power that comes when African Nova Scotians and people of African descent stand together with a shared sense of direction.

WHEREAS The 2026 theme also reflects the continued journey beyond the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent, carrying forward the principles of recognition, justice, and development. Strength in Unity calls upon us to harness our collective wisdom, resilience, and creativity to build prosperity in all its forms, cultural, social economic and spiritual.

WHEREAS African Heritage Month provides an opportunity for all Nova Scotians to learn, reflect, and celebrate the history, culture, achievements and contributions of people of African descent past and present.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the Municipality of the County of Pictou proclaims the month of February as African Heritage Month and we encourage all residents to partake in events and celebrations taking place throughout the county and province.

Dated the 2nd day of February 2026 in Pictou, NS.

Sgn

WOMEN'S INSTITUTE WEEK

Warden Parker presented the following proclamation in observance of Women's Institute Week, celebrated February 15–21, 2026. Members of the Lyon's Brook Women's Institute were in attendance for the proclamation.



**PROCLAMATION
WOMEN'S INSTITUTE WEEK
FEBRUARY 15-21, 2026**

WHEREAS the first Women's Institute in Nova Scotia was formed in 1913 in Salt Springs, Nova Scotia, Pictou County.

WHEREAS for 113 years, the Women's Institutes have provided Nova Scotian women with opportunities to improve the quality of life for women and children in their local and global communities through community service, education and personnel and leadership development.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that I, Robert Parker, Warden for the Municipality of the County of Pictou, do hereby proclaim the week of February 15-21, 2026 as Women's Institute Week in Pictou County.

Dated the 2nd day of February 2026 in Pictou, NS.

Christine MacKenzie
President of Pictou District WI

Robert Parker
Warden for the Municipality of
the County of Pictou

CORRESPONDENCE

- a. Letter from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development regarding milk in schools.
- b. Letter from Eric Sibille regarding proposed power plant in Salt Springs.

Clr. Dewar expressed concern that the response letter deflects responsibility and fails to provide a clear answer. Clr. Dewar stated that the milk was never delivered to the schools, which is unsatisfactory. Deputy Warden Murray agreed with Clr. Dewar's assessment. Deputy Warden Murray further advised that Dairy Farmers of Canada have agreed to attend a meeting with Council, and that this matter will be followed up accordingly.

Deputy Warden Murray assumed the chair to allow Warden Parker to address the Salt Springs residents' letter regarding the proposed natural gas plant location.

Clr. Parker spoke regarding the letter from Mr. Sibille concerning the proposed gas plant. Clr. Parker stated that Mr. Sibille does not support locating the plant within the

community, noting that approximately 40–50 homes are located within one kilometre of the proposed site and that water is a significant concern.

Clr. Parker suggested that a site farther along the pipeline, where there are no nearby residences, should be considered and that the additional cost would be worthwhile. Clr. Parker believes the project is likely a done deal, but feels there are better locations available. Clr. Parker acknowledged the need for the plant to replace coal but expressed concern that Councillors were not consulted to provide input on the site selection.

Warden Parker stated that the Salt Springs location affects a significant number of residents and emphasized that Council should not refrain from speaking on behalf of those impacted. The Warden noted that, as Council, together they have a stronger collective voice and that residents expect their elected officials to advocate for them, regardless of whether such efforts are ultimately successful.

Warden Parker referenced letters from two residents, both seniors, who expressed their concerns sincerely and emotionally, noting both residents are deeply concerned and upset about the changes occurring in their community. Warden Parker added that, given the project's estimated cost of approximately \$1 billion, the additional cost of relocating the site would be minimal.

Clr. Dewar attended the Marshville meeting and noted that while questions were asked, clear answers were not provided, particularly regarding water concerns. Clr. Dewar stated that no definitive assurances were given about water, which was identified as the most critical issue, emphasizing that once water resources are compromised, verbal assurances are insufficient and binding contractual commitments are necessary.

Clr. Dewar added that attendance at the community meeting was lower than expected and that residents from various communities attended. Clr. Dewar agreed that relocating the facility farther away from residential areas would be preferable. Clr. Dewar also raised concerns about the condition of local roads, stating they are not adequate to support the project.

Clr. Dewar noted that the two residents who submitted letters are highly respected members of their community and, given the importance of their concerns, suggested inviting them to the meeting as well. Clr. Parker agreed with this and said that the two residents are outstanding community members who feel helpless and have reached out to Council for representation on their behalf.

MOTION

It was moved by Warden Parker and seconded by Clr. Dewar to invite representatives from the IESO and appropriate Department of Energy staff involved in the facility site selection to attend a meeting to answer questions regarding possible alternatives, on behalf of residents living within the affected communities. **Motion Carried**

Warden Parker resumed the chair for the meeting.

PRESENTATION
2024-2025 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Ms. Heather Murphy, MacDonald & Murphy Inc., detailed the 2024-2025 Consolidated Financial Statements for the period ending March 31, 2025.

Clr. Wadden noted that the management letter had been sent to all Councillors to ensure they were aware of the issues identified. Clr. Wadden stated that all matters raised had previously been brought forward by the Audit Committee, including tax sales, personnel, and internet concerns. These items remain on the Audit Committee's radar.

Clr. Wadden noted that this pertains to last year's budget, which ideally should have been completed by September, and expressed disappointment in the delays. Clr. Wadden emphasized the importance of staying on top of these matters and completing them more promptly, noting that the delays are a definite cause for concern.

Clr. Palmer raised a concern about water, asking whether all customers are metered and whether readings are taken monthly. Mr. McDowell explained that there are still a number of estimated accounts, but an active water meter tender for upgrades is underway and closes next week. Updated meters are expected to resolve the issue. Mr. McDowell added that readings are currently taken quarterly and that multiple options are being explored, including drive-by radio-read systems in which a municipal vehicle collects readings from approximately 200 meters. The tender will consider both AMI (Advanced Metering Infrastructure) and cellular reading options, with responses expected for both systems.

Clr. Turner raised a concern regarding expenditures, noting that \$6.8 million has been spent on internet services without a corresponding budget line. Clr. Turner stated that this represents a deficiency in the accounting process and asked whether there is a recommendation to address it. Ms. Murphy indicated that business plans have been provided and approved, but no technical budget has been brought to Council for approval, as is done with the general and water operating budgets. Ms. Murphy confirmed that the issue is noted in the management letter and that providing a technical budget would provide Council with a benchmark for oversight.

Clr. Thompson asked about Note 12, which reports \$28 million in loans, and whether interest costs are reflected in the statements. Ms. Murphy confirmed that the current year's interest cost is borne by the internet operating fund.

MOTION

It was moved by Deputy Warden and seconded by Clr. Wadden to accept draft financial statements for the 2024-2025 fiscal period as presented. **Motion Carried**

Ms. Murphy extended thanks to Ms. Cornish for assistance in completing the financial reports.

SCOTT HAYMAN REGARDING SURETY FOR SUBDIVISION WORK

Mr. Hayman addressed Council requesting the partial release of a surety related to the Mount William Road subdivision. The subdivision process began in 2015, with the servicing agreement finalized in December 2024. Water and sewer infrastructure were fully installed by March 2025, and the road was constructed to municipal gravel standards. Paving remains outstanding.

Mr. Hayman requested the return of a portion of the surety, excluding paving costs, citing Clause F of the bylaw, which permits partial release at the municipality's discretion when work is substantially complete. Mr. Hayman expressed concern regarding staff communication, indicating that partial release was not possible.

Mr. McDowell advised that partial surety releases are not customary practice and that legal counsel supported this position. Mr. McDowell further indicated that paving is required to achieve substantial completion and that the surety protects the County if the work is not completed, particularly if the second phase does not proceed.

Council discussed the balance between supporting housing development and managing financial risk to the County. Several members noted the quality of the development, the completion of water and sewer infrastructure, and the rationale for delaying paving until Phase 2. Concerns were also raised regarding potential liability if surety were released prior to paving.

Council deferred a decision and directed staff to continue discussions with Mr. Hayman to explore a possible resolution and report back as appropriate.

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Palmer and seconded by Clr. Thompson to go to an In-Camera session. **Motion Carried**

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Palmer and seconded by Deputy Warden Murray to return to regular session. **Motion Carried**

BUSINESS ITEMS NOT REQUIRING ACTION **NEW SCOTLAND BUSINESS PARK REPORT**

The New Scotland Business Park Report was received as presented.

Clr. Dewar stated that the last substantial financial report was received in 2017 and noted that, as of 2026, there has been a six to seven-year reporting gap. Clr. Dewar suggested the matter is worth further investigation.

Clr. Wadden indicated that staff were requested to follow up to obtain a report. The Warden added that no financial statements have been received since that time and confirmed that staff will investigate the matter.

PICTOU COUNTY PARTNERSHIP QUARTERLY REPORT

The Pictou County Partnership Quarterly Report was received as presented.

BUSINESS ITEMS OR ITEMS REQUIRING ACTION **DISTRICT 1 MUNICIPAL SERVICE GRANT**

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. MacKeil and seconded by Clr. Wadden to approve the following District 1 Municipal Service Grant for the Sutherland's River and District Community Association in the amount of \$3,000.00. **Motion Carried**



RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED the Municipality of the County of Pictou approves the following Municipal Service Grant for District 1:

1. Sutherland's River and District Comm. Assoc.	<u>\$3000.00</u>	Hall Renovations
Total	<u>\$3000.00</u>	

DATED at Pictou, N.S. this 2nd day of February 2026.

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Motion Carried
Clr. Darla MacKeil
Clr. Deborah Wadden

DISTRICT 10 MUNICIPAL SERVICE GRANT

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Palmer and seconded by Deputy Warden Murray to approve the following District 10 Municipal Service Grant in the amount of \$4,000.00 for the MacPherson's Mills Community Centre. **Motion Carried**



RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED the Municipality of the County of Pictou approves the following Municipal Service Grants for District 10:

1. MacPherson's Mills Community Centre	\$4000.00	Septic System Repairs
Total	\$4000.00	

DATED at Pictou, N.S. this 2nd day of February 2026.

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Motion Carried
Clr. Randy Palmer
Deputy Warden Wayne Murray

DISTRICT 2 COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY EVENT GRANT FUND

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Wadden and seconded by Clr. Parker to approve the following District 2 Community Connectivity Event Grant Fund for the Little Harbour Community Hall in the amount of \$1,500.00. **Motion Carried**



RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED the Municipality of the County of Pictou approves the following Community Connectivity Event Fund:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. District 2 - Little Harbour Community Hall - | \$1500.00 | - District 2 Family Day |
| Total | \$1500.00 | |

DATED at Pictou, N.S. this 2nd day of February 2026.

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Motion Carried
Clr. Deborah Wadden
Clr. Donald Parker

TAX WRITE-OFFS

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Palmer and seconded by Deputy Warden Murray to approve the tax write-offs for the following accounts: **Motion Carried**



RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED the Municipality of the County of Pictou approve the following write-off on taxes, the same having been reviewed and approved by the Financial Services Committee:

<u>ACCOUNT #</u>	<u>ACCOUNT NAME</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>REASON</u>
05298296	MacKay Kathleen C	\$36.95	Deactivated per land registry, no PID associated with AAN, all lands contained in other assessments.
08832447	Duggins John W	\$ 94.87	Mobile Home Demolished
03434419	Murray Phillip Ronald	\$11.21	Gravel Pit also assessed AAN 06027563
10557461	Fraser Marion	\$236.70	House burnt in 2018, balance at the time was \$157.88 account never went inactive so pen continued to be applied.
08833370	Cross Cheryl	\$929.27	Inactive in 2019 roll, area rates were billed in 2020 & 2021 as the account was never made inactive, penalty continued to be applied to the account.
00117722	Arnold Annie Eunice "Estate"	\$1440.54	Inactive since 2018, neve made inactive in system continued to accumulate interest, imported into Diamond as large balance owing and billing based on

200 assessment until
2017.

TOTAL \$2749.64

DATED at Pictou, N.S. this 2nd day of February 2026.

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**Motion Carried
Clr. Randy Palmer
Deputy Warden Wayne Murray**

STRATEGIC PLANNING PART 2

Clr. Wadden asked whether Council was in agreement to plan for a second strategic planning session. CAO Cullen confirmed that the request has already been made and that potential dates will be suggested. The CAO noted that, based on Council's calendar, the session would likely take place in March.

Clr. Palmer asked whether these sessions would replace the regular Council planning session. Warden Parker indicated that the two sessions with the province should be held first, followed by Council's regular planning session.

DEFERRED BUSINESS

Dreamery Gardens Project Tax Receipts.

Clr. Baillie reported that the project is progressing and noted that the agreement should be sent to CAO Cullen soon.

MOTIONS OF RECONSIDERATION

There were no motions of reconsideration.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Community announcements were given.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the meeting, Warden Parker declared the meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

WARDEN

MUNICIPAL CLERK