

May 20, 2025

The Financial Services Committee for the Municipality of the County of Pictou met in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Administration Building by videoconference and teleconference on Tuesday, May 20, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT

- 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
Evan Hale, Director of Emergency Services
Rhiannon McNair, Director of Business Operations, Broadband Initiative
Adam MacInnis, Communications Officer
Shellie Pettipas, Administrative Assistant

ABSENT

Logan McDowell, Director of Public Works & Development

CALL TO ORDER & LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Clr. MacKeil, Chair of the Financial Services Committee called the meeting to order and acknowledged that we are on the ancestral territorial lands of the Mikmaq people.

AGENDA

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

Clr. MacKeil noted that an In-Camera discussion will be added to the agenda.

EMERGENCY RESOLUTIONS

Deputy Warden Murray requested that the Climate Change Advisory Committee bursaries be added to the agenda as an emergency resolution.

Warden Parker noted that the potential upcoming postal strike would have a tremendous impact on small businesses and seniors in the community. The Warden requested a discussion be added regarding the potential strike.

MINUTES

Clr. MacKeil asked if there were any errors, omissions, or corrections in the April 22, 2025, minutes. The members of the Committee entered no errors, omissions, or corrections. The Chair proclaimed the minutes of the meetings on April 22, 2025, as the official record of the meetings. **Motion Carried**

Clr. Baillie noted a correction in the Council Grants discussion. The minutes should state that Clr. Baillie requested the grants meeting information be provided to all Council members and not just the Grants Committee members.

REPORTS NOT REQUIRING A MOTION

COMMUNICATION REPORT

The Communication Report for the month of April 2025 was received as presented.

RECREATION REPORT

The Recreation Report for the month of April 2025 was received as presented.

WARDEN'S REPORT

The Warden's Report for the month of April 2025 was received as presented.

Warden Parker noted conducting numerous interviews over the past couple of weeks and emphasized the importance of informing people about the community's feelings and reactions to the two missing children in Lansdowne.

The Warden stated that there is a need to discuss uranium mining in the county. Warden Parker indicated that staff should gather as much information as possible and conduct that discussion at the June 2, 2025, Council meeting.

INTERNET REPORT

The MOPC Network Sales and Marketing Report for the month of April 2025 was received as presented.

Clr. Boyles has been receiving very positive feedback about the internet and noted that residents are extremely pleased with the service. Clr. Parker echoed hearing positive feedback from residents.

VOLUNTEER BANQUET SURVEY RESULTS

Clr. MacKeil noted that over 150 people attended this year's Volunteer Appreciation Banquet. A survey was distributed, and from the 95 responses received, the feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

Warden Parker noted that there were so many deserving people nominated, and it was difficult for Council to choose a winner. The Warden recognized that Mr. Ed Kennedy was chosen as Volunteer of the Year.

TAXES RECEIVABLE REPORT

The Taxes Receivable Report for the month of April 2025 was received for informational purposes.

DEED TRANSFER TAX

The Deed Transfer Tax for the month of April 2025 was received as presented.

REPORTS REQUIRING A MOTION

ACCOUNTS PAID – APRIL 2025

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Baillie and seconded by Clr. Palmer, that the Accounts Paid Report for the month of April 2025 be received as presented. **Motion Carried**

INTERNET ACCOUNTS PAID

It was moved by Deputy Warden Murray and seconded by Clr. Turner that the Internet Accounts Paid Report for the month of April 2025 be received as presented. **Motion Carried**

BUSINESS ITEMS REQUIRING ACTION

CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

Mr. Kennedy presented a highlighted overview of the 68-page Climate Change Action Plan, with a focus on the plan's budget.



Action Plan Overview

- ❖ In February 2024, the Climate Action Planning team started background research and development of proposed action plans
- ❖ An online survey in March 2024 sought feedback on proposed action items
- ❖ In October 2024, education media about climate change impacts on Pictou County were distributed through posters and social media
- ❖ At the January 2025 Council meeting the proposed climate actions were presented
- ❖ The Community Engagement meetings in eight locations around the County throughout January 2025 provided feedback from some 175 residents
- ❖ On April 23, the Climate Change Advisory Committee agreed to forward the Action Plan to County Council for review

Proposed Climate Change Actions for Pictou County

Proposed Climate Change Actions	Percentage of Participants Who Viewed the Action to be of High Importance
Creating measures for ensuring the safety of citizens that are impacted by climate disaster events	91%
Enhancing the annual MOPC Tree Planting Program	87%
Developing a storm surge and flooding risk analysis tool	86%
Completing a wildfire hazard assessment to support wildfire mitigation efforts	86%
Assessing and modifying the MOPC infrastructure	86%
Replacing emission-generating energy sources within MOPC buildings	74%
Replacing MOPC transportation fleet with zero-emission vehicles	62%

Five-Year Financial Plan (1)

Actions	Budget Type		Budget Year				
	Operating	Capital	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Replacing the MOPC Transportation Fleet Exterior funding from Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund		✓	\$50,000 \$40,000	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$125,000
Replacing Emission-generating Energy Sources Exterior funding to be determined		✓	\$	\$			
Enhancing the MOPC Tree Planting Program Exterior funding from Thriving Forests Program	✓		\$10,000 \$4,100	\$10,000 \$8,000	\$10,000 \$12,000	\$10,000 \$16,000	\$10,000 \$20,000

Five-Year Financial Plan (2)

Actions	Budget Type		Budget Year				
	Operating	Capital	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Developing a Storm Surge and Flooding Risk Analysis Tool Exterior funding from Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund	✓		\$16,500 \$12,000	\$80,000	\$40,000		
Mitigating Wildfire Risk in Pictou County Exterior funding from Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund	✓		\$100,000	\$60,000 \$240,000	\$60,000 \$240,000		

Five-Year Financial Plan (3)

Actions	Budget Type		Budget Year				
	Operating	Capital	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Emergency and Evacuation Preparedness Education	✓		\$10,000				
Assessing and Modifying Vulnerable MOPC Infrastructure		✓		\$60,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	
MOPC Funding			\$186,500	\$255,000	\$215,000	\$155,000	\$135,000
Exterior Funding			\$56,100	\$328,000	\$292,000	\$16,000	\$20,000
Total Annual Budget			\$242,600	\$583,000	\$507,000	\$171,000	\$155,000

Action Plan Implementation

- ❖ For a successful Action Plan implementation, the planned actions will involve and be in synchronization with the Municipality's Planning Documents, General Operating Budgets, and Capital Investment Plan
- ❖ To measure annually the performance of the plan's climate actions, a list of key performance indicators are proposed, which will be dependent on the clear assignment of responsibilities for results
- ❖ For the next year and a half, the MOPC will receive some support from Clean Foundation for implementing the action plan
- ❖ Given the responsibility loads carried by existing staff members, adding a person with climate change experience to be responsible for plan implementation will help to ensure that the plan fulfills its potential

Questions and Discussion

Mr. Kennedy acknowledged the strong support from those involved in developing the Climate Change Action Plan. Community engagement meetings were held, and Mr. Kennedy noted that some good feedback was received from that process.

Mr. Kennedy discussed the seven proposed action areas and detailed the proposed budget for a five-year period. Mr. Kennedy noted that the budget is seen as a rolling plan and will be reassessed yearly. Mr. Kennedy said that for the next year and a half support will continue to be received through the Clean Foundation.

Clr. Boyles questioned if an expert staff member should be hired to address this. Mr. Kennedy noted that there were discussions with Mr. McDowell regarding this possibility.

Clr. Boyles would not support this and feels that taxpayers are being asked to pay a significant amount of money. Clr. Boyles said that the most important issues now should be addressed first and then go from there. Mr. Kennedy noted that the amount of action to be included in the plan was debated at the committee meetings. Mr. Kennedy stated that the most significant expense within the proposed budget was the wildfire risk assessment, which was also a major concern for residents. Mr. Kennedy said that ultimately it would be Council's decision on what is addressed.

Warden Parker stated that there are currently funding opportunities available, and with Ms. Griffith's assistance, to explore ways to reduce costs, which should be kept in

mind. The Warden said that this problem with climate change is not going to go away and Council needs to be the best to limit this.

Clr. Parker believes that climate change is an essential priority and should be investigated further. Clr. Parker said that many residents are concerned about wildfire risks.

Clr. MacDonald inquired about the number of vehicles in the county fleet. CAO Cullen stated there are 12 vehicles. Clr. MacDonald asked what type of heating system is in the Municipal Administration Building, and CAO Cullen noted that there is an oil heating system.

Deputy Warden Murray stated that the ask is big and the only concern with the plan was the financing. The Deputy Warden questioned whether the Action Plan and the funding should be decided upon separately. Mr. Kennedy said the county is well known for climate risks, and there is a good opportunity to receive funding. Mr. Kennedy noted that some funding has already been accessed, and things are moving along.

Clr. Wadden agreed that there are concerns surrounding funding, but upon looking through the list of action items, it is common sense to move forward. Clr. Wadden stated that climate change is already underway and that inaction is not beneficial to the county's residents.

Clr. Palmer expressed budget concerns and noted that this would be decided by Council during budget discussions. Clr. Palmer suggested choosing parts of the Action Plan to move forward with.

Clr. Baillie agreed that the budget request is a high ask and agreed that climate change is occurring. Clr. Baillie would have trouble accepting the plan without backing it with money. Warden Parker noted that Council will have to make some difficult decisions during budget discussions.

Clr. Boyles asked if the plan was passed, would it then be a five-year plan? CAO Cullen said approval of the plan is about the hopes of achieving the principles. Each item would be evaluated at budget time against all other priorities. The CAO noted that the plan's budget is an estimate, and as the plan is refined, the costs may change. Several grant applications have been submitted, and some have a good chance of being successful. Mr. Kennedy stated that the plan would proceed year by year according to the budget.

Clr. Turner noted that the proposed amounts are asks, and adjustments would be made at budget discussions. Clr. Turner said the plan should be viewed as a protective and forward-looking plan, protecting citizens, resources, and assets. Clr. Turner supports the plan and said this is a living document that will change as priorities change.

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Turner and seconded by Clr. Wadden to adopt the Climate Change Action Plan as presented.

Motion Carried

Nay Vote: Clr. Peter Boyles

MACLELLAN'S BROOK WATER PROJECT SCOPE AMENDMENT

Clr. MacKeil said that Council must approve amendments to the water project before it can move forward. Clr. MacKeil stated that three bids were received for the project. There are some areas within the design where residents have indicated that they do not require water services, and these areas will be excluded, resulting in reduced costs.

Clr. Palmer said that some residents from those areas had called, wondering what was going on and thinking the project had been cancelled. Clr. Palmer stated that the fire department is also to be called to discuss where to put the hydrants. Mr. Hale noted that two meetings were held with the fire chief.

Clr. Palmer said that many residents were very excited to have the notice that water is coming to that area.

Clr. Thompson said that when the sewer project was done in Plymouth, it was also done in phases. Clr. Thompson expressed support for this project and said this is much needed and this needs to get moving forward.

It was moved by Clr. Palmer and seconded by Clr. Thompson to accept the revised phase I for the Coalburn/MacLellan's Brook Water Project.

Motion Carried

Clr. Boyles is hopeful that water services will be provided to other areas in the county.

MUNICIPAL SERVICE GRANTS

DISTRICT 3

It was moved by Clr. Baillie and seconded by Clr. Turner to approve the following District 3 Municipal Service Grants:

Motion Carried

Bayview Hall Streetlight	\$40.00	Yearly Cost
Bayview Community Hall	\$900.00	Maintenance
Haliburton-Pictou Cemetery	\$2,000.00	Maintenance
St. James Mill Dam Cemetery	\$1,800.00	Maintenance
Seaboard Cemetery	\$2,000.00	Maintenance
Caribou Island Cemetery	\$500.00	Maintenance
Waterside Cemetery Co.	\$2,000.00	Maintenance

Central Caribou Cemetery	\$5,000.00	Maintenance
Upper Caribou River Company	\$6,000.00	Maint. & Expansion
Caribou River Community Hall	\$2,700.00	Maint. & Expenses
Caribou District Fire Department	\$3,000.00	Gazebo Const.

Total: \$25,940.00

DISTRICT 7

It was moved by Clr. Parker and seconded by Clr. MacDonald to approve the following District 7 Municipal Service Grants: **Motion Carried**

Mill Brook & Area Comm Club	\$1,300.00	Cell Booster, Gravel & Fill for Hall
Forest Hill Cemetery	\$2,000.00	Maintenance
Mill Brook Cemetery	\$2,600.00	Maintenance
Friends of Pioneer Cemetery	\$2,500.00	Maintenance
Friends of Caledonia Cemetery	\$1,000.00	Headstone Repair
NRHS Greenhouse Project	\$5,000.00	Purch/Install Greenhouse
Carpool Street Light	\$480.00	Yearly Cost

Total: \$14,880.00

DISTRICT 10

It was moved by Clr. Palmer and seconded by Deputy Warden Murray to approve the following District 10 Municipal Service Grants: **Motion Carried**

Thorburn & District War Vet. Ass.	\$1,667.00	Maintenance/history binder or names on cenotaph
MacPhersons Mills Comm. Hall	\$4,000.00	Maint & Floor Repair
Dist. 13 Rec & Planning	\$5,500.00	Facility Maint.
Union Presbyterian Church	\$2,500.00	Replace Windows
Thorburn Cemetery Assn.	\$2,500.00	Maintenance
The Mountain Cemetery (McLellans Mtn)	\$3,200.00	Maintenance
MacPhersons Mills Cemetery	\$3,000.00	Maintenance

Total: \$22,367.00

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION/BURSARIES

It was moved by Clr. Turner and seconded by Clr. MacDonald to approve the following high school graduation/bursaries: **Motion Carried**

NRHS	\$2,000.00	Graduation/Bursary
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NNEC	\$2,000.00	Graduation/Bursary
Pictou Academy	\$200.00	Bursary
Tatamagouche Regional High	\$200.00	Bursary

Total: \$4,400.00

CLIMATE CHANGE BURSARIES

It was moved by Deputy Warden Murray and seconded by Clr. Turner to approve the following Climate Change Advisory member's bursaries: **Motion Carried**

Pierre Bredell	\$500.00	Bursary
Violet McCullough	\$500.00	Bursary

Total: \$1,000.00

Warden Parker expressed that Violet and Pierre had a high level of participation and attended meetings regularly. The Warden is pleased this was brought forward and said both were well deserving of this.

APPOINTMENT OF CODE OF CONDUCT INVESTIGATOR

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Wadden and seconded by Clr. Baillie to appoint Charles Thompson of Burchell MacDougall to be appointed as the MOPC's Investigator if an alleged Code of Conduct violation arises. **Motion Carried**

Clr. Boyles asked what background Mr. Thompson has in municipal politics. CAO Cullen stated that Mr. Thompson has experience in conducting investigations and practices in the field of municipal law. The current labour lawyer recommended Mr. Thompson.

Clr. Dewar questioned if any local law firms were interested in this. The CAO noted that no law firm within the county submitted for this. Warden Parker said that in many cases, local lawyers could be a conflict of interest.

POSTAL STRIKE

Warden Parker said that a postal strike could stop small businesses who rely on this service cold in their tracks. The Warden also noted that many seniors depend on postal service. Warden Parker stated that many services are being eliminated, and the government should be moving in the opposite direction. Warden Parker understands the ask for more pay but feels it is at the expense of citizens.

MOTION

It was moved by Warden Parker and seconded by Deputy Warden Murray to send a letter to Prime Minister Carney with a copy sent to local MPs asking that the parties be forced to a binding arbitration to get this matter settled. **Motion Carried**

Clr. Wadden expressed the importance of a fair settlement for both parties involved.

MOTION

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

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. MacDonald and seconded by Warden Parker to return to regular session. **Motion Carried**

DEFERRED BUSINESS

There was no deferred business.

MOTIONS OF RECONSIDERATION

There were no motions of reconsideration.

ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business before the meeting, so the Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

CHAIRPERSON

MUNICIPAL CLERK