

October 20, 2025

The Property Services Committee for the Municipality of the County of Pictou met in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Administration Building on Monday, October 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

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
Rhiannon McNair, Director of Business Operations, Broadband Initiative
Adam MacInnis, Communications Officer
Shellie Pettipas, Administrative Assistant

CALL TO ORDER & LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Clr. Randy Palmer, Chair of the Property 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

EMERGENCY RESOLUTIONS

No emergency resolutions were brought forward.

MINUTES

Clr. Palmer asked if there were any errors, omissions, or corrections in the minutes for September 15, 2025. The members of the Committee entered no errors, omissions, or corrections. The Chair proclaimed the minutes of the meeting on September 15, 2025, as the official record of the meeting.

Motion Carried

REPORTS NOT REQUIRING A MOTION

PUBLIC WORKS AND DEVELOPMENT

The Public Works and Development Report for the month of September 2025 was received as presented.

Clr. Wadden followed up on a request for two streetlights made in November 2024 and noted that none have been installed yet. Mr. McDowell is awaiting a response from Nova Scotia Power regarding those requests. Clr. Wadden commented that it seemed to be taking a long time to install the lights. Mr. McDowell is uncertain as to why some installations are being advanced and others are not.

Clr. Boyles requested a copy of the printout of the speeds from the speed indicators in Hillside. Mr. McDowell noted that there were no loggers on those units, but they could be reinstalled to obtain that information. Mr. McDowell pointed out that the device does not tell the speed of the vehicle, but rather the number of cars over the speed limit.

Warden Parker inquired whether the RFP has been issued yet for the Blue Acres sidewalk lighting and crosswalks. Mr. McDowell confirmed that the RFP has been issued and will close next week.

DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

The Development Officer Report for the month of September 2025 was received as presented.

Warden Parker inquired about the correct procedure for a resident of District 6 seeking to change the zoning of a property in the Rural General Zone to permit a dog kennel. Mr. McDowell spoke to the property owner regarding the request and noted that certain activities currently being undertaken would be grandfathered in, but a rezoning would be required for the permitted uses within the zone. Mr. McDowell noted that this could be treated as a bylaw amendment, and it could be done concurrently with the agricultural changes required, as it is more efficient to handle them all as a single amendment.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Emergency Services Report for the month of September 2025 was received as presented.

FIRE SERVICES GOVERNANCE REPORT

CAO Cullen said that Mr. Hale attended a conference about emergency management last week. The province has yet to respond to the study and has not released a timeline for the response.

Warden Parker commented that there is a lot in the report. When this was brought up at the West River Fire Department, it was stated that new people would have to be found to run the department.

Clr. MacDonald noted that the county would have to approve of the chief, not select the chief of the department.

Clr. Parker attended a board meeting and stated that there was considerable concern regarding the report and the selection of the new chief. The result could end with volunteer firefighters quitting. Clr. Parker commented that the report contains a significant amount of funding information.

CAO Cullen noted that Mr. Hale was unable to attend the meeting and will provide an update on this report.

FIRE INSPECTOR REPORT

The Fire Inspector Report for the month of September 2025 was received as presented.

BUILDING OFFICIALS REPORT

The Building Inspector's Report for the month of September 2025 was received as presented.

BYLAW OFFICER REPORT

The Bylaw Officer Report for the month of September 2025 was received as presented.

BUSINESS ITEMS OR ITEMS REQUIRING ACTION

DISTRICT 4 STREETLIGHT

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Baillie and seconded by Clr. Parker to approve the installation of a streetlight at the intersection of Murphy Road and Cape John Road.

Motion Carried

DISTRICT 4 STREETLIGHT

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Baillie and seconded by Clr. Parker to approve the installation of a streetlight at 42 Queen Street, River John.

Motion Carried

DISTRICT 7 STREETLIGHT

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Parker and seconded by Clr. Baillie to approve the installation of a streetlight at the intersection of Highway 4 and Mt. Thom Road.

Motion Carried

DISTRICT 9 STREETLIGHT

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Boyles and seconded by Clr. Turner to approve the installation of a streetlight at 1948 Frasers Mountain Road, Frasers Mountain.

Motion Carried

DISTRICT 12 STREETLIGHT

Clr. Dewar said that the request for the streetlight is at a standstill because the other neighbour does not want to do it. The request was made for safety and Clr. Dewar noted that this is a perfect location for a light because of the school buses. Mr. McDowell agreed that the location was suitable for a streetlight to be installed but noted that there is currently no area rate established in that location and that one of the two residents did not want it.

REQUEST FOR SIDEWALK IN ALMA

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Parker and seconded by Clr. Turner that the construction of a sidewalk from the crosswalk on Highway 4 Alma to the entrance of the Alma Loop be added to the Capital Project list.

Clr. Parker said the request for the sidewalk came from the principal of Northumberland Regional High School to make it safer for over 900 students to evacuate in the event of a fire or emergency. The estimated cost for the project is between \$ 50,000 and \$60,000.00.

Clr. Turner concurs with the request and stated that if there is a need for a sidewalk anywhere, it is in this location. Clr. Turner said that, based on the safety of the students, Council should consider putting this sidewalk in. Warden Parker spoke in support of the motion, agreeing that it should be a priority as it is a safety issue.

Clr. MacKeil noted that the email stated this would only be used in the event of an emergency. Clr. MacKeil agreed that this is an important issue, but feels that more information is required, such as what protocols are currently in place. Clr. MacKeil agreed that this is a safety issue and is of the utmost importance.

Clr. Dewar assumed the chair. Clr. Palmer noted that it is nearing the end of this fiscal year. The project would need to be issued for tender, and the design would require approval from the province. Clr. Palmer noted that this would not be a quick process. Clr. Palmer stated that the budget for this fiscal year was approved last year and suggested that it might be more beneficial to wait until budget time and have the tender issued at the beginning of the year.

Clr. Palmer resumed the chair. Warden Parker agreed that it is late in the year and suggested changing the motion to address this at budget time next fiscal. The Warden said that it might be helpful to ask Mr. O'Toole, as well as the Fire Chief, to come to Council and answer the questions that had been asked.

Clr. Turner noted that schools conduct regular evacuations and stated that the request for the sidewalk is for situations where a code black is declared and the school needs to be evacuated. Clr. Turner noted that if it is Council's wish to get the project on the list and have the work done up front, it is agreed to change the motion. Clr. Parker withdrew the motion.

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Parker and seconded by Clr. Turner to request the Director of Public Works investigate a sidewalk design and to have the information ready for next year's budget and attempt to get the project on next year's Capital project list.

Motion Carried

DEFERRED BUSINESS

SANITARY SEWER LATERAL CHARGES

Mr. McDowell followed Council's direction and reviewed the sanitary sewer lateral charges in similar municipalities around Northern Nova Scotia. The fees in Pictou County are lower. Mr. McDowell noted that the county has not adjusted the fees in several years.

The recommended changes would be to increase the lateral charge from \$2,500.00 to \$3,000.00 and to increase the charge for those completed after a capital project from \$2,500.00 to \$5,000.00. Mr. McDowell recommended increasing the \$250.00 charge for each additional unit to \$300.00. Subsequent laterals after the first lateral will be the responsibility of the property owner, and likewise for larger or specialized laterals, with the notation that Municipal Council would have the option to remove or contribute to this.

Clr. Boyles enquired if these changes would cover the county's expenses. Mr. McDowell noted that it would not cover all the costs for most developments, but it is an attempt to strike a balance that remains attractive for development and not to burden other taxpayers. Warden Parker agreed with the numbers presented. The Warden said that Council does not want to make them so high that residents are unable to handle the cost. It is about finding that balance while treating everyone equally.

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Wadden and seconded by Clr. MacKeil to accept the staff recommendation for the Sanitary Sewer Lateral Charges as presented. **Motion Carried**

MOTIONS OF RECONSIDERATION

There were no motions of reconsideration.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Community announcements were given.

ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business before the meeting, so the Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

CHAIRPERSON

MUNICIPAL CLERK