

May 20, 2025

The Property 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 9:00 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
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. 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. MacDonald that the agenda be approved as presented. **Motion Carried**

EMERGENCY RESOLUTIONS

There were no emergency resolutions.

MINUTES

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

Clr. Palmer asked if there were any errors, omissions, or corrections in the minutes for April 22, 2025, In-Camera minutes. The members of the Committee entered no errors, omissions, or corrections. The Chair proclaimed the minutes of the meeting on April 22, 2025, In-Camera 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 April 2025 was received as presented.

Clr. Boyles questioned if any decision had been made regarding water services to the Evan MacDonald Road. It was recommended that Clr. Boyles contact Mr. McDowell for an update regarding this.

Warden Parker requested an update on whether any conclusions have been made regarding the Blue Acres sidewalk lighting. CAO Cullen said the final report has not yet been received. Once the design is complete, it will be submitted to Public Works for approval.

DEVELOPMENT OFFICER REPORT

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

EMERGENCY SERVICES

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

FIRE INSPECTOR REPORT

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

BUILDING OFFICIALS REPORT

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

BYLAW OFFICER REPORT

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

BUSINESS ITEMS OR ITEMS REQUIRING ACTION

LITTER REVERSE ONUS CLAUSE

Clr. MacKeil said the Ad-Hoc Litter Awareness Committee has the right people involved, and members are very enthusiastic.

Clr. MacKeil noted that the Reverse Onus Clause has been done in other municipalities, and the committee felt it would be beneficial for Council to discuss this as an option. Clr. MacKeil stated that a significant amount of illegal dumping is occurring in communities. With the Reverse Onus Clause, if someone's name is found in the garbage, then it is that individual's responsibility to clean it up. Clr. MacKeil spoke in favour of supporting this.

Clr. Boyles noted that this occurred at the Hillside Graveyard; a person's name was found on the envelopes, but the RCMP said no action could be taken.

Clr. Parker stated that this issue was initially discussed because a District 8 resident who also owns land in District 7 had raised it. The resident discovered garbage that had been dumped and identified the owner of the trash. The gentleman told the resident that he would clean it up, but he has never done so. Clr. Parker said that Yarmouth and Shelburne have the Reverse Onus Clause. Clr. Parker spoke in favour of this clause.

Clr. MacDonald questioned where illegal dump sites should be reported to. CAO Cullen noted that dump sites should be reported directly to Pictou County Solid Waste.

Warden Parker questioned if this procedure had yet been tested through the courts. Clr. MacKeil said that it was tested through the court in Halifax and has stood up twice.

Deputy Warden Murray received a call about garbage dumped in District 5. Names were located within the garbage, and both residents had paid someone to take it to the dump. Clr. MacKeil noted that when someone is hired to carry construction materials on a resident's behalf, it is advisable to request a receipt from the person performing this service.

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. MacKeil and seconded by Clr. Parker to recommend to Council to amend the current solid waste bylaw. **Motion Carried**

FEE AT PICTOU COUNTY SOLID WASTE LANDFILL

CAO Cullen noted that the bag drop-off fee at the Pictou County Solid Waste landfill has increased from \$5.00 to \$10.00. The CAO stated that costs have considerably increased due to the new collection contract.

Clr. Boyles stated that this is a good program for residents, and if it is not available, then littering on the sides of the roads could worsen, and in turn, the clean-up costs would be an added expense.

Clr. MacKeil voiced conflicting thoughts about this program. On the one hand, people who use the service are disposing of garbage properly, but the county is already paying a large fee for curbside collection, as well as issuing landfill vouchers.

Clr. Wadden said that many District 2 residents utilize this service, and often, when garbage is placed curbside, it gets torn apart by animals. Clr. Wadden agreed that the increased fee is a significant amount of money but would not like to see this service discontinued for those using it for the right reasons.

CAO Cullen stated that there is a significantly higher vehicle presence at the landfill site in comparison to other locations within the province. The CAO noted that more stringent rules could be placed around using the service. Warden Parker questioned the reasoning behind the increased number of vehicles, and it should be investigated why there is such a significant increase compared to other parts of the province.

Clr. Parker suggested the county continue to pay \$5.00, and the residents be charged the other \$5.00. Clr. Palmer agreed that the option should be considered. CAO Cullen stated that it would be an option, but advance notice would have to be given to residents. Mr. Cullen suggested monitoring for a month before further discussion.

Clr. Boyles asked why the fee has doubled. CAO Cullen stated that the fee was initially introduced in 2010, and disposal costs have increased significantly since then. The CAO noted that all other fees have been adjusted over time. The board has a budget that needs to be balanced. Warden Parker stated being in favour of splitting the \$10.00 between the municipality and the resident.

Clr. Palmer noted that this discussion was for informational purposes and suggested that staff look further into the numbers to attempt to find a solution and have a later discussion regarding the fees.

COASTAL PROTECTION

Warden Parker said it has come time for Council to decide on coastal protection. The Warden stated that during the public engagement sessions, residents were informed that coastal protection would be addressed as a separate issue, and people are expecting this to be discussed.

Warden Parker noted that there is some funding to help hire experts, and the province will also provide some tools to assist. Warden Parker pointed out that it is still a choice; some municipalities are moving forward, while others are not. Warden Parker asked if it was too risky for the province; then, is it too risky for the county to implement? Warden Parker noted that there are a lot of people expecting that something will be done, and Council should decide whether to get involved with this or to walk away.

Clr. Boyles stated that the process of implementing the Land Use Bylaws is just finishing up and who is Council to tell people what they can do? Clr. Boyles voiced that the banks and lending institutions should be getting more involved. Clr. Boyles feels that residents are being told too much about what they can do now.

Clr. MacKeil said the mistake the province has made is that now throughout the province the rules will differ between municipalities and that will create a mess. Clr. MacKeil said if one is going to be doing it then all needs to do it. Warden Parker had reached out to other municipal units along the Northumberland Strait but noted not receiving good response.

Clr. Thompson feels that this is a private property matter and not something that Council should be attempting to regulate. Clr. Thompson believes that the municipality enforcing coastal protection rules is going to do anything to stop this. Clr. Thompson stated that this matter should be between the homeowners, mortgage lenders and insurance companies. Clr. Thompson noted that the Climate Change Advisory Committee is embarking on mapping programs and thinks more information should be gathered before any decisions are made. Clr. Thompson also noted that this would put an administrative burden on the municipality. Clr. Thompson said that there is guidance from Gordon Smith, who is very knowledgeable and Council should be consulting with Mr. Smith before any decisions are made.

Clr. Turner said there is merit to this being a private property matter but it should also be considered that the natural ecosystems also need protection. Clr. Turner noted that coastal economies must also be protected such as the recreation, fishing and tourism economies should also be part of that discussion. Clr. Turner is not opposed to waiting until more information is known, but noted that those aspects also need to be put on the table for future discussion.

Clr. Baillie recommended that Mr. Smith be invited to speak to Council and agreed it would be beneficial to have more detailed information before making decisions on this

matter. Deputy Warden Murray agreed and noted that this was brought to the attention of Council to see if there was interest in discussing it further.

MOTION

It was moved by Deputy Warden Murray and seconded by Clr. Wadden to make a request that Gordon Smith be invited to meet with Council to provide more information before any decisions are made.

Motion Carried

DEFERRED BUSINESS

There was no deferred business.

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 10:00 p.m.

CHAIRPERSON

MUNICIPAL CLERK