

September 8, 2026

The Council for the Municipality of the County of Pictou met in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Administration Building on Tuesday, September 8, 2026, at 7 p.m.

PRESENT

Dist:

- 1 Clr. Joe MacDonald
- 2 Clr. Deborah Wadden
- 3 Clr. Darla MacKeil
- 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
Adam MacInnis, Communications Officer
Evan Hale, Director of Emergency Management and Public Safety
Rhiannon McNair, Director of Business for the Rural Broadband Project.
Logan McDowell, Director of Public Works & Development

ABSENT

Sueann Musick, Director of Corporate Services/Deputy Clerk
4 Clr. Ronald Baillie

CALL TO ORDER & LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Warden Robert 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 acknowledged 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.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

A moment of silence was observed.

EMERGENCY RESOLUTIONS

Councillor Peter Boyles requested that Council add a discussion regarding labour relations matters involving employees at Valley View Villa. The request included an opportunity for a representative of CUPE to address Council

Motion: A motion was made to add a Valley View Villa labour relations matter to the agenda as an emergency item.

Moved by: Clr. Peter Boyles

Majority Consent given.

Motion Carried.

AGENDA

Motion: It was moved that the agenda be approved as presented with the addition of the discussion regarding Valley View Villa labour relations.

Moved by Clr. Boyles

Seconded by Clr. Turner

Motion Carried

MINUTES

Warden Parker asked if there were any errors, omissions, or corrections in the minutes for August 4, 2026, Council meeting. The Chair proclaimed the minutes of August 4, 2026, meeting as the official record of the meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE

Council received correspondence from:

- East Pictou Rural Fair thanking Council for financial support.
- Keltic Chorus Group thanking Council for a Municipal Service Grant.
- Nova Scotia Municipal Affairs regarding Agricultural Land Use By-law Amendments.
- Canada Post regarding reduced hours at the Merigomish Post Office.
- Minister of Public Works regarding the Moors Ford Bridge.
- Joe Earle Memorial Road Races thanking Council for support.
- Department of Justice regarding the RCMP Billing Model.

Discussion occurred regarding the Agricultural Land Use By-law review. CAO Cullen advised that the Province identified concerns regarding consistency with the Statement of Provincial Interest on agricultural lands. He noted the issue is primarily administrative and is not expected to result in substantial changes to Council's adopted policies.

Council also discussed the new RCMP funding model which is anticipated to provide approximately \$1 million annually for crime prevention and community safety initiatives. Staff advised that the funding must be reinvested in community safety programs and cannot be used for core policing services.

BUSINESS ITEMS NOT REQUIRING ACTION

New Scotland Business Park Report -submitted for information.

Climate Change Committee Report for August 2026 – submitted for information.

REPORTS REQUIRING ACTION

District 11 Municipal Service Grant

Motion: A motion was made to accept the District 11 Municipal Service Grant in the amount of \$20,750.00.

Moved by: Clr. Thompson

Seconded by: Clr. Dewar

Motion Carried

District 12 Municipal Service Grants

Motion: A motion was made to accept the District 12 Municipal Service Grants in the amount of \$2,250.00.

Moved by: Clr. Dewar

Seconded by: Clr. Boyles

Motion Carried

River John Legion Charitable Status

Council considered a request allowing the Municipality, as a qualified donee, to accept charitable donations and issue tax receipts on behalf of Royal Canadian Legion Branch 108 River John. Funds collected would be directed toward operational and maintenance purposes.

Motion: A motion was made to authorize charitable donations and tax receipts on behalf of Royal Canadian Legion Branch 108 River John.

Moved by: Clr. MacKeil

Seconded by: Clr. Palmer

Motion Carried.

Capital Investment Plan 2026-27

Council reviewed the Year One Capital Investment Plan totaling \$24,288,660, including transportation, water, wastewater, building improvements, broadband infrastructure, and municipal facility projects. Clr. Boyles sought clarification regarding improvements to the Hillside Lift Station and was advised the work remains within the capital planning process.

Motion: A motion was made to approve the Capital Investment Plan 2026-27 through 2030-31.

Moved by: Clr. Palmer

Seconded by: Deputy Warden Murray

Motion Carried

Pictou Island Fire Department Funding

Council considered a request from the Pictou Island Fire Department relating to long-term funding. Staff recommended a temporary grant pending completion of a provincially mandated fire service risk assessment.

Motion: A motion was made to amend the Fire Grant Policy to permit a \$20,000 grant to the Pictou Island Fire Service for 2026-27.

Moved by: Clr. MacKeil

Seconded by: Clr. Murray

Motion Carried

Rural Broadband Project Operating Budget

Council considered the 2026-27 Operating Budget for the Rural Broadband Project. Discussion focused on projected operational deficits, future profitability, long-term debt obligations, and funding sources.

Clr. Thompson expressed concerns regarding the projected operating deficit and funding requirements. CAO Cullen explained that operational forecasts indicate the project will achieve positive operational performance in future years and remain viable over the long-term business planning horizon. Warden Parker emphasized the significance of broadband infrastructure for residents and businesses throughout the County. Clr. Boyles spoke positively about his personal experience with the upgraded broadband service and commended staff for the project's progress.

Motion: A motion was made approve the Rural Broadband Project Operating Budget for 2026-27.

Moved by: Clr. Turner

Seconded by: Clr. Boyles

Motion Carried.

Nay Vote: Clr. Thompson

Salem Wastewater Project Tender Award

CAO Cullen advised that tender prices were substantially lower than project estimates. Following review by consulting engineers, staff recommended awarding the contract to the low bidder, CF Construction, in the amount of \$2,499,970 plus HST. Council discussed funding implications and anticipated construction timelines. Staff advised work would likely begin within 30 days following finalization of funding agreements.

Motion: A motion was made to award the Salem Wastewater Project contract to CF Construction.

Moved by: Clr. MacKeil

Seconded by: Deputy Warden Murray

Motion Carried

Pictou County Crushers Sponsorship Request

Council considered a sponsorship request from the Pictou County Crushers for a Treaty Day hockey event on October 1. Discussion focused on the value of supporting community organizations while recognizing that future requests from other groups may arise. Several councillors spoke in support of the Crushers' community involvement and fundraising efforts.

Motion: A motion was made to provide a \$1,000 sponsorship to the Pictou County Crushers for the Treaty Day event.

Moved by: Clr. Wadden

Seconded by: Clr. Palmer

Motion Carried.

Nay Vote: Clr. Boyles

Valley View Villa Labour Relations Matter

Council heard a presentation from Mark Cunningham, National Servicing Representative for CUPE Local 2330, regarding unresolved collective agreement negotiations at Valley View Villa.

Mr. Cunningham explained that despite the conclusion of the provincial strike, Valley View Villa remains one of a small number of facilities without a finalized collective agreement. Outstanding issues include vacation accrual language and proposed changes to employee benefits. He advised that workers have not yet received wage increases negotiated through the provincial process because an agreement has not been ratified.

Council members asked questions regarding benefit plans, vacation entitlement provisions, and the potential for future labour action. Several councillors thanked employees for attending and acknowledged the importance of reaching a fair resolution for both workers and residents.

DEFERRED BUSINESS

There was no Deferred Business.

MOTIONS OF RECONSIDERATION

There were no Motions of Reconsideration.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Community Announcements were heard.

ADJOURNMENT

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