

DIGBY TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
September 02, 2025
Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Mike Bartlett, Chair
Deputy Mayor Paul Saulnier
Councillor Rick Foote
Councillor William McCormick
Councillor Shane Weir

STAFF PRESENT: Tom Ossinger, Chief Administrative Officer
Leslie Brinton, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Karen Morrell, Administrative Assistant/Receptionist

REGRETS:

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Bartlett called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm

B. Land Acknowledgement

Land Acknowledgment stated by the Chair “We would like to begin by acknowledging that we are in Mi’kma’ki (MEEG-MA-GEE), the traditional (or ancestral) territory of the Mi’kmaq people”.

“We also acknowledge that people of African descent have been in Nova Scotia for over 400 years and we honour and offer gratitude to those ancestors of African descent who came before us to this land”.

C. AGENDA

C.1 Additions/Deletions

None

C.2 Approval

MOTION:

Moved by Deputy Mayor Saulnier and seconded by Councillor McCormick that the agenda for September 02, 2025, be approved as presented.

Motion Carried

D. DECLARATIONS OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

D.1 None

E. DELEGATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

E.1 None

F. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

F.1 August 5, 2025

Councillor McCormick pointed out that his name was misspelled in previous minutes.

Councillor Weir pointed out that a turn of phrase was not correct and needed to be amended from the previous minutes.

Both errors were corrected.

The meeting minutes were approved by consensus as amended.

G. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES/UNFINISHED BUSINESS

G.1 None

H. REPORT OF CAO

H.1 The CAO report was provided

CAO reports that there were various meetings, initiatives, and recommendations related to municipal operations, emergency management, and by-law amendments for the Town of Digby.

Meetings and Events Attended

The CAO attended several council and committee meetings, with some noted periods of vacation. Establishing a Regional Emergency Management Organization (REMO)

A proposal is made to merge Digby REMO with the District of Clare into a Digby County REMO, focusing on:

- **Unified Planning:** Creating a single all-hazards plan.
- **Resource Efficiency:** Sharing resources and trained personnel.
- **Stronger Response:** Enhanced coordination during emergencies.
- **Cost Savings:** Reducing duplication and improving grant access.
- **Community Confidence:** Providing a consolidated source for emergency information.

Legal & Governance Framework

- **Council Resolutions:** Municipalities must authorize participation.
- **Intermunicipal Agreement:** Defines the REMO's scope and decision-making processes.

Governance Structure

Includes a Joint Emergency Management Committee (JEMC) and a Regional Emergency Management Coordinator (REMC).

Operational Integration

Plans for a Unified Emergency Management Plan, resource sharing, and standardized training.

Communication & Public Engagement

Emphasizes a unified public information plan and community education for effective emergency communication.

Transition & Implementation Plan

A timeline for the REMO's creation and integration is proposed, covering legal adoption, governance setup, and public launch.

Motion:

Moved by Councillor Foote and seconded by Councillor McCormick that Council approve Phase 1 to explore the creation of a Regional Emergency Management Organization that would include the Town of Digby, the Municipality of the District of Digby and the Municipality of the District of Clare.

Motion carried

Nova Scotia Federation Municipalities Annual Meeting and Proposed Bylaw Amendments

Two significant motions are discussed for the NSFM annual meeting:

- **Motion #3:** An amendment to limit staff attendance at member meetings, recommended against by the CAO.
- **Motion #5:** A proposal to reduce the Board of Directors' size, also recommended against by the CAO for the sake of collaboration.

Kings Transit Application

The Kings Transit Authority's application to amend its Motor Carrier License to remove fixed route service within Digby is noted, with the Town's non-objection.

The transit Committee has frequently met, and an RFP has been drafted and will be further discussed in camera.

DATA Lease for 110 Montague Row

The lease agreement for 110 Montague Row has been executed, and rent payments authorized.

I. REPORT OF MAYOR

I.1 Mayor Bartlett provided his report to the Council.

There were various meetings and events that occurred in August 2025 in Digby, Nova Scotia, focusing on community services, development projects, and public engagement.

Highlights:

August 5th: Transit Committee meeting to discuss Kings Transit Service and future proposals.

August 6th: Agenda confirmation for the Emancipation Day event with community members.

August 8th-11th: Participation in the 50th anniversary of Scallop Days, including opening ceremonies and community engagement.

August 11th: Elected Chair during the Tide View AGM; a daycare project for town employees is in progress.

August 11th: Successful Emancipation Ceremony with local dignitaries and youth participation.

August 14th: Meeting with the Minister of Justice regarding the potential shift from municipal police to RCMP, which faced community dissatisfaction.

August 18th: Business recognition ceremony for Roger and Sharon Marshall's 50 years in business.

August 18th: Addressed homelessness issues, providing resources for shelter.

August 19th: Update on fire and air quality issues, including the installation of an air quality sensor.

August 20th: Discussions on transit plans with Councillor Foote and CAO.

August 20th: Celebrated the 11th anniversary of the community garden, announcing a \$45k donation for local food initiatives.

August 21st: Public hearing confirmed the cessation of Kings Transit service on August 30, 2025, with future transit plans communicated to residents.

August 22nd: Meeting with a potential developer for housing projects in the town.

August 24th: Participated in a fundraiser at Sobeys to assist families during Christmas.

August 26th: Further discussions on connecting residents with the Canadian Tire transit stop.

August 27th: Demonstration of a public engagement program, with plans for future Council meeting demos.

Additional Meetings:

Mayor Bartlett attended various other meetings, including those for the Port Association, Water Commission, Planning, Digby Recreation, Tide View Terrace, Executive Committee and attended a Golf Tournament for Make a Wish Foundation with Councilors Foote, Weir and McCormick.

J. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

J.1 Western Regional Library Committee Report

The report was presented by Councillor McCormick, he addressed the outcomes of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) for the Western County Regional Library Charitable Association that was held June 19, 2025.

The main concern is the library funding situation in Nova Scotia. The expiration of the funding agreement poses risks of service cuts. Without a renewed funding agreement, libraries may have to reduce services. The funding agreement expired in March 2025, and the province has not renewed it. This has resulted in unchanged funding levels despite increasing expenses. The library has a contingency fund from previous unspent labor budgets, but this is not a sustainable long-term solution for the funding challenges faced.

J.2 Digby Area Recreation Commission Report

Presented by Deputy Mayor Saulnier the Digby & Area Recreation Centre Board meeting held on August 20, 2025, focused on various initiatives and updates concerning community facilities, events, and programs in Digby, Nova Scotia. Key discussions included infrastructure studies, successful events, security enhancements, and new technology acquisitions aimed at improving community engagement.

Infrastructure Developments

Swimming Pool Study: A provincial infrastructure study is being conducted by Swim Nova Scotia and RFANS to evaluate swimming facility needs.

Arena Repairs: An RFP for repairs to the arena's center wall initially received no bids, but two were submitted after re-issuing. Future RFPs will be timed to follow priority repairs for better efficiency.

Community Events and Programs

Digby Dolphins Swim Meet: The event was successful, benefiting from good weather and new swim blocks acquired from Acadia University.

Upcoming Hike Summit: Planning is underway with a provincial group for next year's event.

NHL Legends Game

Marketing efforts are in place, including posters, newspaper articles, and radio ads to promote the event.

Acadia Axemen Program

The program is progressing well with 32 registrations, aiming to match last year's total of 70.

Security Enhancements

Installation of Security Cameras: Cameras have been installed inside and outside the arena to improve safety, including coverage of the splash park washrooms.

Ice Rink Updates

Arena Ice Surface: Eight logos will be placed under the ice, representing various local organizations.

Public Pool Closure: The DARC Public Pool is set to close on August 29, 2025.

Reduced Splash Park Hours: Hours have been adjusted to conserve water, with further changes planned for September.

Active Living Initiatives

The active living coordinator reported a busy summer with successful rock climbing, kayaking, summer camps, and equipment loan programs. DARC supported local events like the Lobster Bash and the 50th Annual Digby Scallop Days.

New Technology Purchase

A 4K Streaming Package has been approved for purchase to enhance event streaming and recording, potentially creating a new revenue stream for DARC and improving accessibility to community programs.

J.3 **Committee of the Whole Report**

A new administrative policy regarding cell phone use during council and committee meetings was submitted for approval. Its primary goal is to maintain a respectful and distraction-free environment while allowing necessary mobile device usage. This is to ensure orderly meetings while allowing appropriate mobile device use. Once adopted it is applicable to all Council members, Committee members, staff, and the public attending meetings. It is noted that discreet use for referencing meeting materials; texting or emailing related to the meeting is allowed. Attendees must silence devices and handle calls or texts outside the meeting room. The policy will be reviewed periodically, at least every five years.

Motion

Moved by Deputy Mayor Saulnier and seconded by Councillor McCormick that Council adopt The Cell Phone Use During Council and Committee Meetings, Administrative policy as presented. Motion carried.

K. CORRESPONDENCE

K.1 Notice of Variance

The notice is sent to property owners within 30 meters of the property, informing them of the variance and their rights. A variance was granted for a property at 115 King Street. It outlines the specifics of the variance, the rights of adjacent property owners to appeal, and provides contact information for further inquiries. The recipients of the letter can appeal the variance to Town Council within 14 days of receiving the notice. Questions regarding the variance can be directed to E. Tom Ossinger, Development Officer, via phone or email.

L. NOTICE OF MOTION

L.1 None.

M. NEW BUSINESS

M.1 Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM Conference)

To take place November 4 to November 7, 2025. At the Westin Hotel in Halifax the rooms have been put under a block of rooms. It was requested that council members that are not attending notify the Deputy Chief Administration Officer as soon as possible so that unneeded rooms can be released from that block. Councilors are responsible for doing their own conference registration. If there are any problems, please let us know so that we can help. Rooms at the Westin have been blocked.

M.2 Victoria Street-Shore Road Resurfacing

Prepared by Edward McCormick, Director of Public Works, discusses the resurfacing project for Victoria Street and Shore Road in Digby. It includes recommendations for awarding a construction tender, financial implications, and risk considerations. Recommendation put forward that council award Tender No. TOD2024-03 to Dexter Construction Company Ltd. for the resurfacing work. The work is projected to be completed by November of this year 2025.

The total budget for the resurfacing project is \$778,559.00, with the tender price *reflected at* \$692,772.30, which includes a 10% contingency and 14% HST.

The Town of Digby will finance 50% of the costs, while the Nova Scotia Public Works Highway Program will cover the remaining 50%.

Motion

Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Councillor Weir that Council award Tender No. TOD2024-03 to Dexter Construction Company Ltd. for the resurfacing work \$692,772.30.

Motion carried

M.3 Temporary Borrowing Resolution

A temporary borrowing resolution passed by the Municipal Council of the Town of Digby to fund various capital projects totaling **\$1,515,000**. It specifies the legal authority for the borrowing, the approval process, and details the projects included in the funding request. The borrowing is authorized under Section 66 of the Municipal Government Act, pending approval from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The council plans to issue and sell debentures as needed, with the option to postpone this issue and borrow from banks or trust companies. The borrowed amount will be repaid from the proceeds of the debentures when sold.

A breakdown of the capital projects to be funded by the borrowing:

Buildings - Plants

Town Hall Backup Generator: \$85,000, Fire Dept Training Building: \$25,000, 4 Lift Station Generators: \$180,000

Subtotal: \$290,000

Machinery and Equipment

New 5 Ton Plow Truck - Plow and Body: \$280,000

Subtotal: \$280,000

Sewer Lines

West St and Third Ave Development: \$300,000

Subtotal: \$300,000

Sidewalks

Culloden Rd Sidewalk - North Side: \$140,000, West St Sidewalk - Warwick to Mount: \$30,000, Upgrade Water St Sidewalk - Promenade to 68 Water: \$85,000

Subtotal: \$255,000

Streets, Roads and Curbs

Resurface Hwy 303 (Victoria and Shore Rd): \$390,000

Subtotal: \$390,000

Total Request

Overall Total for Capital Projects: \$1,515,000

M.4 Strong Mayor Powers

The briefing note from the Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia (AMANS) examines the potential impacts of adopting Strong Mayor Powers (SMP) in Nova Scotia, drawing comparisons to the existing model in Ontario. AMANS concludes that adopting Strong Mayor legislation in Nova Scotia could threaten democratic principles by politicizing local governance, undermining the roles of municipal management and councils, and damaging public confidence in local institutions. This could hinder effective and transparent governance, which is vital for a healthy democracy.

Councillor Foote proposed that this matter be put forward on the Agenda at the MLA's meeting to discuss this matter further.

N. IN-CAMERA

N.1 Contracts

Motion:

Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Deputy Mayor Saulnier that Council Move to IN Camera for Contracts

Motion Carried.

Motion:

Moved by Councillor Foote and seconded by Councillor McCormick that the Council Move out of In Camera.

Motion Carried.

O. BUSINESS FROM IN-CAMERA

Motion:

Moved by Councillor Weir and seconded by Councillor McCormick that the council approve \$5000 for an easement at 110 Prince William Street.

Motion Carried

P. ADJOURNMENT

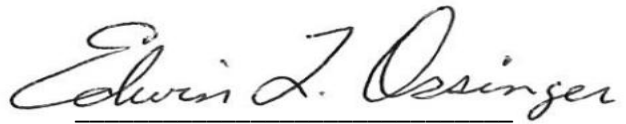
Motion:

Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Councillor Weir that there be no further business that the meeting be adjourned at 8:42 pm.

Motion Carried.



Mayor



Clerk