

**DIGBY TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
October 6, 2025
Council Chambers**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Mike Bartlett, Chair
Deputy Mayor Paul Saulnier
Councilor Rick Foote
Councilor William McCormick
Councilor 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 6:05 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 Councilor McCormick and seconded by Deputy Mayor Saulnier, that the agenda for October 6, 2025, be approved as presented.

Motion Carried

D. DECLARATIONS OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

D.1 None

E. DELEGATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

E. 1 Doane Grant Thornton-Financial Statements

Aaron Kelly and Gloria Banks from Doane Grant Thornton provided the Audited FINANCIAL Statements to the Council for the year ending March 31, 2025

Motion:

Moved by Deputy Mayor Saulnier and seconded by Councilor McCormick that the financial statements from Doane Grant Thornton 2024-2025 fiscal year be accepted as presented

Motion Carried

Motion:

Councilor McCormick made a motion to appoint Doane Grant Thornton as the Town of Digby's auditors for The Fiscal 2025/2026 year. and seconded by Councilor Foote.

Motion Carried

F. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

September 02, 2025

Council accepted the September 02,2025 minutes as Presented. The meeting minutes were approved by consensus.

G. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES/UNFINISHED BUSINESS

G.1 Notice Of Variance 115 King Street

The CAO reported that the appeal period had lapsed, and no appeals were received. The variance is now approved and the development permit has been issued.

H. REPORT OF CAO

The CAO report was provided

Establishing a REMO that includes the Municipality of the District of Clare

The CAO's have drafted an intermunicipal agreement that requires approval from all three municipal units in Digby County. The draft agreement has been placed on the Council agenda for Council's consideration. The REMO Bylaw is being reviewed and amendments are being drafted for Councils consideration pending approval of the intermunicipal agreement.

The Municipal Modernization Act

Legislation was introduced on September 25, to provide new tools to support development, reduce taxes when natural disasters destroy homes and modernize municipal elections. The Municipal Modernization Act includes amendments to six pieces of existing legislation. The proposed amendments will also provide the Minister with the authority to designate a child-care facility area as needed, remove planning barriers and speed up development of critical child-care spaces.

Also included is new legislation – the Transportation Corridor Control Act – which allows the Province to protect priority transportation corridors by proactively designating land for these projects. The act will help prioritize the needs of major transportation projects and streamline co-ordination among government departments, landowners, municipalities, developers and utilities. Proposed changes reflect feedback received from Nova Scotia's 49 municipalities, through NSFM. More details can be found at: https://nslegislature.ca/legc/bills/65th_1st/1st_read/b141.htm

CMHC Housing Accelerator Fund

Staff has officially submitted the request for extension of dates for the program. The request is being reviewed by CHMC and will forward a decision to the Town. **Staff will prepare a job description for a coordinator for this program which will be a term position and is eligible to be funded with the funding received from the CMHC Housing Accelerator Fund.**

Policy Development

Staff and CAO have been working on Draft of policies and policy amendments as per Council's direction, which include Deputy Mayor's policy Communications Policy, and Social Media Policy.

I. REPORT OF MAYOR

Mayor Bartlett provided his report to the Council. The report was detailed in the meetings he had with RCMP Zoom meeting with the Minister of Justice. The main point that stands out is the Town of Digby's appreciation of the RCMP Staff Sargent Ryland and his detachment.

Mayor also met with the Chair of the Digby Housing Coalition, Nancy Robinson. The Mayor's office will look at several avenues to see if we can help speed this process along.

The Mayor attended a Zoom call with Dalhousie University to discuss our feasibility study in terms of transit. **Councilor Foote will be sending information to DAL over the next week.** We will wait for a proposal and take the proper steps forward to a transit solution.

An update to the Water Commission switching to more accurate meter system. We will only replace with the new meters when the old ones break down.

J. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

J.1 By Law Policy

Motion:

Moved by Deputy Mayor Saulnier and seconded by Councilor McCormick that the By law and Policy Committee Meeting Report of September 22, 2025, Chief Administrative Officer Succession Plan be approved as presented

Motion Carried

J.2 Planning Advisory Committee Report

Discussion & Recommended Amendments at the Planning Advisory Committee meeting September 16, 2025

The Committee considered several policies under Section 4.0, with the following amendments recommended:

- **Policy IM-5:** Amend to require a comprehensive review of the MPS and LUB *not later than every 10 years.*
- **Policy IM-6:** Remove reference to the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP), as this will become a *stand-alone document.*
- **Policy IM-7:** Add *Coastal Protection policies*, including mapping to address *sea level rise and storm surge.*
- **Policy IM-8:** Amend wind turbine provisions to require maximum noise output not to exceed *40 dB at the property line.*
- **Policy IM-9:** Update reference to the granting of variances to reflect changes under *Section 235 of the Municipal Government Act (MGA).*

The **Façade Program** review was deferred to a future meeting

The Committee also discussed the upcoming Commercial Engagement Session. Members agreed they would act as facilitators, rather than bringing in external facilitators.

- **Date & Time:** October 23, 2025, at 6:00 PM
- **Next Steps:** **Once the engagement documents are finalized, staff will be distributed to commercial business owners in advance of the session.**

J.3 DATA Committee Report

The most recent DATA meeting highlighted a very strong tourism season. Some visitors reported that

they came to Digby after seeing the *Letter to America* online, which shows our marketing efforts are reaching audiences beyond our usual tracking. Others referenced Ontario advertising they had seen, which further confirms our marketing strategies are effective. Digby will air on the Cottage Country channel beginning the first Sunday in October. This channel enjoys significant national viewership, making this development particularly exciting for our community. There is a Five-Year Plan (2026–2031) that DATA is working on and we wait for future details on this project.

K. CORRESPONDENCE

K.1 ATV Road Trail Request

Keith Weagle, President of the Digby County ATV Association, are seeking approval for an ATV road trail connection beginning at the town limit on Shore Road and linking to the trail entrance on Victoria Street. This connection is proposed as Phase One of a larger initiative to establish a continuous trail system connecting Digby to New Brunswick via the Saint John Ferry. The Digby County ATV Association is committed to working with Council, law enforcement, and other stakeholders to ensure the safe and responsible use of this connection. The club prides itself on actively promoting rider safety, environmental stewardship, and respect for private and public property. By formalizing this road trail link, the ATV Association believes that Council would be taking a proactive step in managing ATV use within the Town limits while also supporting the broader goals of tourism and recreation development.

The CAO advised the Association that the Council would need to clarify if the Shore Road is within Town Limits and if we have the authority to amend the By Law.

Motion:

Moved by Councilor Weir and seconded by Councilor McCormick to have CAO's staff research whether the Town of Digby has the authority to make a By Law pertaining to an ATV road trail connection beginning at the town limit on Shore Road and linking to the trail entrance on Victoria Street

Motion Carried

K.2 Letter to Mayor Bartlett regarding VIC proposed move.

DATA expresses disappointment over the lack of communication regarding the potential loss of their building and emphasizes the need for ongoing dialogue with the Town to ensure the success of their initiatives. They advocate for the continuation of their lease to maintain a central location crucial for attracting visitors to Digby. DATA argues that collaboration is essential for maximizing the potential of tourism in Digby, and merely relocating the VIC would not capitalize on these opportunities.

Council respects the views of DATA however; the lease with DATA is expiring and will not be renewed.

K.3 The Southwest Nova Biosphere Association Invitation

On Wednesday, October 22nd 2025 at 10 AM at Ponhook Lake Campground The Southwest Nova Biosphere Association, the Wamboldts and partners have recontoured the shore, reconfigured stormwater runoff, and planted a thousand trees, shrubs and wetland herbs over half an acre of shoreline. The restoration techniques can be observed at the Campground shore and the raingarden (see <https://youtu.be/o-LVcMQjYg>) and the owners can relate their rationale and the history and future of this lake-based basin.

L. NOTICE OF MOTION

L.1 None.

M. NEW BUSINESS

M.1 Code of Conduct Investigator

Motion:

Moved made by Deputy Mayor Saulnier and seconded by Councilor Foote that council appoint Charles Thompson of Burchell MacDougall as our Code of Conduct Investigator.

Motion Carried

M.2 Preapproved Debenture

Motion:

Moved made by Councilor McCormick and seconded by Deputy Mayor Saulnier that under the authority of Section 91 of the Municipal Government Act, the Town of Digby borrow by the issue and sale of debentures a sum not exceeding \$1,515,000, for a period not to exceed 20 years.

Motion Carried

M.3 VIC Proposal

The CAO presented a proposal to relocate the Digby Visitor information Centre from its current location on Shore Road to 110 Montague Row with the objective of reducing staffing and operating costs.

Appendix A – Cost Comparison: Shore Road vs. 110 Montague Row

Expense Category	Current Location – Shore Road	Proposed Location – 110 Montague Row	Estimated Annual Savings
Building Maintenance	9,500	5000	4,500
Utilities (Power, Water, Phone)	4,000	2219	1,781
Insurance	1,062	1062	0
Staff Wages/ benefits	79,486	48477	31,009
Supplies / Office Expenses	2,500	2500	0
Marketing / Signage	500	500	0
TOTAL ANNUAL COST	97,048	59,758	37,290
Revenue from Other Sources (Province & Municipality)	(11,500)	(11, 500)	0
Net Costs	85,548	48,258	37,290

Motion:

Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Deputy Mayor Saulnier that we will relocate the Digby Visitor Information Centre from its current location on Shore Road to 110 Montague Row, with the objective of reducing staffing and operational costs while maintaining an effective tourism information service.

Motion Carried

M.4 Posting of Newly Adopted Tax Rate

Councilor Weir requested if we could make information sharing between the various Councils and Committees to public more seamless by adopting a centralized, user friendly, online portal for public access. There was an example of how Digby Municipalities had a page dedicated to the highlights of the Meetings on the Municipal site. Council pointed out that the Municipality and other government bodies had staff that was dedicated to this practice and that we do not have the man power to look after another portal. At present we post all Agendas, minutes and videos, on the Town of Digby site,

Alertable, Facebook and the implementation of a newsletter will be out quarterly.

M.5 Lift Station #4

We knew that there was an issue with the pumps at Lift Station #4 but we had hoped that we could get by with fixing the lift station as opposed to replacing Lift Station #4.

Motion:

Moved by Councilor McCormick and seconded by Councilor Foote, that council amend the Capital Investment Plan to include the upgrades to Lift Station #4 at a cost of \$65,937.60

Motion Carried:

N. IN-CAMERA

N.1 Contracts

Motion:

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

Motion Carried

Motion:

Moved by Councilor McCormick and seconded by Councilor McCormick that the Council Move out of IN Camera.

Motion Carried

O. BUSINESS FROM IN-CAMERA

Motion:

Moved by Councilor McCormick and seconded by Mayor Bartlett to accept the REMO agreement as drafted. That council approves that the Mayor and CAO sign the REMO agreement

Motion Carried

Motion:

Moved by Councilor Foote and seconded by Mayor Bartlett to accept Taylor MacLellan Cochrane Letter to Scotia Harvest Inc. as drafted and mailed.

Motion Carried

P. ADJOURNMENT

Motion:

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

Motion Carried.

Mayor

Clerk