

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
COUNCIL CHAMBERS TOWN HALL
APRIL 20, 2026, 6:00 PM
MINUTES**

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

STAFF PRESENT: Tom Ossinger, Chief Administrative Officer
Leslie Brinton, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

REGRETS:

A. CALL TO ORDER – ROLLCALL

B. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

C. CELL PHONE USE DURING MEETINGS

D. AGENDA

D.1 Additions/Deletions

None.

D.2 Approval

Motion:

Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Mayor Bartlett that the agenda be approved as presented.

Motion carried

E. DECLARATIONS OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

None

F. DELEGATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

None

G. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

G.1 March 16, 2026

Motion:

Moved by Mayor Bartlett and seconded by Councillor McCormick, that the minutes of March 16, 2026 be accepted as presented.

Motion carried

H. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES/UNFINISHED BUSINESS

H.1 None

I. STAFF REPORTS

I.1 Director of Finance

a) Report

- employee benefits were renewed effective April 1, 2026, with overall costs slightly decreased.
- insurance renewal was reviewed, with premiums remaining largely unchanged from the previous year.
- An extension for the MCGP Grant was received to March 31, 2027, allowing remaining funds to be allocated toward generators at the Smiths Cove sewer treatment plant.
- The Town has entered into a new mobile phone contract with Telus, resulting in reduced monthly costs under a tiered BYOD plan.
- Concerns were noted regarding overdue rental accounts, including:
 - 53 Mount Street (DATS) – March and April rent outstanding
 - 53 Mount Street (Food Bank) – March rent outstanding
 - Residential dwelling – April rent outstanding

The Director of Finance advised that this would be his final report prior to retirement and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to work with the Town.

b) Monthly Financial Statement –Operating and Capital Budget

A modest operating surplus was indicated based on current figures. It was noted that final figures change pending outstanding items, including:

March Deed Transfer Tax
Library cost sharing with the Municipality
Outstanding vendor invoices

It was noted that the West and Third Avenue project includes both Town and Water Commission costs, with approximately \$329,000 yet to be allocated to the Water Commission.

c) Monthly Financial Statement - Capital

Multiple capital projects were outlined, including:
Fire department equipment and vehicle purchases
Infrastructure upgrades (roads, sidewalks, sewer systems)
Generator installations for municipal facilities and lift stations
Parks, trails, and public space improvements

Total capital expenditures to date were reviewed in comparison to the approved budget, with variances noted across several projects. The overall capital program remains in progress, with a number of projects under budget and others pending completion.

I.2 Director of Public Works

a) Report

- Employee evaluations were completed.
- Estimate requested for required SCADA computer upgrades.
- Cold patch ordered for pothole repairs.
- One driveway permit and one water/sewer application received.
- Pricing obtained for electrical upgrades at the Fire Hall.
- Two employees registered for water/wastewater training in Fredericton.
- Fire hydrant number markers have arrived and will be installed in April.
- Water leak on First Avenue repaired.
- Water meter reads completed.
- Distribution water and wells both recorded zero coliform and E. coli counts.

Wastewater

- Garage door replaced at Main Pumping Station.
- Lift Station #8 requires piping upgrades; estimate in progress.
- Lift Station #4 work expected to begin in early May.
- Lift Station #7 main power board failed; repairs completed after approximately nine hours.
- Sewer section on King Street requires repair due to previous lateral work.

Streets & Equipment

- Snow removal and seasonal clean-up completed.
- Litter clean-up in ditches underway.
- Parks being raked and prepared for summer use.
- Pothole repairs ongoing as weather permits.
- 24-inch cross culvert at #27 Raquette Road requires replacement.
- Repairs completed to F-350; replacement box sides ordered due to rust damage.
- ¾-ton truck out of service pending brake and line repairs.

Transfer Station

March 2026 statistics reported:

- 724 clients served
- 197 household hazardous waste drop-offs
- 6 pressure-treated lumber clients
- A circular materials sea can has been delivered to the site.

Building Maintenance

- Montague Row VIC repairs and painting completed.
- Furniture returned from Shore Road location.

Proposed Transfer Station Operational Changes-Current Seasonal Hours:

Apr 1–Oct 31: Monday–Friday 8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.; Saturday 8:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Nov 1–Mar 31: Thursday–Friday 8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.; Saturday 8:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Proposed Year-Round Hours:

Tuesday–Friday 8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Saturday 8:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Estimated annual additional cost: **\$1,400.00**

Benefits cited:

- Consistent hours year-round
- Acceptance of treated lumber
- Support for changing recycling regulations
- Reduced accumulation of waste on private properties

Recommendation:

That Council refer this matter to the Transfer Station Committee.

I.3 Special Constable/Bylaw Officer

a) Protective Services Report

- No issues reported regarding CCTV, parking control, civic addressing, or crossing guards.
- CCTV camera repositioned.
- Complaint investigated at 37 Queen Street regarding accumulation of dog waste. Property has since been cleaned.
- Two vending licenses issued: Farmers Market license. Multicultural Event license
- Random bin inspections completed on Queen Street. Notices issued to:
 - 176 Queen Street – clean waste bin and replace green bin
 - 186 Queen Street – provide secure waste container for multiple apartments
 - 190 Queen Street – clean waste bin and properly dispose of sharps containers. Bylaw Officer and Public Works safely removed and disposed of several hundred syringes. RCMP notified.

I.4 Dangerous & Unsightly Administrator

a) Dangerous or Unsightly Premises Reports

159 Queen Street. An additional complaint was received from an original complainant on March 25, 2026, citing scattered trash blowing into neighbouring property, combustible materials, and concerns related to safety, fire risk, depreciation of surrounding property values, and general unsightliness. A site inspection determined that the exterior yard conditions fall under the Town's Solid Waste Bylaw. A Notice of Bylaw Violation was issued on March 31, 2026, directing the owner to clean the property. Due to uncertainty regarding the owner's whereabouts or condition, the owner has until April 27, 2026, to comply, failing which an Order to Remedy may be issued.

The Committee noted that any determination regarding habitation suitability or fire risk would require inspection by appropriate authorities. Follow-up is required.

I.5 Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

a) Report

The Deputy CAO attended numerous meetings in March including Council, Fire Committee, Development Agency, Water Commission, Planning Advisory Committee, Strategic Planning Session, and other governance meetings.

Housing Accelerator Fund. The Affordable Housing Grant launched on March 4, 2026. A local contractor application has been finalized, with \$52,500 allocated to support development of seven missing-middle housing units.

The Draft Residential MPS and LUB were submitted for review, satisfying additional milestones. Staff reported all milestones under Initiative 3 have now been completed.

NS TRIP. The final report and financial reporting were submitted, and the final holdback payment has been received.

Celebrate Canada Funding. The Town received confirmation of \$2,410 in funding from Canadian Heritage for the upcoming Canada Day event.

Alertable Notification System. As of April 1, 2026, the Town had 504 subscribers to the Alertable emergency notification system, with the majority using the mobile app.

Staffing Update. Following interviews, James Strange was selected as Director of Finance and joined the Town team in early April.

I.6 Chief Administrative Officer Report

a) Report

- The Committee was advised that during March 2026, four development permits and one subdivision approval was issued. No building permits were issued during the month.
- Two fire inspections were completed at properties on Water Street. Deficiencies were identified at both locations, with 30 days granted for correction.
- The Fire Department responded to eight calls during March, including alarms, ambulance assists, a boat rescue, a UTV fire, and smoke investigations.
- Legal counsel has prepared an affidavit seeking an order for removal of a private structure located on Town property. Court is scheduled for April 28, 2026, and the CAO will attend.
- Sale of 14 Queen Street. The subdivision and sale of portions of 14 Queen Street have been completed and registered.
- One abandoned boat has been removed, while notice has been given regarding the second vessel.
- The new Director of Finance began work on April 7, 2026, and is shadowing the retiring Director until April 30. Staff reported the transition is progressing well.
- Thomas Road Development. The property owner has confirmed continuation of the development project with a new consulting firm and contractor. Revised requests are forthcoming and will be reviewed by staff and legal counsel to determine whether changes are substantial.

Motion:

Moved by Councillor Foote and seconded by Mayor Bartlett that the reports be accepted as presented.

Motion carried

J. CORRESPONDANCE

J.1 Municipality of the District of Barrington

Municipality of the District of Barrington is concerned about power rate increases that are unfair to residents and trust in Nova Scotia Power has been shaken. They are asking Nova Scotia Power for a five-year rate freeze and for government to consider public ownership to better protect residents and a thorough exploration of returning Nova Scotia Power to public ownership, ensuring that residents' interests are prioritized over corporate profits.

Direction:

That staff will write a letter of support to the Municipality of the District of Barrington in their request to Nova Scotia Power for a five-year rate freeze and for government to consider public ownership to better

protect residents and a thorough exploration of returning Nova Scotia Power to public ownership, ensuring that residents' interests are prioritized over corporate profits.

K. NOTICE OF MOTION

None

L. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NEW BUSINESS AGENDA ITEMS

None

M. NEW BUSINESS

M.1 Craig Baird Proposal

Craig Baird, host of *Canadian History Ehx*, is traveling across Canada creating videos about communities. He's offering to make a 10–20-minute professional video about your municipality's history and promote it to his large online audience. The cost is \$500, with half paid upfront and half after review.

Motion:

Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Councillor Foote that Committee of the Whole recommends to Council, Craig Baird's offering to make a 10–20-minute professional video about the Town of Digby's history and promote it to his large online audience. The cost is \$500, with half paid upfront and half after review.

Motion carried

M.2 Autism Flag Raising April 27, 2026

Deputy CAO Brinton will contact the organizer of the Autism event coordinator and discuss further.

M.3 Request for Demolition-10 Carleton Street

Motion:

Moved by Mayor Bartlett and seconded by Councillor McCormick that the committee recommends bringing forward to Council that Versatile Excavation be awarded the contract to demolish 10 Carleton Street in the amount of \$34,400 plus HST.

Motion carried

M.4 Queen Street-Purchase of Surplus Land

Discussion was moved to in camera for further discussion.

N. IN-CAMERA-Contracts

Motion:

Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Councillor Foote that the committee go IN CAMERA for Contracts.

Motion Carried

Motion:

Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Councillor Weir that the committee go out of IN CAMERA.

Motion Carried

Motion:

Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Councillor Foote that the Queen Street land owned by the Town of Digby is considered NOT SURPLUS and therefore it cannot be sold at this time.

Motion carried

O. ADJOURNMENT

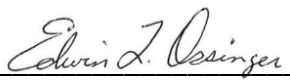
Motion:

Moved by Mayor Bartlett and seconded by Councillor McCormick that we adjourn the meeting at 8:00 PM

Motion Carried



Chair



Chief Administrative Officer