

**TOWN COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS TOWN HALL
APRIL 07, 2026
MINUTES**

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

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

REGRETS: Councillor Shane Weir

A. CALL TO ORDER – ROLLCALL

B. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

C. CELL PHONE USE DURING MEETINGS

D. AGENDA

D.1 Additions/Deletions

D.2 Approval

Motion:

Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Deputy Mayor Saulnier, that the agenda for, April 07, 2026, be accepted as presented.

Motion Carried

E. DECLARATIONS OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

None

F. DELEGATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

None

G. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

G.1 March 02, 2026

Motion:

Moved by Deputy Mayor Saulnier and seconded by Councillor Foote that the minutes be accepted as amended.

Motion carried

H. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES/UNFINISHED BUSINESS**None****I. REPORT OF CAO**

CAO T. Ossinger provided his report outlining March–early April 2026 activities, including attendance at approximately 30 meetings and various municipal engagements. Key updates included the hiring of a new Director of Finance (James Strange, effective April 7, 2026), highlights from the Province’s 2026–2027 budget, and information regarding the upcoming NSFM Spring Conference 2026. The CAO also reported on ongoing development discussions for 9 Thomas Road, execution of a five-year solid waste collection contract with Digby Salvage & Disposal Ltd. (April 1, 2026 – March 31, 2031), and an internal staffing recommendation to appoint Amanda Marshall as Development Officer effective September 1, 2026.

Motion:

Moved by Deputy Mayor Saulnier and seconded by Councillor McCormick that Amanda Marshall be appointed as Development Officer effective September 01, 2026.

Motion carried**J. REPORT OF MAYOR**

Mayor Mike Bartlett reported on meetings and activities for March 2026, including attendance at Council, Committee of the Whole, Executive Committee, Planning Committee, Waste Check Policy, Digby Industrial Commission, and Digby Water Commission meetings; participation in discussions regarding a potential mural festival and a proposed fire facility; a meeting with legal counsel regarding an ongoing matter (report pending); and involvement in the Annual Council Planning Session focused on upcoming budget priorities. A vacation period from March 19–29, 2026 was also noted.

K. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**K.1 Nominating Committee Report****Motion:**

Moved by Deputy Mayor Saulnier and seconded by Councillor Foote that the Council accept the Nominating Committees recommendation of appointing Rebecca LeBlanc to the Town of Digby Audit Committee effective April 08, 2026, for a term of three years.

Motion carried**K.2 Marketing & Promotion Levy Advisory Committee-Councillor Rick Foote**

Councillor Rick Foote reported that the Marketing & Promotion Levy Advisory Committee approved updates to funding applications, including stricter reporting requirements, and confirmed the funding formula. An \$8,000 grant was approved for the Digby Farmers’ and Artisans’ Market, and \$130,000 was allocated to the Digby Area Tourism Association for 2026–2027. Remittances are slightly up, with short-term rental levy collection still under provincial review.

K.3 Digby Development Agency Report-Councillor Rick Foote

The Bell cellphone tower project is progressing.

The Committee reviewed a 2017 EXP Services report regarding the Industrial Park layout on the north side of Hwy 217. The preferred layout supports flexible lot sizes and improves traffic flow while reducing snow accumulation. Cost considerations for servicing (municipal vs. individual well and septic) were discussed, and staff will seek pricing from local companies to better inform potential buyers. A location for a new regional Fire Training Facility was identified next to Chute’s Auto on Industrial Drive. The proposed facility will use sea cans for multi-level and

smoke training, with minimal impact on surrounding properties. The land will be leased to the fire association, with site preparation to begin once the lease is finalized.

Deputy Mayor asked if Councillor Foote could convey to the committee another point of entry. He talked about the ease of doing that extra corridor before the full development plan is implemented.

K.4 Senior Safety Report -Councillor Will McCormick

Council discussed that the Town of Digby has discontinued the current Treasurer position and Official Agent. As a result, the Senior Safety Advisory Board will be required to appoint a new individual to this role to ensure there are no conflicts of interest. The organization must select a representative from within its Board of Directors to serve as Treasurer and Official Agent.

K.5 Fire Committee Meeting-Councillor Will McCormick

The annual capital budget for the Fire Department was reviewed and approved to be forwarded to Council. New items this year include an EV plug and a nozzle. The proposed training center was discussed; no new updates were available. A potential storage building on the vacant lot next to the fire hall was discussed. The department is now considering a steel building instead of a container-style structure, and a preliminary estimate has been received from a local contractor.

K.6 Committee of the Whole Minutes

Motion:

Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Councillor Foote that Digby & Area Seniors' Safety Society funding request for the \$23,600 be approved as recommended by the Committee of the Whole.

Motion carried

K.7 By Law & Policy Report -Community Grants Program 2026-2027

Motion:

Moved by Deputy Mayor Saulnier and seconded by Councillor McCormick that the By Law & Policy Review Committee recommendation of the Community Grants.

Organization/Event	Amount Approved
Digby Food Bank	\$ 2,500
Wharf Rat Rally	\$ 5,000
Lobster Bash	\$ 5,000
Scallop Days	\$ 5,000
Digby Cancer Help Fund Association	\$ 750
Digby Downtown Business Association	\$ 5,000
Fundy Chorale	\$ 500
Digby Area Theatre Society	\$ 3,000
Hike Nova Scotia Society	\$ 750
Admiral Digby Library & Historical Society	\$ 2,500 (pending receipts)
Total	\$30,000

Motion carried

K.8 Digby Area Recreation Commission Report-Deputy Mayor Paul Saulnier

This report has been moved to In Camera.

L. CORRESPONDENCE

L.1 Department of Natural Resources Letter March 18, 2026

Direction to CAO

That Council direct the CAO T. Ossinger, to forward the drafted letter in response to the Minister of Natural Resources regarding the denial of the purchase of PID 30374698 back to the Department of Natural Resources for clarification. Further, that the CAO notify Jill Balser and appropriate senior representatives within the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources and Renewables to ensure awareness of the decision declining the Town's request regarding the rail bed.

L.2 PVSC Budget Distribution

Correspondence was received from the Property Valuation Services Corporation regarding the **2026–2027 municipal budget and assessment recovery**.

The approved provincial municipal recovery budget is **\$19,892,921**, representing an **8% increase** over the previous year. Costs are allocated to municipalities based on: Uniform assessment values and the number of assessment accounts

What that means for the Town of Digby:

Total contribution: **\$28,676**

Quarterly payments: **\$7,169** (April, July, October, January)

Invoices will be issued quarterly and are payable within **30 days** of issuance.

L.3 Trinity Anglican News

A letter was received from Trinity Anglican Church advising that they have been selected as a finalist in the National Trust for Canada *Next Great Save Competition*. The project, *"Save Trinity's Rose Window,"* is seeking funding to restore the church's south wall and historic stained-glass windows, which are in significant need of repair. Voting for the competition runs from **April 7 to April 24, 2026**, with the public able to vote once daily. The organization has requested support in promoting the initiative.

An Open House will be held at the church on **April 18, 2026 (2:00–4:00 p.m.)** to raise awareness and invite community engagement.

M. NOTICE OF MOTION

Deputy Mayor Saulnier will be presenting a motion at the next month's Council meeting to request that the Digby Town Council send a letter to the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities to request a free and unfettered access to be granted to Nova Scotia Municipalities reports from the Joint Registry.

N. NEW BUSINESS

N.1 Temporary Borrowing Resolution

Motion:

Moved by Deputy Mayor Saulnier and seconded by Councillor Foote to approve the refinance debenture of \$100,263.

Motion carried

Motion:

Moved by Councillor Foote and seconded by Councillor McCormick that the town council agree to a five-year debenture.

Motion carried

N.2 Business Continuity

Motion:

Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Councillor Foote that Council approves the Town of Digby for the one-half of 2025-2026 operating budget for 2026-2027 year in the amount of \$2,882,489, until a full operating budget has been approved.

Motion carried

N.3 Digby Area Recreation Commission-Budget

Motion:

Moved by Deputy Mayor Saulnier and seconded by Councillor Foote that the Digby Area Recreation Commission-Budget be moved to In Camera for further discussion.

Motion carried

O. IN-CAMERA

Motion:

Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Councillor Foote that the council move into In Camera for Legal and Personnel

Motion carried

Motion:

Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Deputy Mayor that the council move out of In Camera for Legal and Personnel.

Motion carried

P. BUSINESS FROM IN-CAMERA

Motion:

Moved by Deputy Mayor Saulnier and seconded by Councillor Foote that Council approve the Digby & Area Recreation capital budget in the amount of \$10,000, and the operating budget in the amount of \$389,879.23, for a total budget of \$399,879.23.

This approval is subject to the condition that Digby & Area Recreation hire a certified bookkeeper to organize its finances. Council reserves the right to reassess future funding requests based on a financial review prepared by the certified bookkeeper.

Motion carried.

Motion:

Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Councillor Foote that the Town of Digby consider Consolidation discussion with Municipality of Digby.

Yeas

Nays

Mayor Bartlett

Deputy Mayor Saulnier

Councillor Foote

Councillor McCormick

Motion Defeated

Recommendation to CAO

That Council recommends that CAO Tom Ossinger initiate the necessary steps to have a survey conducted on the land located behind the Digby Fire Station, prior to any consideration of the sale of the property.

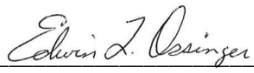
Q. ADJOURNMENT

Motion:

Moved by Deputy Mayor and seconded by Councillor McCormick that the meeting being concluded that we adjourn at 9:20 PM

Motion carried



Mayor

Clerk