

**Regular Town Council Minutes
November 18, 2024, 6:00 PM
Town Council Chambers**

Present

Mayor S. Cameron

Councillor L. MacLellan

Councillor J. Pelly

Councillor J. Sullivan

Deputy Mayor D. Roberts

Councillor A. Murray

Absent with Regret

Councillor P. McKenna

Also, in Attendance

R. Delorey, CAO

M. Fougere, Deputy Clerk

M. Barkhouse, Director of Corporate Services

S. Long, Marketing and Communications

K. MacInnis, Director of Community Development

K. Misener, Supervisor of Facilities

K. Proctor, P.Eng., Director of Public Works

L. Roy, Strategic Initiatives

Media

Members of the Galley

1. Call to Order

Mayor S. Cameron called the meeting to order at 6:07PM and acknowledged that the meeting took place in the traditional and ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq people, and that we are all treaty people.

2. Approval of Agenda

"It was Moved and Seconded to approve the agenda with additions."

Motion carried.

3. Approval of Minutes

"It was Moved and Seconded to approve the In Camera and Regular meeting Minutes of October 7th, Special Council Meeting minutes November 7th and 8th, 2024."

Motion carried.

4. Business from Minutes

4.1 Fire Truck Replacement – Memo to Council

K. MacInnis spoke on behalf of the Antigonish Volunteer Fire Department, AVFD. A memo was provided to Council summarizing the fire department's October presentation regarding replacing the pumper tanker truck as part of their scheduled vehicle

replacement plan. K. McInnis explained that the replacement is necessary now due to the 18–24-month lead time for delivery.

One bid was received from Fort Garry Fire Trucks for \$945,210 plus HST. Limited bids are common due to specialization in the industry and manufacturers being booked 2–3 years in advance.

Motion

“It was moved and seconded that the Town proceed with the purchase of the pumper tanker truck from Fort Garry Fire Trucks for \$945,210 plus HST as outlined.”

Motion carried.

K. MacInnis will finalize the order with Fort Garry Fire Trucks.

4.2 College St - Update

CAO, R. Delorey provided council with an update on the College St. Bridge. Work began in September, prioritizing repairs to the main deck. Additional work was undertaken on one sidewalk, with approximately one week of work remaining before the project halted. R. Delorey advised that a workplace safety incident occurred, prompting all work to cease for investigation.

The affected individual is recovering well. A joint Occupational Health and Safety subcommittee has been formed, and a third-party safety consultant is assisting to ensure a thorough investigation.

The Department of Labour has been notified and is conducting their review alongside the town’s investigation.

The bridge was closed earlier this year due to structural integrity concerns identified during inspections.

Repairs focused on stabilizing the main deck, addressing slope cribbing, and reinforcing sidewalk supports.

Temporary measures, such as additional posts and braces, were implemented to ensure safety during ongoing work.

Remaining work will resume once clearance is given, with an estimated one week to reopen the bridge. Upon completion, the bridge will accommodate two-way traffic and one functional sidewalk, ready for winter use.

4.3 Hawthorne St paving - Update

CAO, R. Delorey provided Council with an update. Curb work and paving on Hawthorne Street were recently finished.

The work was completed efficiently, with curbing followed by paving in a short timeframe. Paving began shortly after the provincial funding portion was secured in late July or early August. Initial delays occurred due to prioritization of other road projects, such as Bay Street, which was not feasible with available funds.

Hawthorne Street was chosen as an alternative project with 50% provincial cost sharing. No significant underground infrastructure renewal was necessary for the paved section, allowing for expedited completion.

Temporary rerouting of buses and traffic during construction caused some congestion and safety concerns, particularly on Highland Drive. These issues will be reviewed for better traffic management in future projects.

The town debated whether to delay the project for a larger section next year but proceeded to take advantage of the 50% provincial funding available. There was a risk of losing funding due to provincial budget caps if postponed. It was discussed and suggested to plan for future paving projects with earlier tendering to optimize cost and scheduling.

4.4 Flag Replacement Policy

A formal schedule for flag replacement was proposed to ensure flags are always in good condition. The policy recommends replacing flags biannually, with staff inspections conducted every two months to monitor flag condition.

Schedule for Replacements are June 1 and December 1.

Councillor J. Sullivan asked the question about the dates chosen, and if they have considered July 1 (Canada Day), Nov 11 (Remembrance Day) or Feb 15th (Flag Day).

The policy serves as a minimum replacement cycle, ensuring a flag is replaced as needed regardless of the schedule.

Visual inspections every two months by staff will help identify damage (e.g., from storms).

Emergency replacements will occur based on reports or visible wear, without waiting for the regular replacement date.

5. New Business

5.1 Code of Conduct - Council to pass a motion on accepting the new provincial model code of conduct per the province requirements. The Town's existing Code of Conduct will be repealed and replaced.

Motion:

"It was Moved and Seconded to adopt the model code of conduct as presented by the Nova Scotia Municipal Affairs and by the province of Nova Scotia requirements."

Motion carried.

5.2 Pre-approval Resolution - MFC Loan (Bethany Reservoir)

The resolution as circulated pertains to securing a loan through the Municipal Finance Corporation (MFC) for the Bethany Reservoir project.

The Bethany Reservoir project was previously approved at two levels:

- a. Council Approval as part of the capital project.
- b. Utility and Review Board Approval to include the costs in water rates through the Water Utility.

A temporary borrowing resolution for \$2.5 million received ministerial approval earlier this year, allowing for a line of credit to begin project work.

The current step is transitioning from the line of credit to a debenture through MFC, which offers lower provincial interest rates compared to commercial institutions.

The resolution seeks approval to borrow \$2,503,599 through MFC, subject to interest rates at the time of issuance.

Resolution:

“It was moved and seconded to approve the resolution for the MFC loan as presented.”

Resolution carried.

Resolution for Pre-Approval of Debenture Issuance Subject to Interest Rate

WHEREAS clause 66 (1) of the Municipal Government Act (the “Act”) provides that a municipality may borrow to carry out an authority to expend funds for capital purposes conferred by the Act or another Act of the Legislature;

AND WHEREAS clause 91(1)(a) of the Act provides that where a municipality is authorized to borrow money, subject to the approval of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (the “Minister”), that the sum shall be borrowed by the issue and sale of debentures, in one sum or by installments, as determined by the council;

AND WHEREAS clause 91(1)(b) of the *Municipal Government Act* authorizes the council to determine the amount and term of, and the rate of interest, on each debenture, when the interest on a debenture is to be paid, and where the principal and interest on a debenture are to be paid;

AND WHEREAS clause 91(2) of the *Municipal Government Act* states, that in accordance with the *Finance Act*, the mayor or warden and clerk or the person designated by the council, by policy, shall sell and deliver the debentures on behalf of the municipality at the price, in the sums and in the manner deemed proper;

AND WHEREAS the resolution of council to borrow for was approved by the municipal council on June 17, 2024.
(council’s TBR approval date)

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED

THAT under the authority of Section 91 of the *Municipal Government Act*, the
Town of Antigonish
(*Name of Unit*)

borrow by the issue and sale of debentures a sum or sums not exceeding \$ 2,503,599.00 , for a period not to exceed 20 years, subject to the approval of the Minister;

THAT the sum be borrowed by the issue and sale of debentures of the
Town of Antigonish
(*Name of Unit*)

in the amount that the mayor or warden and clerk or the person designated by the council deems proper, provided the average interest rate of the debenture does not exceed the rate of 6.5%;

THAT the debenture be arranged with the Province of Nova Scotia with interest to be paid semi-annually and principal payments made annually;

THAT this resolution remains in force for a period not exceeding twelve months from the passing of this resolution.

5.3 Approval of MFC contract related to Bethany Reservoir

The Town of Antigonish is set to receive \$2.5 million in funding through the Municipal Finance Corporation (MFC). This funding will come with interest rates ranging from 3.4% to 1.74% over the next 20 years, as outlined in the borrowing schedule provided to Council.

By approving this contract, the funds will be deposited into the Town's Scotiabank account on November 28th. These funds will be used to pay off the existing line of credit with Scotiabank, effectively transferring the debt to the MFC. Payments over the next 20 years will be made to MFC according to the pre-authorized payment schedule.

Motion

"It was Moved and Seconded that the amount of \$2,484,957 be transferred to the Town of Antigonish's Scotiabank account to pay off the line of credit, with repayment scheduled over 20 years as outlined."

Motion carried.

5.4 Delightful December

K. MacInnis gave Council an overview of Delightful December by advising that the program began 4–5 years ago, replacing the previous "Red Bag" campaign that offered free holiday parking. Under the new initiative, the Town encourages residents to continue paying parking meters during December, with collected revenue donated to charitable causes.

The campaign fosters the spirit of giving by supporting local charities.

Past beneficiaries include the Antigonish Fuel Fund and the Antigonish Food Bank.

Over the past few years, the program has raised approximately \$6,000–\$6,300 annually. Council to approve the Delightful December campaign for this year, allocating December parking meter revenue to charitable organizations.

Council to approve advancing \$3,000 each to the Antigonish Fuel Fund and the Antigonish Food Bank (total: \$6,000) at the start of December.

Any additional funds collected from parking meters above \$6,000 will be distributed to these organizations in the new year.

Motion

"It was Moved and Seconded that Council guarantees a minimum donation of \$3,000 to each organization, with additional funds distributed after the final revenue is calculated in January.

Motion carried.

5.5 Parade update

Councillor J. Sullivan asked staff for an update on the Parade. S. Long gave Council an update that the Town will host a Christmas on Main event, Friday November 22nd. The center block of Main Street (between Church Street and College Street) will be closed to set up a stage for a free concert. Santa will be present to greet attendees.

The event serves as a kickoff to the holiday season and encourages community members to visit downtown for shopping and festivities.
Santa Claus Parade will be held on Saturday evening, November 23rd starting at 6:00 PM.
The Parade will begin at Fairview Street and proceeds along West Street, Main Street, and Church Street, concluding at Market Square. Councillors are invited to join the festivities and can meet at Fairview Street.

5.6 Snow removal (item added)

Councillor J. Sullivan raised concerns about snowbanks along Main Street, which hinder pedestrian access to vehicles and businesses, particularly for seniors. Accumulation between sidewalks and streets has also created safety risks, including ice formations after rain.

The current snow removal policy addresses streets and sidewalks but not snowbanks in access areas. Council agreed to review and update the policy, with Public Works collaborating with the committee to develop recommendations by December.

A motion to initiate the policy review was suggested but deferred until the committee completes its assessment and makes recommendations.
The council plans to revisit the issue in December to determine whether further action or budget adjustments are required.

5.7 Committee Structure

The structure of committees was reviewed, with a focus on ensuring a balanced distribution of responsibilities among council members.
Councillors verified the distribution by listing all committees and their members for accuracy.

Motion

“It was Moved and Seconded to accept the updated committee structure as circulated.”
Motion carried.

6. Correspondence

6.1 ASAP Funding Request – Information purposes only

A funding request from ASAP, All-of-us Society for Art Presentation Artist-Run Centre, was brought forward for consideration. Concerns were raised as the majority of the current council had not seen ASAP's original presentation (delivered to the previous council in June).

It was suggested to defer the funding request until December, allowing:

- Time for the council to gather more information.
- ASAP the opportunity to revisit the council and provide a presentation.
- Further alignment with the policy guidelines surrounding funding requests.

Motion

“It was Moved and Seconded to defer the ASAP funding request until December and invite ASAP to present additional information.”

Motion carried.

Staff will reach out to ASAP to arrange a presentation and ensure the policy guidelines are addressed.

6.2 Antigonish Skatepark Association (Item added)

The Antigonish Skatepark Association had previously received funding from Town Council to host an event. The event was not held, prompting a question about the unused funds: It was suggested that the funds be returned and that the Skatepark Association submit a new funding request when they plan their next event.

This approach ensures accountability and adherence to the proper funding processes. Direction was provided (no formal motion required) to request that the Town staff return the funds and reapply for funding when they schedule a future event.

6.3 Sodexo/Antigonish Community Fridge Partnership (Item added)

Council received a presentation in their package from Sodexo for review. Sodexo, the food service provider, collaborates with the Antigonish Community Fridge initiative to donate excess food. The community fridges are located at the arena and occasionally at the library.

Sodexo expressed interest in continuing this partnership and potentially expanding it. While, no direct financial ask was made, Council members recognized the program as valuable for supporting community needs and wishes to invite Sodexo representatives to give a presentation, providing more details on their request and the program's needs.

Staff to reach out to the group to invite them back for a presentation.

6.4 Quad County U13AAA Whitecaps

Mayor S. Cameron received a funding request from the Quad County Whitecaps U13AAA Female Hockey Team. The team is seeking support for their bid to host the upcoming Provincial Championships, scheduled for March 21-23, 2025. Mayor Cameron outlined the various sponsorship levels available. After discussion, Council agreed to support the team with a Gold Sponsorship Package valued at \$1,000.

Motion

“It was Moved and Seconded that The Town of Antigonish donate the gold sponsorship level of \$1,000 to the Quad County Whitecaps U13AAA Female Hockey Team.”

Motion carried.

6.5 Letter from The Honourable Sean Fraser

The mayor presented a letter from the honorable Sean Fraser requesting feedback on Housing Accelerator fund.

7. CAO & Staff Report

Feedback was given regarding the clarity and organization of council documents. Funding and Grant Applications - The Town experienced delays in receiving funding allocated in the budget. Staff, including the Director of the Arena, collaborated to pursue additional grant opportunities.

Federal Grant Application was Submitted on October 16th for a \$3 million project to enhance the arena. If successful, 80% of the project costs would be covered by the federal government, with the remaining 20% split between the Town and the County. The Town's contribution would be \$300,000 over three years (\$100,000 annually). Approval from council would be required before committing to the project.

Motion

"It was Moved and Seconded to accept the CAO and Staff Report as presented."

Motion carried.

8. Councillors Reports

As the new committee structures were recently established, most Councillors did not have any updates to report.

Deputy Mayor D. Roberts provided a summary of her recent activities and meetings.

Councillor A. Murray provided an update from the Museum Board meeting. An exciting project was discussed involving the generous donation of the original Peace by Chocolate shed by Tareq Hadhad. The shed, along with an additional section, will be relocated to the museum on a 10-year loan. This centerpiece will highlight the inspiring story of the Hadhad family and their journey, serving as a meaningful addition to the museum's exhibits.

9. Adjournment

"It was Moved and Seconded to adjourn at 7:36 pm."

Motion carried.