

**Regular Town Council
December 16th, 2024
Town Council Chambers**

Present

Mayor S. Cameron
Deputy Mayor D. Roberts
Councillor P. McKenna
Councillor L. MacLellan
Councillor A. Murray
Councillor J. Pelly
Councillor J. Sullivan

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. 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 6:00 PM 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 as amended."

Motion carried.

3. Approval of Minutes

It was Moved and Seconded "to approve the November 18th Regular Council Minutes as presented."

Motion carried.

4. Presentations/Flag Requests

4.1 Christian Gerro – Special Olympics Canada Athlete of the year

The Mayor acknowledged the remarkable accomplishment of Christian Gerro, who was recently awarded the title of Special Olympics Canada Athlete of the Year. The Mayor invited Christian Gerro and his coaches, J. Doiron and J. Conrad, to the front of Council. On behalf of Council, the Mayor presented Christian with a certificate to recognize his achievement.

A photo opportunity followed, featuring Christian, his coaches, and all members of Council.

4.2 PARC – People for an Antigonish Recreation Centre

Trudy Delorey and Paul Curry, both members of the People for an Antigonish Recreation Centre (PARC), presented to Council.

Formed in April 2023, PARC is a group of local residents representing diverse backgrounds and subgroups within the Town and County advocating for a new recreation centre to address gaps in accessibility, booking, and drop-in spaces in existing facilities.

The group highlighted demographic needs, including a 6.4% population growth since 2016 and significant numbers of youth and seniors in the community. They requested Council's support in evaluating barriers to recreation access and planning next steps.

Council likes the approach. It was agreed and accepted that Councillors P. McKenna and J. Pelly would serve on the committee, along with the Director of Community Development, K. MacInnis.

A question-and-answer session followed the presentation, after which the Mayor thanked Trudy Delorey and Paul Curry for taking the time to present to Council.

4.3 SODEXO/Antigonish Community Fridge

Tim Hierlihy and Guerin Sykes presented to Council on their initiative in collaboration with the Antigonish Community Fridge. They detailed their program, which involves preparing, packaging, freezing, and distributing meals to those in need.

In its first year, the program produced approximately 8,000 meals, all of which were successfully distributed. With continued funding and support, the initiative has now surpassed 13,000 meals in just over a year since its launch.

The goal of the program is to repurpose surplus food already available in the community and remove barriers for community members in need. The demand has far exceeded expectations, a trend seen across many community food initiatives.

T. Hierlihy outlined two funding scenarios to ensure the program's sustainability. Emphasizing their commitment to scaling the program within sustainable limits while seeking support to enhance its reach. They highlighted the potential to collaborate with local grocers, farms, and food producers to recover wasted food and transform it into valuable meals for the community.

The Mayor thanked both Tim Hierlihy and Guerin Sykes for their initiative and dedication to the community. He noted that no decision would be made at this time but assured them that Council would take their request into consideration and follow up after the next Council meeting in January.

4.4 Bay Street

K. Meisner presented an update on the Bay Street Project, providing an overview and noting that a Resolution of Council is required to get the GRID and CHIP Funding applications put forward.

Background

- In 2022, an application was successfully submitted under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) for the Bay Street project.
- New funding applications GRID and CHIP to cover the shortfall and minimize municipal/taxpayer impact.

Bay Street currently faces several challenges, including potholes, lack of sidewalk access, and aging underground infrastructure, which has led to frequent sewer inflow/infiltration and a non-continuous stormwater system.

The proposed work involves a comprehensive overhaul of underground utilities, including water, wastewater, stormwater, electrical, and communications systems. Key goals include enhancing fire protection and water service reliability for critical facilities like the hospital, elevating roadways and upgrading stormwater systems to mitigate flood risks, and improving accessibility and the overall appeal of the town's entrance.

Council approved the resolution to pursue additional funding for the Bay St. Municipal Servicing Upgrades Project, with costs and municipal contributions to be reviewed during the capital budget process. Staff is optimistic about securing GRID funding, with construction targeted for 2025–2026.

R. Delorey noted to the new Council that the project had been previously approved by the former Council, with the current focus being on addressing the funding shortfall.

Discussions ensued.

Resolution

It was Moved and Seconded “that The Municipality of the Town of Antigonish submit applications for available federal and provincial funding to cover the cost increases and existing funding shortfall of the Bay St. Municipal Servicing Upgrades Project.”

Motion carried.

Estimated total project cost is in the order of \$4.7M. Proposed construction period is 2025-2026.

4.5 Pan-African, Flag Raising Request (January 31, 2025)

It was Moved and Seconded “to approve the request to fly the Pan African Flag from January 31, through February 28, 2025, as requested.”

Motion carried.

5. Business from Minutes

5.1 Committees

5.1 a Appointments Accessibility

It was Moved and Seconded “that Councillor P. McKenna & Mayor S. Cameron have been appointed on the Accessibility Committee.”

Motion carried.

5.1 b Appointments Eastern District Planning Commission (EDPC)

It was Moved and Seconded “that Councillor J. Sullivan & Councillor L. MacLellan have been appointed on the EDPC Committee.”

Motion carried.

5.1 c Appointments Community Navigation and Physician Retention Association

Councillor A. Murray & Deputy Mayor D. Roberts both put their name forth and a vote occurred with results indicating that Councillor A. Murray had been appointed.

It was Moved and Seconded “that Councillor A. Murray & Mayor S. Cameron have been appointed on the Community Navigation and Physician Retention Association Committee.”

Motion carried.

5.1.d Appointment Arena Commission

Mayor S. Cameron and Councillor J. Sullivan had been appointed to the Arena Commission Board. One Community member has put forth a nomination, Donnie MacInnis.

The council suggested that staff circulate an advertisement on social media seeking nominations in the New Year.

6. New Business

Deputy Mayor D. Roberts excused herself from the table at 7:33 PM

6.1 Dr. JJ Carroll Grants, (Memorandum to Council)

K. MacInnis addressed the Council’s questions regarding recommendations for the Dr. J. J. Carroll Awards.

Deputy Mayor D. Roberts returned to the table at 7:35 PM

K. MacInnis clarified the grant’s purpose and outlined the programs eligible for funding. Special requirements accompany the grant, specifying that funds must benefit the youth of Antigonish, particularly through swimming and track and field programming.

Discussion ensued.

It was Moved and Seconded “that Town Council approve the 2025 proposed allotment of the \$6,000.00 JJ Carroll Grant to the St. FX Track & Field Club (\$3,000.00), Antigonish Community Swim Program (\$1,000.00), and Wee Lads and Lassies program (\$2,000.00).”

Motion carried.

6.2 No Cell phone use during Council related meetings

Deputy Mayor D. Roberts emphasized the need for clarity and possibly a policy on cell phone usage during council meetings, citing it as distracting and unprofessional.

Discussions ensued.

Several councillors agreed that this can be a respected issue during a meeting and if it is an emergency make it known and you can excuse yourself during the meeting.

Mayor S. Cameron thanked Deputy Mayor D. Roberts for addressing this and that it is a great reminder, and that council can be conscious of their usage and be respectful when someone has the floor that they have their undivided attention.

6.3 Flood Protection

Councillor L. MacLellan raised concerns regarding continued flood protection and provided an update on efforts related to the Wrights River and Brierly Brook. He referenced a 1995 Wrights River Ice Study, which examined how ice moves down the river and provided solutions to minimize ice formation.

Over the past 30+ years, the Town has invested \$140,000 in flood protection measures for the Wrights River. These efforts have successfully reduced ice formation and improved the movement of ice downstream.

The Town in the past purchased land between the Wrights River and West River to create an Ice Park (referred to as a Delta), which serves as a storage area for ice and helps manage its movement down the river.

A Berm repair project was completed this year by landowners on St. Andrews Street.

In exploring this, Councillor L. MacLellan recommended further actions;

- # 1 – Improve communication on Flood Protection issues in the Town and to make people aware of Flood protection and what we are doing with it.
- # 2- Continue to monitor and stabilize the banks. Not a lot in that area – most of the study has been implemented step by step by provincial authorities.
- #3 – Continue periodic cleaning of the vegetation growth of the Ice Park.
- #4 – Explore watershed management for Wrights River to reduce ice impact on the rivers.

L. Maclellan made the following motion, proposing to clear the vegetation in the Ice Park, funds not to exceed \$4000.00 and to be carried out as soon as possible.

Motion

It was Moved and Seconded “that the Town Authorizes funds not to exceed \$4000.00 for clearing of vegetation in the Ice Park to be carried out as soon as possible.”

Motion carried.

Discussion ensued.

7. Correspondence

7.1 2025 Atlantic Baseball – All-Star Series, Challenger Baseball

Letter from Randy Crouse, Coordinator, Antigonish Challenger Baseball was sent to Council by email seeking sponsorship for the 2025 Atlantic All-Star Series. The letter did not specify a particular funding request.

Mayor S. Cameron suggested that this item be deferred until next month to allow staff time to obtain the specific funding amount. Staff will bring this information back to Council for further consideration.

Councillor D. Roberts asked the Chair if the discussion on the Committee structures can be discussed.

Discussion ensued on the various Committees.

Councillor L. MacLellan excused himself from the table and left the room at 8:03 PM

Councillor L. MacLellan returned to the table at 8:05 PM.

Mayor S. Cameron excused himself from the table and left the room at 8:12 PM

Deputy Mayor D. Roberts took the Chair.

Mayor S. Cameron returned to the chair at 8:17 PM.

8. Staff Reports

CAO Report

- R. Delorey provided some updates on the College St bridge noting that work is progressing and should be completed this week barring any unforeseen delays.
- R. Delorey provided an update on Desludging noting that the project is progressing well. Over 50% complete.

Discussions ensued.

Deputy Mayor D. Roberts asked for a follow up on the Wate By-Law. Status is waiting for communication back from the Department of Justice. CAO, R. Delorey advised with the recent Provincial election, advised appointments were only made to the new ministers of the cabinet so in the New Year staff will reach out to follow up on this.

9. Council Reports

- Deputy Mayor D. Roberts provided an update on the Antigonish Community Transit Committee (ACT). The committee recently welcomed Richie Connors as the new General Manager. On November 27th, the board received confirmation that two new accessible vehicles were scheduled for delivery, and they have now arrived. Each vehicle is equipped with five stalls. Currently, the vehicles are in the process in getting decals and licensed. The committee anticipates having them operational early in the new year.

- Councillor P. McKenna shared updates on his recent activities. He attended his first Library Committee meeting (PARL), attended a few council orientations, and attended an offshore wind information session.
- Councillor A. Murray provided two updates;
 - The Museum Board held its December meeting, where they welcomed a new board member, Councillor J. Pelly.
 - Expressed gratitude to staff and contractors for their efforts in creating the town's festive holiday decor.

10. With there being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:33 PM