

**Committee of the Whole
August 5, 2025
Town Council Chambers**

Present

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

Regrets

Mayor Sean Cameron

Also in Attendance

R. Delorey, CAO
M. Fougere, Deputy Clerk
K. Meisner, P.Eng., Director of Infrastructure and Engineering
M. Barkhouse, Director of Corporate Services
M. Williams, Marketing and Communications Officer

Media

Members of the Gallery

1. Call to Order & Land Acknowledgment

Mayor S. Cameron called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM and acknowledged that the meeting took place in the traditional and ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq people and recognized that we are all treaty people.

2. Approval of Agenda

Additions under New Business:

Item 6.8 – Mandatory Water Discussion (Councillor McKenna)

Item 6.9 – Sewer Update (Deputy Mayor Roberts)

Moved: Councillor Pelly

Seconded: Councillor MacLellan

Motion: That the agenda be approved as amended.

Motion Carried

3. Acceptance of the Minutes

The minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting held on June 3, 2025, were accepted as presented, with the following correction under Item 8 (Councillor Reports – Councillor Murray): the wording “Committee meeting and a proposed AGM” shall be corrected to read “Committee meeting and a proposed AGM of the Museum.” The Deputy Clerk will make the correction.

4. Presentations

4.1 Settlement in Antigonish for Families from Everywhere Society (SAFE)

Mr. Mark Ballard, along with representatives from SAFE (formerly Syria-Antigonish Families Embrace), presented to Council on the Society's work supporting refugee sponsorship and settlement in Antigonish, Pictou, and Inverness counties. SAFE began in 2015 and, since 2018, has held Sponsorship Agreement Holder status, enabling the group to help reunite families and support sponsorship efforts in the region.

SAFE highlighted their history of welcoming newcomers from Syria, Congo, Somalia, and Afghanistan, emphasizing the generosity of the community in providing both financial and settlement assistance. Background information was also provided on Canada's private sponsorship program and its requirements.

SAFE is planning its 10th anniversary celebration on November 15, 2025. This one-day event will feature workshops for volunteers and newcomers, a community dinner showcasing newcomer businesses and international music, and a keynote speaker.

Request to Council: SAFE is requesting a one-time contribution of \$6,000 to support the event, ensuring it is inclusive and accessible to all community members, including newcomers.

During the question-and-answer period, Council sought clarification on the number of newcomers in Antigonish (approximately 100, excluding Ukrainians who arrived through other channels). Discussion also touched on the greatest needs by country (e.g., Somalia, Congo), with sponsorship applications often taking 2–4 years. SAFE will provide budget details to staff and noted they are also seeking financial support from the Municipality of the County of Antigonish.

No decision was made at this meeting; the request will be brought forward to the August Regular Council meeting for consideration and motion.

5. Business from Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

6. New Business

6.1 Beautification Recognition (Councillor Murray)

Councillor Murray presented a recommendation from the Beautification Committee that Oona Landry be recognized for over 30 years of service on the Town Committee. A supporting memo was included in the Council package. This item is provided for Council's information, with a decision to be brought forward at the August Regular Council meeting. Discussion ensued.

6.2 Creighton Lane – Parking Update

The CAO provided a brief presentation on the current parking configuration, noting that a parking kiosk has been ordered and that free parking will continue until installation in early September. The proposed design, developed by WSP in 2020, aims to improve traffic flow and provide approximately 100 spaces, including five accessible spaces and two solar/moveable kiosks, representing a net loss of about 10 spaces. Line markings along the riverbank are also planned.

Property ownership issues were discussed. A meeting was held July 18 with parcel owners. Options considered:

- Paid parking only for previously metered spaces (≈59 spots)
- Paid parking for metered + some unmetered (≈95 spots)
- Maintain 24–25 free spaces on private property.

Questions were raised about consistency with the Town's overall parking policy and concerns about non-shoppers using spaces.

Differing views were expressed regarding paid vs. free parking, with suggestions for a mixed approach (e.g., certain rows free, others paid).

Concerns noted about reduction of total spaces and adequacy of proposed free spaces. By-law enforcement practices were discussed; CAO noted that data on enforcement will be brought to a later council meeting once the data has been obtained.

6.3 CRA Town Rep

Meaghan Barkhouse, Director of Corporate Services, informed Council of the need to designate CAO Randy Delorey as the Town's authorized representative (owner) with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) to enable access to the Town's CRA online account. As no current employee is listed as the account owner and the existing contact is unknown, Council, by consensus, approved the designation of the CAO as the CRA account owner. This process will also be adopted as a standard practice during future staff transitions.

6.4 Solar Garden Municipal Finance Debenture (Commitment Letter and Pre-Approval Form)

M. Barkhouse provided an overview of financing options for the Solar Garden project, noting that details were included in the Council package. A commitment letter will be required to proceed with a Municipal Finance Corporation (MFC) debenture in the fall. Financing options for a Public Works loader were also discussed, with debenture financing offering lower interest than leasing.

A resolution for MFC borrowing will be brought forward at the next Regular Council meeting on August 18.

6.5 RK By-Law Amendments

The CAO provided an overview of proposed amendments to the RK By-Laws. The first amendment would streamline the approval process by removing the requirement for provincial approval, leaving Municipal Council as the approving body. The second relates to the timing of the AGM, clarifying requirements for the delivery of reports, which historically occurred no later than June each year.

No decision was made at this meeting. Council may invite an RK representative to a future meeting for further discussion.

6.6 2025 Sidewalk Projects

Kyle Meisner, Director of Infrastructure and Engineering provided an update on sidewalk priorities previously discussed during budget meetings. Projects identified include:

- Pleasant Street to Hawthorne Street: construction of a sidewalk on the hill where none currently exists.
- Church Street: widening sidewalks from 4 ft. to the accessible standard of 6 ft., with priority from Mariner Drive to the Mall, and eventual extension to the St. Ninian's crosswalk.

Council discussion took place, and it was noted that the concrete crew began work today.

6.7 Line-Painting Update

K. Meisner, provided an update on ongoing night-time line-painting, including the realignment of the St. Ninian Street crosswalk to match the Bridge walkway. A few missing markings were identified and noted for completion. Deputy Mayor Roberts acknowledged the quality of the newly painted crosswalks.

Council discussions took place.

A suggestion from Councillor MacLellan was made to prepare a map of all crosswalks and sidewalks in Town for staff reference.

Recess: 7:37 PM

Reconvene: 7:47 PM

6.8 Mandatory Watering Discussions

The CAO reported that voluntary water conservation measures will move to mandatory restrictions effective 6:00 AM, August 6, with enforcement measures in place for non-compliance. The urgency was emphasized, noting current drought conditions are among the worst in decades. The CAO commended the County for assisting with supplementary water supply and confirmed conservation protocols are available to Council and the public.

During discussion, Councillor Murray inquired about timelines for potential water supply depletion. Staff responded that river flows would decline before dam levels. Councillor McKenna raised concerns about the impact on vegetable gardens and asked whether limited allowances might be considered. The CAO explained that such practices are generally restricted but could be reviewed at Council's discretion, while also noting the communication challenges this would present. It was further discussed that although direct hose use is prohibited, residents may reuse household water, such as from sinks or dehumidifiers.

6.9 Sewer Update

The CAO provided an update on recent measures to address wastewater treatment challenges. A new recirculation system is now operating, pumping water from Cell 6 back to Cell 1 to increase oxygen levels and improve stability. Early data indicates no negative effects and some signs of improvement.

Discussions have also begun with Nova Scotia Environment regarding the potential use of a well, with staff noting the province has been supportive and collaborative.

Council members discussed the ongoing odor concerns and resident frustrations, particularly in the Mount Cameron and East End areas. While data trends are showing improvement, the odor issue remains. It was noted that there is no quick fix, and the unusually warm summer has compounded the challenges.

Ideas such as cooling methods (e.g., pond coverings or plastic balls) were raised. The possibility of a well for future use will continue to be explored.

7. Councillor Reports

Councillor MacLellan

Reported that a successful community cleanup was held in June, noting that the event went well and was enjoyable. He also expressed hope that the new provincial recycling program, Circular Materials, will meet its contractual obligations.

Councillor McKenna

Provided an update on recent activities and meetings attended, including:

Committee meetings: Waste Management, Police and Licensing, Accessibility, RK Board, Finance, Steering, and AGM.

Events: CACL Ham and Bean Supper, Antigonish Chamber of Commerce Golf Tournament, Mini-Pitch Grand Opening, RK MacDonald Ground-Breaking Ceremony, Filipino Society Flag Raising, EDPC Planning and Advisory Presentation, Canada Day Celebrations, CACL Barbecue, and the Emancipation Event.

Councillor McKenna highlighted that the Emancipation event was a very meaningful gathering. He praised the Deputy Mayor and the Warden for their contributions and noted it was a good opportunity to learn more about loyalist history and to reflect on how to keep building inclusive communities.

Councillor Sullivan
Had nothing to report.

Councillor Murray
Reported on the Canada Day celebrations, highlighting the addition of a children's choir. He noted that while the choir faced some challenges with stage access and not having microphones, they still plan to return next year.

Councillor Pelly
Had nothing to report.

Deputy Mayor Roberts
Provided the following update:
May: Attended 7 meetings and 3 events, and signed cheques as required.
June: Attended 6 meetings and 8 events, represented the Town at 2 flag-raising ceremonies, and signed cheques as required.
July: Attended 2 meetings (noting the Police Advisory meeting was cancelled due to lack of quorum) and signed cheques as required.

8. In-Camera

8.1 Legal advice eligible for solicitor-client privilege; MGA Sec 22 (2) (g)

8.2 Contract negotiations; MGA Sec 22 (2) (e)

At 8:28 p.m., Council moved to go In Camera.
Moved: Councillor MacLellan
Seconded: Councillor Murray

Council reconvened in open session at 9:06 p.m.

9. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:06 p.m.



Mayor Sean Cameron



Randy Delorey, CAO