

**Regular Town Council
March 17th, 2025
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 & Communications
K. Meisner, P. Eng., Director of Public Works
L. Roy, Strategic Initiatives

Members of the Gallery
Media

1. Call to Order

Mayor S. Cameron called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

2. Land Acknowledgement

Mayor S. Cameron 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.

3. Approval of Agenda

Three items were added to the agenda, items 8.9, 8.10 and 8.11.
It was Moved and Seconded "to approve the agenda as amended."

Motion carried.

4. Approval of Minutes

It was Moved and Seconded "to approve the February 18th Regular Council Minutes and the Special Council Meeting Minutes of February 25th, 2025, as presented with an amendment made to item 7.2 of Special Council Minutes."

Motion carried.

5. Presentations

5.1 WSP District Energy Feasibility Study

L. Roy, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator with the Town of Antigonish took the podium to introduce representatives from WSP and explained that the purpose of the presentation was to deliver the final report on the District Energy System Feasibility Study, with StFX University identified as the anchor client.

L. Roy outlined the funding sources for this feasibility study. The Town received \$175,000 from the Green Municipal Fund through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), and \$300,000 from the Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund. The total cost of study was \$528,110 of which 90% was covered by external funding. The Town contributed 10% or \$53,100, which included \$32,774 in staff time.

L. Roy invited Brian Warren, P.Eng., Team Lead & Presenter to the podium. He was joined by Matthew Rodgers, P.Eng., Project Manager, Mechanical and Gardiner MacNeill, P.Eng., Senior Electrical Engineer. Also representing WSP.

B. Warren presented findings from the Pathway to Zero Emissions Community District Energy System Feasibility Study. The study's goal is to identify the most cost-effective capital investment and long-term operational strategy for a district energy system supporting the Town's objective of becoming Canada's first Net Zero community.

A copy of the full presentation was attached to the agenda and made available to Council.

StFX was identified as the primary anchor client due to its existing infrastructure and energy use.

The study involved:

- On-site mechanical and energy assessments at StFX and Town buildings.
- System loading and sizing analysis.
- Review of existing oil-fired steam systems at StFX.
- Energy modeling using utility data, site visits, and interviews with operations staff.

Coordination with future municipal projects (e.g., Main Street renewal and active transportation upgrades) could help lower installation costs.

Potential for cost savings if district energy infrastructure is installed alongside other municipal upgrades.

WSP will provide more detailed cost estimates and business case development in the final report.

Mayor S. Cameron thanked them for the very informative presentation.

Councillor Discussions ensued for the Q & A period.

5.2 Antigonish Rivers Association - Allison White and Bailey Randall

Allison White and Bailey Randall of the Antigonish Rivers Association (ARA) presented to Council, highlighting the work and goals of the organization. ARA is a non-profit organization, affiliated with the NS Salmon Association, and works closely with local farmland owners and community partners, including STFX Aquatic Resources students, to carry out research and restoration projects.

James River and Brierly Brook, both of which face environmental challenges. The James River Dam was noted as a barrier to fish passage and sediment flow. Summer months see low water flow, and channels have become over-widened and straightened, reducing habitat quality.

ARA hosts regular events such as the Annual Brierly Brook Garbage Clean-Up and a Fishing Derby.

ARA is also involved in efforts around the Cameron Lake barrier.

Council Discussion & Questions occurred.

Deputy Mayor Roberts asked about the Department of Environment's involvement. ARA noted they work with the department for annual permitting but not directly on projects unless required.

It was clarified that individuals cannot remove debris from rivers without proper permits, typically issued by the Department of Public Works. However, if the debris is on private property, it is up to the property owner.

Mayor and Council thanked both A. White & B Randall for their presentation.

6. Business from Minutes

No Business from the Minutes

7. Business from Committee of the Whole

7.1 Capital and Operating Reserve Options

R. Delorey, CAO spoke to two recommendations originating from the Committee of the Whole meeting held on March 4, where M. Barkhouse, Director of Corporate Services, presented a financial update and year-end projections to Council. The following items are now brought forward for formal approval by Council.

R. Delorey provided context for both motions.

Motion 1:

Whereas the purchase of the Mini Pitch does not meet the eligibility criteria for a capital purchase;

Be it resolved that the amount of \$398,800 be transferred from the operating reserves to cover the cost of the Mini Pitch.

Motion carried.

Motion 2:

Whereas the following projects were previously earmarked under operating funds;
Be it resolved that the following amounts be transferred from operating funds and earmarked under capital reserves:

College Street Bridge: \$135,000

Main Street Parking Lot: \$256,000

Motion carried.

8. New Business

8.1 Strategic Planning Priorities Update

R. Delorey, CAO provided a brief overview of the key strategic priorities identified during the recent Committee of the Whole meeting. He noted that both Council and staff were in support of the draft vision statement, while the draft mission statement received general support. These drafts have not yet been formally adopted.

Council and staff ranked the strategic priorities as follows:

Council's Rankings

Asset (Infrastructure) Management

Fiscal Sustainability

Environmental Sustainability

Social Sustainability

Strategic Supports

Staff's Rankings

Asset (Infrastructure) Management

Fiscal Sustainability

Strategic Supports

Environmental Sustainability

Social Sustainability

8.2 In Camera

At 7:20 PM, Mayor Cameron called for the meeting to move In Camera in accordance with Section 22(2) of the Municipal Government Act to discuss matters related to:

- acquisition, sale, lease and security of municipal property
- labour relations;
- contract negotiations;and
- personnel matters.

Council moved out of In Camera at 8:52 PM.

The Council Chambers were reopened to the public.

8.3 Auditor Appointment

Following the expiration of the current auditing services contract, the Town of Antigonish issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a new five-year auditing services agreement. Three auditing firms submitted proposals, which were reviewed through the Town's formal procurement process.

Resolution

WHEREAS Section 42(1) of the Municipal Government Act requires that the Council appoint an auditor for the Town;

AND WHEREAS the Town has completed the necessary review and selection process for auditing services;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the Town of Antigonish hereby appoints MNP, LLP as the Town's auditors for the fiscal years 2024-25, 2025-26, 2026-27, 2027-28, and 2028-29.

Motion Carried.

8.4 Solar Garden Temporary Borrowing – Ministerial Approval (Memo)

A memo to Council submitted by M. Barkhouse, Director of Corporate Services was circulated in the agenda package providing background on the proposed Temporary Borrowing Resolution (TBR) for the Community Solar Garden project. The previous TBR and ministerial approval expired in February 2025, and the associated loan has been fully repaid. As the project is not yet operational, the Town is currently ineligible for Municipal Finance Corporation (MFC) debenture financing.

To address this, a new TBR in the amount of \$4,015,000 is being submitted to reflect the updated financial obligation, with the total project budget increasing from \$5.4 million (2021) to \$8.0 million (2025). The resolution allows for a 24-month borrowing period, providing the financial flexibility needed to complete the project and prepare for MFC financing eligibility.

Resolution

Be it resolved that Council approve the attached Temporary Borrowing Resolution to initiate the process of accessing temporary borrowing for the Community Solar Garden. Furthermore, Council authorizes the necessary approvals to enter into a Municipal Finance Corporation (MFC) debenture once the Community Solar Garden meets its eligibility criteria.

Motion Carried.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF THE

Town of Antigonish

TEMPORARY BORROWING RESOLUTION

Amount: \$ 4,000,000

Purpose: Community Solar Garden

WHEREAS Section 66 of the Municipal Government Act provides that the Council of the Town of Antigonish, subject to the approval of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, may borrow to expend funds for a capital purpose as authorized by statute;

WHEREAS the Council of the Town of Antigonish has adopted a capital budget for this fiscal year as required by Section 65 of the Municipal Government Act and are so authorized to expend funds for a capital purpose as identified in their capital budget; and

WHEREAS the Council of the Town of Antigonish has determined to borrow the aggregate principal amount of four million dollars Dollars (\$ 4,000,000) for the purposes of Community Solar Garden;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED

THAT under the authority of Section 66 of the Municipal Government Act, the Council of the Town of Antigonish borrow a sum or sums not exceeding four million dollars Dollars (\$ 4,000,000) for the purpose set out above, subject to the approval of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing;

THAT the sum be borrowed by the issue and sale of debentures of the Council of the Town of Antigonish to such an amount as the Council deems necessary;

THAT the issue of debentures be postponed pursuant to Section 92 of the Municipal Government Act and that the Council borrow from time to time a sum or sums not exceeding four million dollars Dollars (\$ 4,000,000) in total from any chartered bank or trust company doing business in Nova Scotia;

THAT pursuant to Subsection 92(2) the sum be borrowed for a period not exceeding Twenty-Four (24) Months from the date of the approval of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing of this resolution;

THAT the interest payable on the borrowing be paid at a rate to be agreed upon; and

THAT the amount borrowed be repaid from the proceeds of the debentures when sold.

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that the foregoing is a true copy of a resolution read and duly passed at a meeting of the Council of the Town of Antigonish held on the 17 day of March, 2025.

GIVEN under the hands of the Clerk and under the seal of the Town of Antigonish this 17 day of March, 2025.

Clerk

8.5 Electric Utility UARB Rate Adjustment (Memo)

A memo was circulated to Council from M. Barkhouse, Director of Corporate Services, regarding the need to file a Flowthrough rate application with the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (NSUARB) to ensure alignment between the Antigonish Electric Utility (AEU) and Nova Scotia Power Inc. (NSPI) rates for the Large General Rate Class.

Under existing Board Orders (2008 and 2014), AEU is required to match NSPI's Large General Service Demand and Energy Rates. With NSPI's most recent rate increase approved in February 2025, AEU's rates are no longer in alignment.

Motion

It was Moved and Seconded "That the Town of Antigonish Electric Utility (AEU) is authorized to prepare and file a Flowthrough application to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (NSUARB), and to provide notice to Large General Rate Class customers of the intent to submit the Flowthrough application, in accordance with AEU Schedule "A" – Rates for Electric Supply & Services.

Motion Carried.

The Flowthrough application to the AEU's Large General Rate Schedule is intended to align the rates with the Nova Scotia Power (NSPI) rates for the same class. The Flowthrough application may include Large General Rate Class Energy Charge increase to \$0.10949/kWh, Demand Side Management (DSM) increase to (\$0.00790/kWh) and Fuel Adjustment Mechanism (FAM) increase to (\$0.00517/kWh), or the rate of NSPI's Large General Rate Class at the time of filing, if the above rates are no longer in effect.

8.6 Funding Application for the Northern Collector Project (CHIP)

K. Meisner, Director of Public Works, provided Council with a brief overview of a funding opportunity under the Canadian Housing Infrastructure Fund (CHIP). The department is seeking Council's support to submit an application for funding related to the proposed Northern Collector Project. No decision on moving forward with the project itself is being requested at this time—this is strictly to pursue potential funding.

The CHIP funding stream supports housing-related infrastructure projects valued between \$100,000 and \$100 million, offering cost-sharing of up to 50%. The application deadline is at the end of the month, and staff are currently preparing the submission.

A motion is requested to authorize staff to submit the funding application to the CHIP program.

Motion

It was Moved and Seconded “that The Municipality of the Town of Antigonish shall submit applications for available federal and provincial funding for the development of infrastructure to allow for the future construction of the Northern Collector Project and related infrastructure to support community growth.”

Motion Carried.

8.7 Capital endorsement trunk and routes provincial submission (Memo)

A memo from K. Meisner, P. Eng., Director of Public Works, was circulated to Council recommending the submission of priority road segments for repaving consideration under the Province of Nova Scotia’s cost-shared - Shared Trunks and Routes program for fiscal year 2025–2026.

The submission deadline is March 18, 2025. The list reflects current road conditions and informal input from councillors. While the province requests a multi-year priority list, future years can be revised through subsequent annual submissions.

Recommended Priorities:

Priority 1 (2025): Highway 7 (West Street) from Highway 4 to Highland Drive (0.61km)

Priority 2 (2026): Route 245 (Hawthorne Street) from Pleasant Street to Pine Street (0.60km)

Priority 3 (2027): Route 245 (Hawthorne Street) from Pine Street to MacDougall Street (0.59km)

Priority 4 (2028): Route 337 (Main Street) from Hawthorne Street to College Street (0.27km)

Motion

It was Moved and Seconded “that the Town of Antigonish submit the above-listed priority roadwork projects to the Province of Nova Scotia for cost-sharing consideration.

Discussions ensued.

Councillor P. McKenna proposed an amendment to move Priority 4 (2028) to Priority 2 (2026) and to extend the project limits from The Wheel Pizza and Sub Shop on Main St to Elm Street.

Amended Motion:

It was Moved and Seconded “that the Town of Antigonish submit the revised priority roadwork list, with the following changes:

Priority 1 (2025): Highway 7 (West Street) from Highway 4 to Highland Drive (0.61 km)

Priority 2 (2026): Route 337 (Main Street) from the Wheel Pizza and Sub shop to Elm Street (replacing original Priority 4)

Priority 3 (2027): Route 245 (Hawthorne Street) from Pleasant Street to Pine Street (0.60 km)

Priority 4 (2028): Route 245 (Hawthorne Street) from Pine Street to MacDougall Street (0.59 km)

Motion Carried.

8.8 Gaining a legal opinion re: AT Trail

Councillor P. McKenna asked to make a motion to move this item to the Committee of the Whole Meeting.

It was Moved and Seconded “that the item gaining a legal opinion re: AT Trail, be moved to the next Committee of the Whole meeting.”

Motion Carried.

8.9 St Patrick’s Day

Councillor J. Pelly recused herself from the discussion due to a declared conflict of interest.

Councillor A. Murray reported a 40% increase in student presence during St. Patrick’s Day celebrations this year on St. Mary’s St. He noted that while many students were polite and coherent, noise levels were significantly elevated. Conversations were held with five groups of students; while some expressed a disregard for local concerns, others emphasized their intent to enjoy the university experience. He also noted that some students preferred gathering in areas they were asked to avoid.

Deputy Mayor D. Roberts addressed the continuing challenges of disrespectful behavior and emphasized the financial burden placed on the Town for additional policing. She proposed that StFX take on greater responsibility, including contributing to related enforcement costs, and suggested inviting university representatives to a future Council meeting to discuss collaborative solutions.

Councillor P. McKenna reminded Council that students are also residents of the Town and shared that Police & Licensing had met prior to the event to prepare.

Councillor MacLellan acknowledged the Town’s responsibility but noted uncertainty around effective solutions.

CAO R. Delorey provided clarification on the Town’s approach to the event planning and management.

Deputy Mayor D. Roberts requested information regarding enforcement actions. It was reported that 17 charges for open liquor violations were laid.

Mayor S. Cameron commended the RCMP for their efforts in managing the event.

Council agreed that a formal letter of thanks would be sent to the RCMP and By-Law Enforcement for their work.

Councillor J. Pelly rejoined the meeting following the conclusion of this item.

8.9 Local Newspaper – Councillor J. Sullivan (Amendment)

Item deferred to Committee of the Whole

8.10 X-Women Hockey – Councillor J. Sullivan (Amendment)

Councillor J. Sullivan extended congratulations to the X-Women hockey team on their successful season as AUS champions. He proposed sending a letter to the team to wish them luck. The Mayor suggested recognizing their achievement with a social media post.

9 Correspondence

9.9 Nova Scotia Association of Garden Clubs (NSAGC & Antigonish Garden Club)

The Nova Scotia Association of Garden Clubs' 2025 Annual Convention will be held at St. Francis Xavier University on June 13–14, 2025. Correspondence regarding the event was included in Council's package. As the hosting region, the Antigonish Garden Club is seeking sponsorship from Council.

Motion

It was Moved and Seconded "that Town Council approves \$3000.00 dollars to the Antigonish Garden Club."

Motion Carried.

9.2 National Dental Hygienists Week – April 4-10, 2025

National Dental Hygienists Week (NDHW), celebrated annually from April 4th to 10th, is a time to recognize the vital role of dental hygienists in promoting oral health and overall well-being, sponsored by the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA)

Motion

It was Moved and Seconded "that the Town Hall light up in purple from April 4-10."

Motion carried.

10 Staff Reports

Staff reports deferred to Committee of the Whole

11 Adjournment

With no further business the meeting was adjournment at 9:33 PM.