

**Regular Town Council
May 20, 2025
Town Council Chambers**

Present

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

Also in Attendance

R. Delorey, CAO
M. Fougere, Deputy Clerk
M. Barkhouse, Director of Corporate Services & Acting CAO
S. Long, Acting Director of Community Development
K. Meisner, P. Eng., Director of Engineering and Infrastructure
M. Williams, Marketing and Communications

Regrets

Councillor J. Pelly

Members of the Gallery
Media

1. Land Acknowledgement & Call to Order

Mayor S. Cameron called the meeting to order at 6:01 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

It was Moved by Councillor McKenna, Seconded Councillor Murray "to approve the agenda as presented."

Motion Carried

3. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting of April 22, 2025, were accepted as presented.

4. Business from Committee of the Whole

4.1 Live Streaming Policy

Council was provided with a memo from Staff on the Live Streaming policy at the May 7th Committee of the Whole Meeting and a recommended motion was brought forth to this regular council meeting.

Motion

It was Moved by Councillor MacLellan, Seconded by Councillor McKenna "that Council for the Town of Antigonish hereby adopts the Town of Antigonish Livestreaming Policy, as presented at the Town's Committee of the Whole meeting on May 7, 2025."

Motion Carried

Mayor Cameron called to break for a quick recess to give staff time to switch the meeting over to live streaming capability.

4.2 Traffic Authority Policy

Council was provided with a memo regarding the amended Traffic Authority Policy at the May 7th Committee of the Whole Meeting and two recommended motions were brought forth to this Regular Council Meeting, the following motions were approved:

Motion

It was Moved by Deputy Mayor Roberts, Seconded by Councillor Murray "that Council approves the amended Town of Antigonish Traffic Authority Policy as presented."

Motion Carried

Motion

It was Moved by Deputy Mayor Roberts, Seconded by Councillor Murray "that Council approves Kyle Meisner as the Town's Traffic Authority, John Pellerin to a Deputy Traffic Authority, and Grace Gillis as another Deputy Traffic Authority."

Motion Carried

Discussions from council was brought up on the responsibility of the By-Law Enforcement and CAO R. Delorey clarified that the Traffic Authority role had historically been managed by a By-Law Enforcement Officer. However, with the new organizational structure effective May 1, 2025, the role is now more appropriately housed within the Infrastructure and Public Works Department. One By-Law Officer remains appointed as a Deputy Traffic Authority to assist as needed.

4.3 Resolution of Council for PCAP funding

A memo was circulated in council's package to seek Council's approval to formally support the joint application for Provincial Capital Assistance Program (PCAP) funding for an Intermunicipal Sewage Flow Study between the Town of Antigonish and the Municipality of the County of Antigonish.

The study supports efforts to update the Intermunicipal Sewage Agreement.

Resolution

It was Moved by Councillor McKenna, Seconded by Councillor Murray "Be it resolved that the Municipality of the Town of Antigonish submit applications for available provincial funding (PCAP) jointly with the Municipality of the County of Antigonish for an intermunicipal sewage flow study. This flow study will be undertaken by a third-party consultant and will form the basis for a new Intermunicipal Sewage Agreement between the two parties."

Motion Carried

5. Presentations/Flag Requests

5.1 Antigonish Highland Society

Carol Anne MacKenzie, President of the Antigonish Highland Society, presented to Town Council, accompanied by Vice President Gerardine MacLean and Operations Manager Dan Cochrane.

Ms. MacKenzie highlighted the Society's long-standing role in preserving and promoting Gaelic and Highland Scottish culture, noting its continued efforts to serve past, present, and future generations. She emphasized the importance of community collaboration and thanked the Town for its ongoing support.

The 2025 Games will mark the 160th running of the Antigonish Highland Games, drawing international visitors to celebrate Gaelic culture through music, dance, athletics, and tradition. As a special initiative this year, the Society is offering free daytime passes as a gesture of thanks to the local community, made possible through strong donor and sponsor support.

Mr. Cochrane spoke to the historical significance of the Games and shared details on the evolving programming, highlighting youth participation in heavy events and piping and drumming competitions. A short video clip showcasing highlights from past Games was also presented.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the Society gifted Council a framed photo of the Highland Games in recognition of the Town's continued support of the Games.

Mayor Cameron thanked the presenters for their time and contribution.

5.2 ACTS (Antigonish Community Transit Society)

Richie Connors, General Manager of ACTS, provided Council with an overview of the organization. ACTS is a non-profit, charitable transit service operating since 2014, with registered charitable status since 2021. Its mission is to provide safe, affordable, and accessible transportation to residents of the Town and County of Antigonish.

Mr. Connors outlined ACTS's two core services:

Book-A-Ride: A door-to-door, flexible, pre-booked service (Monday to Friday)

Fixed Route: A one-hour loop through Town running Monday–Friday (9 AM–5 PM) and Saturdays (8 AM–4 PM).

Services support access to healthcare, education, employment, and reduce rural isolation. Additional offerings include:

- Accessible transport for seniors and persons with disabilities
- Medical transportation (local and out-of-town)
- Recreational transit for local groups
- Essential trips (groceries, pharmacy, social services)

Mr. Connors thanked the Town and County for their support, highlighting the valuable contributions of Deputy Mayor Diane Roberts and County Councillor Gary Mattie as ACTS Board members.

Council Discussion

During the discussion, questions were raised regarding the visibility of stop signage, with ACTS acknowledging the concern and confirming that improvements will be included in the upcoming rebranding initiative. Inquiries were also made about the development of a transit app, to which it was noted that a Google-based app is forthcoming. Clarification was provided on fleet size: ACTS currently operates nine vehicles (seven—soon to be eight—for Book-A-Ride and two for the Fixed Route).

The Mayor and Council thanked Mr. Connors for his presentation. Council expressed appreciation for ACTS's continued contribution to the community. A complimentary transit pass was offered to Council members to experience the service firsthand.

5.3 Allan Armsworthy - Fence Repair Denial Appeal

Allan Armsworthy appeared before Council to appeal a denied request for fence repair at his primary residence. He referenced two complaints previously submitted to the Town and stated that, following the recent election, he approached the new CAO and was informed that his request had been denied. Mr. Armsworthy also obtained an independent report, which noted the fence was rusted.

Deputy Mayor Roberts confirmed that Mr. Armsworthy had previously reached out to her and advised Council that the fence had been repaired on two prior occasions in the past. Council engaged in discussion regarding past practices in similar cases and the history of Mr. Armsworthy's previous fence repairs.

Mayor Cameron thanked Mr. Armsworthy for his presentation and noted that, while there is currently no formal appeal process in place, Staff would follow up with Mr. Armsworthy.

5.4 Filipino Cultural Society of Nova Scotia Flag Raising Request

Council reviewed a request from the Filipino Cultural Society of Nova Scotia to fly the Filipino Cultural Flag on June 12, 2025, in recognition of Philippine Independence Day.

Motion

It was Moved by Councillor MacLellan, Seconded by Councillor Sullivan that the Town grant this group to fly the Filipino Culture Flag on June 12 for the one day."

Motion Carried

During discussion, Council noted the value of including an image or description of requested flags in future submissions to provide better context and understanding of flag-raising requests.

5.5 Antigonish Pride Flag Raising Request

Council received a request from Antigonish Pride to fly the Pride Flag from June 2 to June 30, with the exception of June 12, in recognition of the previously approved flag-raising for the Filipino Cultural Society.

Motion

It was Moved by Councillor Murray, Seconded by Councillor Sullivan "that the Antigonish Pride Flag be flown for the month of June, with the exception of June 12th.

Motion Carried

5.6 Access Awareness Week (May 25-31)

Council received a request to raise the Access Awareness Flag in recognition of Access Awareness Week, taking place May 25–31, 2025.

Motion

It was Moved by Councillor MacLellan, Seconded by Councillor McKenna "that the Town approve the request to raise the Access Awareness flag as requested May 25-31, 2025."

Motion Carried

Council recessed at 7:26 PM.

Councillor Murray left the meeting at 7:28 PM.

The meeting reconvened at 7:32 PM.

6. Business from Minutes

6.1 Low-Income Property Tax Exemption Policy

M. Barkhouse presented proposed updates to the Low-Income Property Tax Exemption Policy, previously introduced at the April 22nd Regular Council Meeting. The recommended changes are as follows:

- Increase the maximum annual household income threshold from \$28,510 to \$35,000.
- Replace the flat exemption of \$450 with a tiered exemption ranging from \$250 to \$750.

These changes aim to align with anticipated tax rate increases and offer more targeted financial support to residents most impacted.

The CAO noted that the previous presentation included a detailed comparison of various low-income tax structures for Council's consideration.

Motion

It was Moved by Councillor MacLellan, Seconded by Councillor McKenna, "that Council approve the updated Low-Income Property Tax Exemption Policy as presented."

Motion Carried

Staff confirmed that the exemption application period will run from May 30 to June 30 and will be advertised accordingly.

Councillor Sullivan expressed appreciation for the update, noting the positive impact this will have for eligible residents.

7. New Business

7.1 EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer) Policy

CAO, R. Delorey presented a new Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) Policy for Council's consideration. Although it was initially intended for discussion at a Committee of the Whole meeting, the item was brought forward due to the potential Canada Post strike scheduled for this Friday.

The policy aims to modernize the Town's payment processes by allowing vendor payments to be made via EFT rather than by cheque. The policy is written as a permanent change to streamline operations and reduce reliance on postal services.

Motion

It was Moved by Councillor MacLellan, Seconded by Deputy Mayor Roberts, "that Council adopt the Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) Policy as presented."

Motion Carried

7.2 Volunteer of the Year Nominations 2025

Council received the Volunteer of the Year nominations in their Council package in advance of the meeting. M. Williams informed Council that the Town received four total submissions, two of which were eligible nominations. The eligible Youth nomination was Dondre Reddick, and the eligible Adult nomination was Bill Landry. As there was only one eligible nomination in each category, both nominees will be acclaimed as the 2025 Volunteer of the Year recipients.

Councillor MacLellan suggested that future nominations could be reviewed by the Nominations Committee prior to being brought forward to Council for final approval.

Council acknowledged both as excellent nomination choices. Staff will follow up and contact the selected nominees.

8. Correspondence

8.1 Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional High School

Council received a letter from the Relay for St. Martha's Committee at Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional High School regarding a student-led, community-focused fundraising event in support of the Pediatric Procedure Room at St. Martha's Hospital. The event is scheduled to take place on June 5th.

Motion

It was Moved by Deputy Mayor D. Roberts and Seconded by Councillor J. Sullivan "that Town Council make a \$200.00 donation to the Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional High School Relay for St. Martha's Committee."

Motion Carried

8.2 Antigonish Garden Club

Mayor Cameron informed Council that he received a thank-you card and a batch of muffins from Mary Campbell on behalf of the Antigonish Garden Club. The gesture was in appreciation of the donation provided by Town Council at the March 17, 2025 Regular Council Meeting in support of their upcoming Annual Convention, scheduled for June 13-14, 2025 at St. Francis Xavier University.

Mayor Cameron extended his thanks to Mary and the Garden Club for their thoughtful gesture.

9. Staff Reports

Deputy Mayor D. Roberts commended the Staff Reports, acknowledging the new section included under the Director of Infrastructure and Engineering report. She expressed appreciation for the inclusion of Public Works personnel, noting that it provides an introduction to staff members and the work they do.

Mayor Cameron advised Council that he received an email identifying a pothole located in front of St. James United Church, which was noticed during the recent Veterans Walk as part of the Legion Convention parade. Discussions took place and it was suggested that "pothole" be added as a separate category in the Town's Report a Concern tool to improve issue tracking. Staff confirmed this addition will be made.

Councillor McKenna echoed this suggestion and noted that having a specific section for pothole reporting in the online Report a Concern form would allow staff to more easily identify and address these types of concerns submitted by the public.

S. Long informed Council that the Town and County have jointly supported the installation of a new visitor information kiosk at the library. An unveiling event is scheduled for Thursday, May 22nd at 5:00 PM at the Antigonish Library. Staff will circulate a reminder to Council.

Motion

It was Moved by Councillor McKenna, Seconded by Deputy Mayor Roberts, that the Staff Reports be accepted as presented.

Motion Carried

Mayor Cameron called for a short recess at 7:56 PM.

10. In-Camera Session under the MGA – Sec 22 (2)(e)

10.1 Contract Negotiations

It was Moved by Councillor MacLellan, Seconded by Councillor McKenna, that Council proceed In Camera at 8:14 PM under Section 22(2)(e) of the Municipal Government Act (MGA) to discuss: Contract Negotiations.

Council returned to the regular meeting and reconvened at 9:10 PM.

11. Adjournment

The Mayor Called for an adjournment at 9:11 PM. It was Moved by Deputy Mayor Roberts.



Mayor Sean Cameron



Randy Delorey, CAO