
Joint Town and County Council Meeting
Wednesday, November 19, 2025, 6:00 PM
Town Council Chambers
274 Main Street
Antigonish, NS

AGENDA

1. Call to Order - Chair Mayor Sean Cameron
2. Approval of Agenda
 - 2.1 Additions/Amendments to the Agenda
3. Acceptance of September 17, 2025, Joint Council Committee Minutes
4. Presentations
 - 4.1 FireLoch – Expanding A Social Enterprise 2025 – 2026 – Jennifer Decoste
5. Correspondence
 - 5.1 Antigonish Community Soup Gatherings
6. Business Arising from Minutes
 - 6.1 EDPC South – West Primary Watershed Flood Mapping Study - Informational
7. Continuing Business
 - 7.1 Water and Sewer Systems Update
8. New Business
 - 8.1 Library Funding Concerns
 - 8.2 In- Camera
 - (a) Contract Negotiations MGA Sec 22 (2) (e)
9. Adjournment

Joint Town and County Council Minutes

Wednesday, September 17, 2025, 6:00 PM
St. Joseph's Lakeside Community Centre
2752 Ohio East Rd
St. Joseph, NS B2G 2K8

Present:

County of Antigonish

Warden Nicholas MacInnis
Councillor Shawn Brophy
Councillor Mary MacLellan
Councillor Adam Baden-Clay
Councillor Richelle MacLaughlin
Councillor Wayne Melanson
Councillor Gary Mattie

Town of Antigonish

Mayor Sean Cameron
Councillor Leon MacLellan
Councillor Pat McKenna
Councillor Andrew Murray
Councillor Juantia Pelly
Councillor Jack Sullivan

Beth Schumacher, Clerk

Randy Delorey, CAO
Melanie Fougere, Deputy Clerk
Kyle Meisner, P.Eng., Director of Infrastructure and
Engineering

Also Present:

John Bain, Director of Eastern District Planning Commission
Bobby Pettigrew, CBCL

Members of the Gallery

Absent with Regret:

Deputy Mayor Diane Roberts
Deputy Warden John Dunbar
Councillor Sterling Garvie
Councillor Harris McNamara
Shirlyn Donovan, CAO

1. Call to Order

The Joint Town and County Council Committee was called to order by Chair, Warden Nicholas MacInnis at 6:02 PM. Warden MacInnis and Mayor Cameron welcomed everyone in attendance to the meeting. A roundtable of introductions was done.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Warden MacInnis called for any additions or deletions to the agenda.

The following additions were noted:

- Item 6(a) – EDPC South-West Primary Watershed Flood Mapping Study was moved to Business Arising from the Minutes – Item 4(a).
- Councillor Mary MacLellan added an item under New Business – 6(a): Lighthouse and Lighthouse Road, Cape George.
- Councillor Leon MacLellan added an item under Continuing Business – 5(b): Consideration of Cost Sharing.

Moved and Seconded

Motion: That the agenda be approved as amended.

Motion Carried.

3. Approval of June 18, 2025, Council Minutes

Warden MacInnis called for any errors or omissions in the Joint Council meeting minutes of June 18, 2025. Hearing none, the minutes were considered approved as presented.

4. Business Arising from the Minutes

a. EDPC South-West Primary Watershed Flood Mapping Study

Bobby Pettigrew from CBCL presented the findings from the EDPC South-West Primary Watershed Flood Mapping Study, outlining study areas, historical flooding in the Town of Antigonish, and modeled 5% and 1% annual exceedance flood scenarios. Data collected in 2022 included riverine and coastal analysis, with consideration of sea level rise and climate impacts.

The study provides flood hazard maps to support municipal planning and potential updates to the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-laws.

Council discussion included data sources, use of private weather stations, bridge and culvert assessments, and implications for future infrastructure and permitting. CBCL clarified that the study is high-level, with detailed infrastructure assessments to occur under separate processes.

Mayor Cameron noted that while the information was valuable, both Councils had not yet received the full report. Staff will circulate the report to both Councils.

Warden MacInnis thanked Mr. Pettigrew for his presentation.

5. Continuing Business

a. Water and Sewer Systems Update

Kyle Meisner, Town of Antigonish Director of Infrastructure and Engineering, provided an update on the Town's Water and Sewer Systems, following previous presentations to Joint Council in February and June.

Mr. Meisner reported that odor issues at the Sewage Treatment Plant in July 2025 were less severe than in 2024, primarily due to improved aeration and recirculation measures. The issue, linked to high lagoon temperatures during the summer heat wave, was mitigated by recirculating oxygen-rich water within the plant as recommended by CBCL. Additional measures included the installation of five aeration units, a tender for expanded aeration capacity closing September 19, and the use of cold-water and deodorizing systems to further manage odor.

Updates were also provided on the Screening Project and Sewage Flow Study. The Screening Project will upgrade the plant's front-end screening and aeration system. The equipment tender closed September 8 and is under review, with award anticipated September 19. The Sewage Flow Study, awarded to RVA with BioMaxx Environmental, will assess inflow and infiltration and support updates to the intermunicipal wastewater agreement.

Mr. Meisner outlined the 2025 Water Conservation Measures. Following low water levels at the James River Dam, voluntary conservation measures were implemented on July 17, with mandatory measures enacted August 6 and lifted August 29 after significant rainfall improved storage levels. During the mandatory conservation period, overall water consumption decreased by approximately 11%, County wells were activated, leaks were identified and fixed, and plant operations were adjusted to reduce water usage. Voluntary measures remain in effect, with water levels stabilizing following late-summer rainfall.

Looking ahead, the Town and County are collaborating under the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) to explore new source water opportunities through test wells planned for this fall. If successful, new wells would be developed to support future growth. The Town has also included this initiative in its federal CHIF funding application, with design work anticipated to begin in 2026–27 and construction in 2027–28 pending approval.

Council discussed future capacity, inflow and infiltration concerns, potential solar integration, alternative water sources, and protection of future well sites.

Warden MacInnis thanked Mr. Meisner for his presentation.

A brief recess was called at 8:02 p.m. and the meeting reconvened at 8:09 p.m.

b. Consideration of Cost Sharing

Councillor Leon MacLellan added this item to the Agenda and moved a motion to defer discussion to the next meeting.

Moved and Seconded

That Item 5(b) Consideration of Cost Sharing be deferred to the next meeting.

Motion Carried.

6. New Business

a. Cape George Lighthouse Facilities

Councillor Mary MacLellan brought this item forth for council discussion. Council discussed ongoing maintenance of the Lighthouse area, a key tourist attraction supported by local volunteers. Requests included cost-sharing for expenses, hiring a student for summer grass cutting, road grading, a sign installation, and a memorial bench. With the season ending, volunteers asked that plans be considered for next year.

Warden MacInnis noted residents may also seek funding support and mentioned that Councillor Garvie had previously used district funds for grading. The Mayor will share information with Town Council and expressed support for collaborating with the County. County Council was encouraged to connect with the Antigonish Tourism Association and its new director.

Adjournment

With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Warden Nicholas MacInnis

Mayor Sean Cameron

Shirlyn Donovan, CAO, County of
Antigonish

Randy Delorey, CAO, Town of
Antigonish



EXPANDING A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE 2025-2026



fireloch
GATHERING PLACE
& RETREAT

www.fireloch.com

jennifer@fireloch.com

North Lochaber Nova Scotia Canada

FireLoch is a social enterprise in North Lochaber, offering an inclusive and natural gathering place that intentionally hosts space for building wellness and community connection.

Enterprise:

- We provide hosted nature-based, multi-day experiences for groups and teams
- We create employment opportunities for local small businesses who will offer services like art and movement classes (yoga, dance), catering, therapy sessions, and nature-based experiences through this venue.

Social:

- We have an incorporated NFP that raises funds to provide community engaged programming called WINGSPAN (partnership with CFNS and County of Antigonish)



INTRODUCTION TO FIRELOCH

ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE



2022

Year Zero we renovated a barn to craft workshop, created apartment for facilitators, built a cedar wood burning sauna, built a community oven and axe throwing arena

Hosted IONS team retreat, ABCD retreat, 6 folkschool classes, 9 community pizza parties, 4 public retreats, 5 corporate retreats



ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE



2023

Year One we received Federal New Horizons Grant, Provincial ACCESS-Ability Grant and ECCU Community Partners Grant and built the largest geodesic dome in the province

Hosted 12 team retreats, 8 folkschool classes, 21 outdoor cookouts and launched an NFP



ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE



2024

Year Two we upgraded our paths and constructed a 12X30 accessible Outdoor Pavilion and Pizza Oven

Hosted an average of 1-2 retreats/events per week. Launched fully funded (\$85k) "Care for Care Takers Fellowship" and BIPOC Leaders Retreat and Seasonal Seniors Program

WELLNESS TOURISM

By 2023, the global wellness tourism market had fully recovered from its pandemic-era dip. By 2027, the market is projected to reach \$1.4 trillion

**\$1.4
TRILLION**

Wellness Tourism is a global industry, achieving a 12.7% 4-year compound annual growth rate

**12.7%
INCREASE**

Consumers on wellness holidays spend more than those on traditional holidays. The average international wellness tourist spent 41% more than the average tourist.

**41%
MORE
THAN
AVERAGE**

“With more firms adopting remote or hybrid work practices, company-wide retreats are becoming a necessity. A company's culture will wither without face-to-face time.”

**HYBRID
WORK**

KEY COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

Expert Team >

Our skilled team is able to lead key facilitated experiences or reach within an existing network for support.

Location >

We are well positioned to host teams with staff in Halifax and Sydney and are less than 2 hours from the Halifax Airport



> In House Solutions

We can provide all-in-one packages including facilitation, catering, and nature-based wellness activities.

> Proven Success

With a track record of successful projects, we've earned a reputation for reliability and excellence, setting us apart from the competition.



Challenge: Lack of Reliable, Local Accommodations

Lochaber has limited local accommodation.

Antigonish is 20 minutes away



Time Phased Experiences Requested by Corporate Team Retreat Participants

Change takes time and immersive experiences are more effective at making real and lasting change.



Broader Reach

Visitors travelling to FireLoch are seeking a seamless experience

FOLLOWING THE FLOW

Year Zero Revenue (2022)	14k
Year One Revenue (2023)	81k
Revenue 2024 - cash flow positive	128k

OUR NEXT STEP

**PARTNERSHIP
WITH DODECA
HOMES IN BC**



Accommodations

www.skeetchestndodecahomes.ca

MODULAR HOMES - A TRAINING CENTRE IN ATLANTIC CANADA

Indigenous Partnership



Dodeca Homes is an Indigenous-led housing innovation seeking to build housing for First Nations communities across Canada

Training Centre



FireLoch will host a training centre for modular home building in partnership with Dodeca and NSCC



Expansion Potential

Modular homes will be used as cabins at FireLoch, expanding our tourism services.



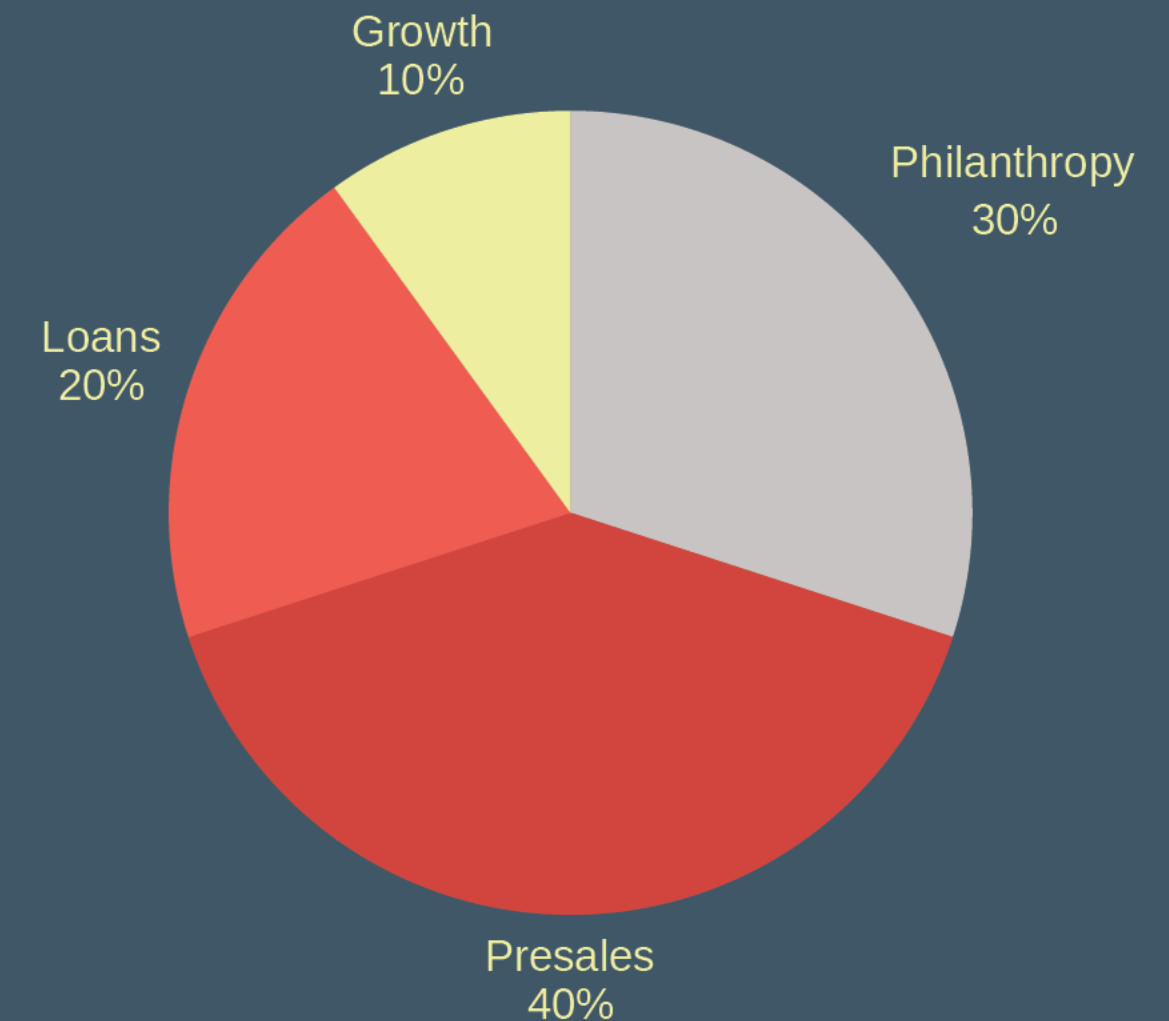
Media Campaign

Our partnership and training centre will become part of a larger media campaign about modular homes in NS

COLLABORATIVE INVESTMENT MODEL

Our plan is to secure investment from 4-5 key partners who will commit to \$50k each, over 3 years. For their commitment, each organization will receive 3 weeks onsite each year, starting in 2026, which can be used by their team or donated to local community organizations. Funds raised will be leveraged to access additional capital required for the build, remainder will be sought from grants. FireLoch's investment will be re-funded over a 15 year process at a rate of 8% of gross revenue, annually.

Grants/Philanthropic Contributions	30%
Presale Partners	40%
Loans	20%
Expansion and Growth	10%



UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Fully Funded 6 month Wellness program to support volunteers in Antigonish and Pictou Counties who are experiencing burnout.

**CARE FOR
CARE
TAKERS**

Our Connection to Land and Place - workshop for African NS seniors funded by Shannex Community Cares grant

**ANS
ELDERS
WORKSHOP**

Partnership with AHA! in 2025/2026 - co-hired a PT staff member to coordinate Art for Health programs at FireLoch

AHA!

Hosting wellness events for Resident doctors in October and Family Festival for all doctors and families in November 2025

**PHYSICIAN
RETENTION**

SUPPORT US

1. Program Support - (charitable tax receipts available):
www.cfns.ca/wingspan
2. Philanthropic Support - fund a lodge in support of a non-profit or charitable cause
3. Partner with Us - become one of the 4-5 key, long term partners to bring this vision to life for our community.

Tourism Support from Provincial Government: partnership for Compelling Tourism Communities Initiative? Others?



THANK YOU

FOR YOUR TIME AND CONSIDERATION



fireloch
GATHERING PLACE
& RETREAT



Melanie Fougere

From: Melanie.Fougere@townofantigonish.ca
Subject: FW: EXTERNAL: Community Soup Gathering volunteers opportunity

From: Catherine MacPherson <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, October 16, 2025 10:12:21 AM
To: Nicholas MacInnis <nicholas.macinnis@antigonishcounty.ca>; Sean Cameron <sean.cameron@townofantigonish.ca>
Subject: EXTERNAL: Community Soup Gathering volunteers opportunity

You don't often get email from [REDACTED]. [Learn why this is important](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Mayor Cameron and Warden MacInnis,

Our Community Soup Gatherings began in October 2023. We usually hold an event approximately every two weeks, from September to June in the Community Room at the Antigonish Farmers Market Association building. We have a professional chef lead the team of volunteers. We usually produce two soups (one meat based and one vegetarian). We have dished up thousands of bowls of soup, some for hot meal service, with the majority frozen for distribution in our Community Fridges.

I would like to invite members of both Councils to volunteer with our Community Soup Gathering on Sunday, December 7, 2025.

We start around 9 am in the kitchen at the Antigonish Farmers Market. Hot meal service is from noon til 1 pm, then clean up. We usually finish between 1:30 and 2 pm. I divide the day into two shifts for the volunteers.

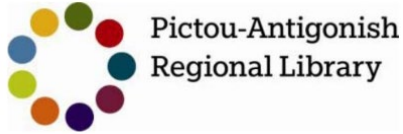
The early shift, from 9am-1130am, involves lots of vegetable peeling and chopping and labeling the individual soup cups. The afternoon shift (11:30-1:30) involves hot meal service to the 30-40 people who show up to eat in, and preparing any take-out orders. Flash freezing the soup, stocking storage freezer and clean up make up the bulk of the tasks for this shift. And, of course, dishes need to be done during the whole event.

The kitchen at the Farmer's Market is top tier, with fantastic appliances and lots of space to work. It is a real asset to the community. We are grateful to be able to use the space.

Should any members of both Councils like to volunteer for the Dec 7 event, we would be thrilled to have them.

Thank you for your continued support of this increasingly essential service. Many people have come to rely on our soups for their meal of the day.

Sincerely,
Catherine MacPherson,
Local Food Security Coordinator,
Antigonish Community Fridge and Pantry and Antigonish Community Soup Gatherings
[Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer](#)



September 23, 2025

The Hon. Dave Ritcey,
Minister of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage
1741 Brunswick St., 3rd Floor
P. O. Box 456, STN Central
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2R5

Dear Minister Ritcey,

At the regular meeting of the Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library Board, September 11, 2025, a motion was approved to write and thank you for the one-time funding assistance to be used in this fiscal year.

The amount allocated to our region is \$67,300. This covered the increase in salaries due to the mandated provincial minimum wage increase. With additional municipal funding support of \$25,000 and additional fundraising of \$39,000 by the regional library, we hope to avoid a deficit year. Once again, we thank you for this support.

Board members also expressed their appreciation for your commitment to reconvene the Funding Review Committee. One-time funding increases, which now total \$134,600 for this regional library, have exclusively supported provincial minimum wage increases. This is not sustainable and places further risk next fiscal year on already strained library services. What is needed is a properly resourced public library system which can plan forward over multiple years. We urge the provincial government to support the Funding Review Committee recommendations.

Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library is proud of its community-guided approach to public services, evidenced by new library infrastructure investments. These enable us to support the key determinants of health, especially literacy (both print and electronic), breaking isolation and overall mental wellness. We also support government priorities, such as technology and training support for virtual care, food security, and access to government services and supports. Our partnership approach also makes us successful, evidenced by our receiving the 2024 Community Partners Award from the Pictou County Chamber of Commerce. We are here to support all of our communities during these times of financial and social uncertainty.

Once again, thank you for support and we look forward to resolving this funding matter.

Sincerely,



Councillor Clyde Fraser, Board Chair

Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library
PO Box 276, New Glasgow, NS B2H 5E3
Clyde.Fraser@newglasgow.ca

cc. Premier Tim Houston; Minister Michelle Thompson; MLA Danny MacGillivray; MLA Marco MacLeod.

Town of Antigonish; Town of New Glasgow; Town of Pictou; Town of Stellarton; Town of Trenton; Town of Westville; Municipality of the County of Antigonish; Municipality of Pictou County.



October 24, 2025

Hon. Tim Houston, Premier of Nova Scotia and MLA for Pictou East
2042-2 Queen Street
Westville, NS B0K 2A0

Dear Premier Houston.

I am writing on behalf of the Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library Board to request a meeting to discuss provincial funding to our region.

Word has come to us, from Communities, Culture, Tourism, and Heritage (CCTH), to expect tight fiscal conditions ahead. The Board hoped the government would approve the *Public Library Funding Review Committee* recommendations, but we acknowledge the current uncertain times.

With the understanding the *Funding Formula* recommendations will not go ahead, we are asking for your support to stabilize the public library funding situation in our region. The current “base” funding to PARL is \$1,383,800. Over the past two years, CCTH has provided extra “bridge” funding to help the board cover costs such as mandatory minimum wage increases. A significant number of our staff, despite their training and qualifications, are paid at minimum wage levels. This bridge funding totals \$134,600 and is greatly appreciated. But, as we now depend on this funding to pay wages, we ask this be added to the base funding from the province. This gives us clarity and the ability to plan.

However, we have a second request. We understand the mandatory minimum wage will increase to \$17 per hour April 1st. The board supports this but the increase will cost an extra \$56,000 in salaries. We ask this be added to the base grant as well.

If the board cannot achieve stability, service to the public will be impacted in several ways.

- We will have to cut library open hours, which means laying off staff across the region.
- Some of our award-winning services, such as support for Virtual Care access will be eliminated.
- Programming to support newcomers, the unhoused, seniors, children, and families will be reduced or cease altogether.

- Planned community partnership opportunities to support population health, worth over \$250,000, will be cancelled as current staffing levels are needed to carry out programming. These focus on combating isolation among rural seniors, enabling the visually impaired to take part in meaningful workshops, supporting healthy breakfasts and reading for children, and retaining newcomers in our community. Many community organizations rely on the public library and our goal is to support them and their services.

Our staff are professional, well-trained, and creative. They are here to help government and our community weather the current storm. Libraries are community hubs and people use our services much more during tough economic times. Our ask is not large, but it will do a world of good.

Thank you and we look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,



Clyde Fraser, Chair

Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library
PO Box 276, New Glasgow, NS B2H 5E3

cc. Hon. Michelle Thompson
MLA Marco MacLeod
MLA Danny MacGillivray
Hon. Dave Ritcey
Municipality of the County of Antigonish; Municipality of Pictou County; Town of Antigonish; Town of New Glasgow; Town of Pictou; Town of Stellarton; Town of Trenton; Town of Westville