

**Town of Digby  
Committee of the Whole  
February 18, 2025  
Council Chambers**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mayor Mike Bartlett  
Deputy Mayor Paul Saulnier (Chair)  
Councillor William McCormick  
Councillor Rick Foote  
Councillor Shane Weir

**STAFF PRESENT:** Leslie Brinton, Executive Assistant  
Ed McCormick, Director of Public Works  
Matthew Raymond, Director of Finance  
Laura Lee Milner, Special Constable  
Rob Hartmier, Grant Coordinator

**REGRETS:** Tom Ossinger, Chief Administrative Officer

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

Deputy Mayor Saulnier called the meeting to order at 5:06pm.

Land Acknowledgment stated by the Chair “We would like to begin by acknowledging that we are in Mi’kma’ki (MEEG-MA-GEE), the traditional (or ancestral) territory of the Mi’kmaq people.

**B. AGENDA**

**B.1** Additions/Deletions

**B.2** Approval

**By consensus, the Committee of the Whole approved the agenda as presented.**

**C. DELEGATIONS/PRESENTATIONS**

**C.1** Nancy Robinson – Digby Area Housing Coalition Society

Nancy Robinson gave a brief history of the DAHC Society and its founding which included the purchase of the old Siesta Motel. They spoke to the fact that they have nearly secured funding from the CMHC. Once the money is secured, plans to begin demolishing should begin in the spring. The expectation is that the 34 units will be filled immediately and thus there is a need for more housing in Digby. There has been a working group with the Municipality but they would like to see the Town also involved in this working group. Nancy Robinson has brought forward a funding proposal for an Executive Director Position that DAHC would like to be funded by both the Town of Digby as well as the Municipality of Digby. The Montague Project is estimated at between 8-10 million dollars. The hope with an ED position would be to really tackle the housing issue in both the Town and Municipality. Funding would go strictly to the employment of the Executive Director position. The DAHC Society is open to suggestion to how a working group should be as well as what an executive could look like. The end goal would be to create more housing and thus increase the tax base for the Town of Digby. Deputy Mayor asked how the model would be for the Executive? Nancy Robinson seems to think that the

executive would be similar to the DARC model. Mayor Bartlett commented that the Town of Digby may be in conflict as the Town is the ones to approve development agreements. It was communicated that this would be a joint effort with the Town of Digby and the Municipality of Digby. It was communicated that the project would be funded federally and provincially up to roughly 95% of the project with the last 5% being funded through fund raising.

**MOTION:**

***Moved by Mayor Bartlett and seconded by Councillor Weir that a recommendation be submitted to Council for a review of the Executive Director position and the partial funding by the Town of Digby for this position.***

**Motion Carried**

**D. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**D.1** January 20, 2025

**MOTION:**

***Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Councillor Weir that the Minutes of January 20, 2025 be approved as presented.***

**Motion Carried**

**E. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES/UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**E.1** None

**F. STAFF REPORTS**

**F.1 Chief Administrative Officer**

The Report was submitted with the package and is presented by the Executive Assistant. There was no new development permits issued in the last month, however there were a number of inquiries about residential development. The development agreement between the DAHC was approved by council on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February with notice of approval being published on the 5<sup>th</sup> of February on both the Town of Digby website and the Town's Facebook page. The appeal period will end on February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Rezoning approval at King Street (PID 303800549) was approved by Council on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February with notice of approval being published on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February on both the Town of Digby website and the Town's Facebook page. The appeal period will end on February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025. The NSUARB planning appeal matter for the Thomas Road development is continuing. The Town have put forward a notice of motion that not all individuals named in the appeal are "aggrieved persons" as defined by the MGA. Section 191 of the MGA is where the listing of "aggrieved person" is defined. The NSUARB has requested the Appellant please clarify ASAP if they are proceeding as 22 individual parties or as an unincorporated organization. The next preliminary hearing in relation to the Appellants standing as aggrieved parties will be heard on Wednesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025. One building inspection this month. One Fire inspection this month on 110 Warwick Street and a number of deficiencies found and has 30 days to correct or to ask for an extension. NSUARB fire inspection appeal that is ongoing in regards to the Fundy Restaurant Limited. This hearing will be held in March 25-27 in Halifax and the CAO will be accompanying the Fire Inspector to this hearing. There were 8 fire calls for January. Community Grants applications closed January 31, 2025. There were 17 applications this year totaling \$84,770 compared to last years 16 at \$64,805. As per the Policy, Community Grants are based on 1% of operating budget. 2024/2025 was \$51,732 with awards to \$38,100. Staff have reviewed applications for omissions of supporting documentation and have sent out letters requesting follow up documents. Performance

evaluation was completed on the Grant Coordinator and a report and recommendation will be forthcoming to council for review and consideration.

## **F.2 Director of Public Works**

The Report was submitted with the package. Majority of the time has been spent working on Annual reports for NS Environment for water and wastewater systems. Snow removal budget will likely be above due to the amount of snow removal that is needing to be done. Codes for Digby Station have been changed for February and will continue to be changed on a monthly basis. Replaced parts for air/vacuum relief valve on admirals walk. Maintenance on F250 has been done and pushed it over maintenance budget. Guard rail on shore road is partially completed. Looking at trying to have a fall arrest and confined space course held in Digby. Fire Inspections will happen soon for both Town Hall and Public Works buildings. Councillor Foote asked about who can be part of the confined space course and the DOPW communicated that they open it to other municipalities to make sure it gets all paid for. The Deputy Mayor asked about the reserves and the costs of snow removal. DOPW and the DOF communicated that we are over budget on wages as well as salt however there is a reserve for salt purchasing.

## **F.3 Director of Finance**

a) Report - The Report was submitted with the package. Two properties have been advertised for tax sale. Other two properties are that were in breach have made payment arrangements. Work has begun on capital budget. Date needs to be sent with Council to go over first drafts. Mount Street actual total cost will come in at \$3.7 million, not the original \$2.4 million but less than the \$4.06 million that was projected. WCB duty to cooperate legislation webinar was attended. Comes into effect July 15, 2025. Low-income property tax rebate form has been updated. Rent is now up to date on all houses after Food bank rent was overdue, but has now been paid. Written waiver was granted for no need for a project manager over backup generator installs.

b) Operating and Capital Budget Report – The Report was submitted with the package. Due to the weather of the last two months, it looks as there we will end the year with a small surplus of a small deficit. Basically, the Town will be on Budget with a very small variance overall. Mount Street is the main cost in the Capital budget.

## **F.4 Special Constable**

a) Dangerous and Unsightly - The Report was submitted with the package. 27 West Street still has an issue with wall that has been built on neighbors' property. Neighbor is willing to file against the property owner. By-law suggest holding a meeting between the two property owners to try to resolve the matter. More to follow. 122 Queen Street – abandoned vehicle removed. 10 Carleton Street - Feb 6<sup>th</sup>, property owner sent notice of By-law violations by registered mail. Owner was given 14 days to resolve deficiencies. Failure to comply by Feb 27 will result in issuance of an Order to Remedy by March 3 where they will have 30 days to complete all repairs or face the proscribed penalties under MGA. 53 Raquette Road received copy of demo permit for site. 88 Victoria Street received a request to extend time to resolve complaint as owner has medical issues. 21 Maiden Lane-owner has agreed to demo shed by February. 56 Water Street – email from property manager stating they would discuss issue with building inspector in order to get clarity on how to deal with the issue. 128 Water Street – Number of updates/renovations have been done after Building Inspector completed a fire inspection. Tenant reached out and was extremely grateful to By-law for the assistance in getting the building up to code.

b) Protective Services – The Report was submitted with the package. Upgrade to security system for remote restart is approximately \$650 and option for restoral notifications for yearly monitoring is \$150 per year. RCMP requested footage for a break in on Water Street. Car covered in snow on Town land. Asked property manager to have it removed. 1 Civic Address verification. Posted notice of tax sale on vacant lot with PW assistance. There was an inquiry for a multi-cultural event vending license. There was a couple of complaints around taxi (over charge and assault while operating taxi). Civil matters continue between taxi companies. RCMP has been requested to aid in resolving dispute and monitor drivers' behavior. 14 Birch Street noticed issued for waste bin not repaired. Picture sent in verifying it was complete. 45 Montague Row debris now cleared away. Vandalism at the community gardens. Request was made from them for the town to install security cameras or motion lights to help prevent this. 208 King Street was complained about with an open fire. No answer at property so notice was sent to property owner detailing proper fire pit construction.

**Motion**

***Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Mayor Bartlett that the discussion of the upgrade to security system be sent to Council for review.***

**Motion Carried.**

**F.5 Grant Coordinator Report**

The Report was submitted with the package. CHIF grant parts one and two have been submitted. Progress reports for a number of grants submitted. AHM final report submitted. Teamwork with the AHM and the EA, event was very well attended. The hope is that with the new JACBA.org building hopefully opening this summer that we could support that society with these events as they are a lot of work for town staff to put on.

**Motion**

***Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Councillor Weir that the Reports be approved as presented.***

**Motion Carried.**

**G. CORRESPONDENCE**

**G.1 Cost Shared Paving Program for Municipally Owned Trunks and Routes**

The Executive Assistant spoke in place of the CAO and in the 2025-2026 capital investment plan that the Town has committed to the rail bed on Victoria Street to the Raquette and then past Raquette to the town boundary on Shore Road. However, the tenders placed for this work is greatly over budget so the decision was made to hold on this project. The DOPW spoke to the fact that the two sections mentioned do fit into the Cost Shared paving program. The costs looked to be around \$200,000 for the small piece and about half a million for the big piece, just roughed estimated.

**G.2 Letter to America – DATA**

Deputy Mayor explained that DATA is looking for some funding to be able to submit some ads to the Boston Globe and the Portland Press Herald papers. Councillor McCormick communicated that DATA has submitted to the Marketing Tax Levy to cover costs and look at having the Town cover the rest of the costs. The mayor explained that perhaps the cost should be shared through the whole of Southern Nova instead of just of the Town of Digby. Councillor McCormick spoke to the fact that the cost would be shared through DATA, Town of Digby and the

Municipality of Digby. Shares would be \$2,800. Marketing Levy would pay for half. DOF communicated that population is 3 to 1 between Municipality and the Town.

**Discussion has been tabled until further information received from DATA as well as final costing information.**

## H. NEW BUSINESS

H.1 Draft Admin Policy #2025-03 Citizen Appointments to Committees, Commission and Boards

### Motion

***Moved by Mayor Bartlett and seconded by Councillor Foote that Draft Admin Policy #2025-03 be sent to Council for approval.***

**Motion Carried.**

H.2 Draft Admin Policy #2025-04 Code of Conduct for Citizen Members Appointed by Council

### Motion

***Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Councillor Weir that Draft Admin Policy #2025-04 be sent to Council for approval.***

**Motion Carried.**

H.3 The Nova Scotia Transit Research Incentive Program (NS-TRIP)

Councillor Foote spoke on what he found for a feasibility study grant for local Transit. He would like to see the Grant Coordinator move forward on researching and putting together the proper information so that when the NS-TRIP program feasibility study is open, that a grant application can be submitted. The Grant Coordinator communicated that he already did some research. The fund itself is not open until mid-March. Also, in conversations with the program director, most feasibility studies run anywhere from \$35K – \$50K with the grant only covering up to a maximum of \$15K. Councillor Weir asked Councillor Foote what the feasibility study would give us once completed. Councillor Foote explained that this is the first step to figuring out what the town needs for transit and what type of costs there would be associated with starting a transit system for the town.

### Motion

***Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Mayor Bartlett that the Committee of the Whole recommends to Council to discuss the costs for a feasibility study to be approved.***

**Motion Carried.**

H.4 Taxi By-law

Mayor Bartlett asked what the process was to repeal the Taxi By-law and the EA explained the process. It is similar to adopting a By-law with 3 readings needing to happen in order to repeal the Taxi By-law.

### Motion

***Moved by Mayor Bartlett and seconded by Councillor McCormick that the Committee of the Whole recommend to Council to begin the process to repeal the Taxi By-law.***

**Motion Carried.**

H.5 Town of Digby Tradeshow

Councillor Foote is working on a plan for this tradeshow (Services Showcase or Open House) which will be at the Fire Department. Tables will be set up at the FD and will be maned by most of the organization like Port Authority, Scallop Days, DATA, DARC and other partners. Councillor Wier suggested changing the name from Tradeshow to Services showcase or Services Open House. Rough date of April 23<sup>rd</sup> from 5 to 8pm Digby Fire Hall. (Town of Digby Services Open House). The Mayor spoke to the DOF so that some ideas and displays could be created to show

Citizens of the Town where the tax money is actually being spent. An aside conversation was had about the contact software that is being investigated by Deputy Mayor Saulnier as there was a hope by Councillor Foote that the app could be used to not only advertise for the event but to have it as a sign up at the Open house.

**Motion**

***Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Councillor Weir that the Committee of the Whole recommends a discussion on the communication app be sent to Council.***

**Motion Carried.**

**H.6 Strategic Priorities**

Mayor Bartlett spoke to the Strategic Priorities list that was generated in the Planning Session of January 7<sup>th</sup>. His request was to move forward on a number of priorities and to take them to Council for discussion and approval with the following:

Infrastructure	West Street Sidewalk from Warwick Street to Mount Street Paving 2 <sup>nd</sup> avenue from Church to Mount
Active Transportation	Walk this Town Active Transportation event – Councillor Foote explained that this event was a walk/invitation to walk the town and get some perspective on the Town. Possibly some local business sponsorship with gift certificates available to win at entry station points. The hope is that it could be duplicated in other municipalities. DATA has looked into doing this event as well so there could be some work with that group to make this happen. Very low cost.
Traffic Control	Diversion of the Trails – same type of event that could be done. Crosswalk at the Marina for foot traffic Curling Club Crosswalk needs to be redone
Beautification	Façade program to begin work on Streetscape program – get a letter off to the person who did our study so that can come back and speak to the report and inform new council on it. As it is 5-6 years old, there may be changes that need to be done to it. East side of water street to be done first.
Tourism	Lighthouse Kiosk work to get started so it can be used for tourism this summer (Building a stairway to the door).
Letter to Premier	Staff needs to write a letter in order to meet with the Premier about taking ownership of the Marshalling Yards (Halifax trip in the spring or meeting after the Truro conference).

**Motion**

***Moved by Mayor Bartlett and seconded by Councillor McCormick that the Committee of the Whole recommend to Council to discuss and move forward on the priority list as presented.***

**Motion Carried.**

**I. IN-CAMERA**

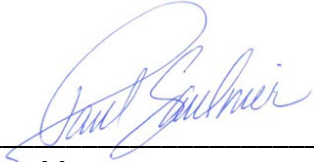
**I.1 None**

**J. Adjournment**

**Motion**

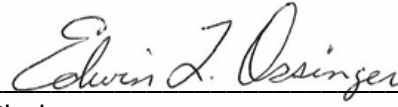
***Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Councillor Weir that the Committee of the Whole meeting be adjourned as there is no further business at 6:43pm***

**Motion Carried.**



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Deputy Mayor



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Clerk