

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
November 17, 2025, 6:00 PM
Agenda

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Mike Bartlett
Chair Deputy Mayor Paul Saulnier
Councillor William McCormick
Councillor Rick Foote
Councillor Shane Weir

STAFF PRESENT:

Tom Ossinger, Chief Administrative Officer
Leslie Brinton, Deputy Chief Administration Officer
Karen Morrell, Admin. Asst./Receptionist

REGRETS:

A. CALL TO ORDER – ROLL CALL

B. CELL PHONE USE DURING MEETINGS

C. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

D. AGENDA

D.1 Additions/Deletions

Addition to the Agenda

Correspondence- J.3 Ombudsman

New Business- K.5 Senior Safety Funding Update

D.2 Approval

Motion:

Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Mayor Bartlett that the agenda be accepted as amended.

Motion Carried

It was also at this time that the committee wanted to publicly thank Department of Public Works for the work that they did for the Remembrance Day Ceremony on November 11, 2025. Thank you.

E. DECLARATIONS OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

E.1 None

F. DELEGATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

F.1 Lobster Bash-Phil Robertson

The Committee was pleased with the presentation that Mr. Robertson gave. Mr. Robertson talked about where the \$5000 that The Town of Digby granted to Lobster Bash was allocated. It was noted that all of the events that were put on for children were free of charge. The committee was encouraged to go onto the Events Facebook page and see the pictures that were taken of the event.

It was noted that the festival every year grows and is attended by high numbers. Councillors also noted that the Lobster industry is very important and it is nice to celebrate the industry in a fun way.

The important take away was that the festival recognizes that it will need to adopt a traffic plan similar to that of Wharf Rat Rally's plan.

G. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

G.1 October 20, 2025

Motion:

Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Councillor Foote that the minutes of October 20, 2025 be accepted as presented.

Motion Carried

H. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES/UNFINISHED BUSINESS

H.1 Digby Area Food Bank-Copy of Correspondence

It was noted that the committee offered several avenues to help with lowering the cost of operating the Food Bank but management has not asked for any more details on how to implement those directives.

STAFF REPORTS

I.1 Director of Finance

a) Report

- **Government Transfers:** Decreased reliance from 8.9% in 2023-24 to 7.5% in 2024-25.
- **Uncollected Taxes:** Increased from 7.2% to 9.1%.
- **Tax Base Growth:** Significant increase from 17.8% to 29.8% over three years.

Residential Tax Effort: Increased from 5.4% to 6.0%.

Liquidity: Decreased from 2.7 to 1.7.

Undepreciated Assets: Increased from 47.7% to 52.5%.

Combined Reserves: Increased from 33.7% to 36.4%.

Insurance Claim: Gathering information; options for further discussion are available if necessary

Financial Information Return (FIR): FIR submitted for provincial analysis, aiding in financial comparisons.

Tax and Water Interest: One-month waiver on interest due to postal disruptions.

Borrowing Resolution: Approval for a \$1.5M temporary borrowing; expected debenture borrowing in Spring 2026.

Banking Controls: New bank reconciliation module introduced to improve fraud detection and financial control.

Insurance Program Participation: Engagement in a municipal insurance program focusing on risk management.

E-Delivery of Tax Bills: Increased preference for email delivery, resulting in cost savings.

Provincial Reports: Summary of completed reports to ensure timely submissions.

Rental Units: Update on overdue rental payments for various properties.

b) Monthly Financial Statement – Operations

Statement of Operations: Summarizes the financial activities for the first seven months of the fiscal year, indicating no major budget discrepancies.

Capital Budget Statement: Provides insights into financial allocations for projects, although specific figures are not included in the summary.

Variations: Highlights both positive and negative variances in various accounts, explaining significant discrepancies mainly due to timing and expected year-end adjustments.

Councillor McCormick requested a report on how much we came under budget for the Third and West Street project for the next Committee of the whole meeting.

c) Monthly Financial Statement - Capital

Due to the Software Upgrade, ongoing issues post-upgrade are hindering the generation of custom reports, impacting monthly financial statements. No report at this time.

I.2 Director of Public Works

a) Report

- Public Works reported on several infrastructure projects such as, Installation of new generators, completion of crosswalks and sidewalk upgrades.
- The West Street and Third Avenue project nearing completion. Domestic Water and Sewer are operational and will be finished once the shed is moved.
- Vantassell Lake water level is coming up with the recent rains. Water has been shut off at the Splash Park and bottle filler.
- Distribution water and wells had zero counts for e-coli and coliform.
- The new pump for station number 5 has arrived and has been installed.
- The posts and concrete at the old KFC have been removed and the area finished with a coat of asphalt.

I.3 Special Constable/Bylaw Officer

a) Protective Services Report

By-Law Officer addressed ongoing community concerns, mainly focusing on dog control and solid waste management issues, officer also participated in a Traffic Control Course to enhance staff capabilities.

I.4 Dangerous & Unsightly Administrator

a) Dangerous or Unsightly Premise Report

There have been attempts at cleaning efforts for problematic properties and there have been noted delays due to contractor availability for demolitions and repairs.

I.5 Deputy Chief Administrative Office

a) Report

- Attended several meetings for the month of September and October
- Meet with Alan Howell from the Province of NS Department of Growth and Development to discuss Housing Accelerator Fund. The province offered some assistance and support with the program.
- Alertable now has 450 subscribers.
- Attended the Regional AMANS Meeting in Clare. It was well attended and a good networking opportunity.

I.6 Chief Administrative Officer

a) Report

- There was no fire inspections conducted in October:
- NSRAB Fire Inspection Appeal. The appeal has been dismissed.
- The Fire Department Responded to fifteen calls in October.
- The CAO attended the NSFM -Annual Conference accompanied by Mayor Bartlett, Councillor Foote, and Councillor Weir. The two amendments to the Bylaws did not pass, as a 2/3rd majority was required to pass.
- Public Commercial Consultation Engagement (PAC). Despite a lot of effort that staff put into the event, there was minimal attendance.

Motion:

Moved by Mayor Bartlett and seconded by Councillor McCormick that the staff reports be accepted as presented.

Motion Carried

I. CORRESPONDENCE

J.1 Hwy 101 Joint Task Force

The Committee thinks that resuming the Joint Task Force would be beneficial and that Councillor McCormick and Councillor Foote that were originally on the Committee will participate in future meetings once they are scheduled.

Committee of the Whole
November 17, 2025

J.2 Letter to the Town of Digby Re Showers Facilities

The Committee requested the Municipality for a financial contribution to keep the public washrooms/shower open until the end of November. The Municipality declined our request for a financial contribution. They are implementing their own initiatives to help with the hardships of this summer draught for the residents of Digby.

J.3 Ombudsmen

The ombudsman that investigates complaints against the Town of Digby, has been put into place. We will only hear from them if we get a complaint.

J. NEW BUSINESS

K.1 Tree Lighting Ceremony

Mayor Bartlett, requested help from the Committee members on November 28, 2025, the night of the tree lighting to lend a hand giving out hot chocolate and be a part of the festivities.

K.2 Outdoor Christmas Light Decorating Contest

The public advertising has been put onto the website, Facebook and Alertable. Councillor Weir will buy the gift cards and trophy. All will be in place for the contest end date of December 13, 2025.

K.3 MLA Jill Balsler-Proposal of Quarterly Meetings start date of Feb. 2026 This has been discussed with MLA Balsler and staff will reach out for a date that will be of convenience to all parties.

K.4 Proposal for Formal Letter to Tri County School Board

Request for Council Approval to Send a Formal Letter to the Tri-County Regional Centre for Education Regarding the Digby Regional High School Theatre. It is felt by the theatre has not been readily accessible for public use for many years.

Motion

Motioned by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Councillor Weir that the committee requests staff to draft a letter to the tri-county Regional Center for Education expressing Council's support for reopening and restoring the Digby Regional High School Theatre for consistent community use to be brought forward to the Committee of the Whole Agenda in January.

Motion carried

K.5 Senior Safety Funding Update

New funding from the Provincial government is allocating \$25,250 for Senior Safety. \$250 of that money is to go towards World Elder Abuse Prevention activities.

L. IN-CAMERA- Security

Motion:

Motioned by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Mayor Bartlett that the committee go IN CAMERA for Security items.

Motion Carried

Motion:

Motioned by Mayor Bartlett and seconded Councillor McCormick that the committee go out of IN CAMERA for security.

Motion Carried

M. ADJOURNMENT

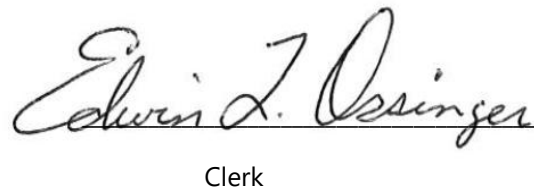
Motion:

Motioned by Deputy Mayor Saulnier and seconded by Councillor Foote that we adjourn the meeting at 7:42 PM.

Motion Carried



Deputy Mayor



Clerk