



COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

AUGUST 17, 2026

6:00 PM

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

STAFF PRESENT:

Tom Ossinger, Chief Administrative Officer
Leslie Brinton, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
James Strange, Deputy of Finance
Karen Morrell, Administrative Assistant

REGRETS:

A. CALL TO ORDER – ROLLCALL

Chair called the meeting at 6:00 PM

B. CELL PHONE USE DURING MEETINGS

C. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

D. AGENDA

D.1 Additions/Deletions

The agenda was amended to add Item:

L.4 Community Transportation Network Conference.

D.2 Approval

Motion:

Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Mayor Bartlett that the agenda for August 17, 2026 be approved as amended.

Motion carried

E. DECLARATIONS OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

E.1 None

F. DELEGATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

F.1 Proposed Location of Scallop Shell- Remi Theriault

Mr. Theriault spoke in support of the scallop shell project but opposed the proposed location within the waterfront right-of-way used for boat launching and marina operations. He advised that the right-of-way is approximately 33 feet wide and that the proposed base would substantially restrict access for wider boats, barges, emergency operations and equipment used to install and remove marina floats.

- The launch is heavily used by local boaters and has supported ferry-terminal work, emergency response and other marine operations.
- Continued access across adjacent private property is not guaranteed.
- An alternative location on Town-owned property across the road was suggested as visible and less disruptive.

Council received the presentation for consideration.

F.2 Buoy Wall-Caroline Starr

Ms. Starr presented a proposal on behalf of the Southwest Nova Mural Festival for a buoy wall on a Town-owned site, potentially near the proposed Basin's Edge park. The installation would celebrate the history of Digby's fisheries, it would provide a visitor attraction and gathering point, and help to raise funds for future public art by selling 'In memory buoys' to attach to the Buoy Wall.

- The festival is being planned for spring 2027, with mural painting tentatively beginning by May.
- The group is open to Town input on design, location, size and implementation. A starting width of approximately 20 to 25 feet was discussed, with possible future expansion.
- Council discussed maintenance, vandalism, volunteer capacity, compatibility with the lobster-trap tree fundraiser and possible private-property partnerships.
- Ms. Starr indicated the group would assist with ongoing inspection, repair, repainting and removal of damaged buoys, and would consult the lobster-trap tree organizers.

No motion was made. Council received the proposal for further consideration.

G. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

G.1 July 20, 2026

Motion:

Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Mayor Bartlett, that the minutes of July 20, 2026 be accepted as presented.

Motion carried

H. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES/UNFINISHED BUSINESS

H.1 None

I. STAFF REPORTS

I.1 Director of Finance

a) Report

The Director of Finance reported on budget information, Munisoft training and reporting improvements, tax reconciliation, audit preparation, municipal funding compliance, employee benefit administration, and insurance updates for newly acquired equipment. He also reported that work is underway to develop internal Public Works rates to help track the costs of staff, equipment, and vehicle use.

- Approximately \$23,000 in insurance proceeds relating to Hurricane Dorian claims was received. Staff advised that the funds ordinarily return to the general revenue as recovery of expenditures previously incurred.
- Several capital projects remain outstanding. Lift-station upgrades were expected to begin in October and were anticipated to be completed by the end of that month.
- The downtown solar crosswalk equipment remains backordered and will be installed when received.

b) Monthly Financial Statement – Operations

Operating results were reported as favourable at this stage, with revenue at approximately 40 to 44 percent of budget and approximately one-third of budgeted expenditures used.

c) Monthly Financial Statement - Capital

Several capital projects remain outstanding. Lift-station upgrades were expected to begin in October and were anticipated to be completed by the end of that month.

I.2 Director of Public Works

a) Report

Council reviewed updates on, lift stations, arrival of the six-ton excavator, the traffic plan for the Wharf Rat Rally, water testing and other Public Works activities. Drinking-water testing continued to show zero coliform. Paving of the small section near Warwick and King Streets was anticipated before the Wharf Rat Rally. Summer students were hired through Canada Summer Jobs with 50 percent wage funding for an eight-week term. Approximately half of the \$60,000

sidewalk and cement budget had been used. Additional work would depend on priority locations and available funds.

I.3 Special Constable/Bylaw Officer
a) Protective Services Report

Council noted that municipal cameras were operating normally. Campers had been observed at the Digby Station marshalling yard, enforcement signage for no camping in this area had not yet been installed at the time of this report. Waste had been removed from 60 King Street. Vendor licensing for Scallop Days had been submitted, with a similar application expected for the Wharf Rat Rally.

I.4 Dangerous & Unsightly Administrator
a) Dangerous or Unsightly Premises Reports

Council talked about downtown businesses who were forced to replace windows due to vandalism several times this summer, the lack of a response from the Office of the Premier regarding provincial housing due to health and safety concerns.

- Staff explained that a vehicle may be treated as derelict based on registration or inspection status and physical condition, including flat tires, vegetation growth, serious deterioration or long-term visible disuse. The Municipal Government Act definition also applies.
- Council was advised that at 138 King Street, all municipal inspection and enforcement options had been exhausted regarding the property. One tenant had been placed in a hotel and offered another unit. The provincial tenancy process is expected to continue and the Town agreed to monitor the situation closely and help where we are able to.
- Concerns continued regarding uncut lawns where the grass has been allowed to grow long.

I.5 Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
a) Report

The Deputy CAO reported that the Housing Accelerator Fund amendments and related initiatives were nearing completion. Funding had been secured for the proposed mural festival. Staff organized the July 23 Joe Casey Humanitarian Award ceremony, at which Alma and Dr. Grant Creighton were recognized for their dedication and commitment to the community.

- Meetings were held with the Department of Justice regarding a new RCMP billing model. Written correspondence outlining the changes was expected and would be distributed to Council when received.
- The Committee was provided with an update on the Town's Housing Accelerator Fund Initiative. Milestones for Initiatives 1 and 2 have been completed, with the final milestone to be completed once Council approves the new MPS and LUB. The Housing

Grant Program was completed on March 12, 2026, with two grants completed to date and additional grants in progress. The review of Development Charges has been completed, with the remaining milestones tied to approval and implementation of the Affordable Housing Grant Policy amendment. The review of the Development Approval Process has also been completed, with permit applications now available online. The new Concierge Service is expected to launch in September. The Housing Accelerator Fund specialist reviewed funded properties and was pleased with the Town's progress.

Deputy CAO Brinton thanked CAO Ossinger for his guidance and mentorship throughout her career at Digby Town Hall. She expressed her appreciation for his wisdom, support, and guidance, and noted that he would be greatly missed. She thanked Tom for his many years of support and leadership.

**I.6 Chief Administrative Officer
a) Report**

The CAO reported on development permits, fire inspections and 14 emergency calls. The Visitor Information Centre welcomed 1,942 visitors in July (200 more than last years numbers at this time), planning for the Thomas Road project continued. All sanctions and additional training required for one of the councillors, under the code of conduct letter of reprimand had been completed. The CAO's final written report was presented prior to his retirement.

CAO Ossinger thanked Council and staff for their support and expressed his appreciation for the many years he spent with the Town. He offered his best wishes to Council, staff, and the Town of Digby upon his retirement.

Motion:

Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Councillor Foote that the reports be accepted as presented.

Motion carried

J. CORRESPONDENCE

J.1 None

K. Public Comment on New Business Agenda Items

Fire Chief Robby Morgan, Charles Haliburton and Simone Sluth spoke regarding the proposed scallop shell location. Each supported the monument project but asked Council to preserve the existing waterfront right-of-way and boat-launch access.

- **Chief Morgan** emphasized that the location provides the Fire Department's only dependable means of launching and retrieving its rescue boat quickly. He referred to a recent basin rescue as an example of the importance of immediate access. The location is historically the only launch in the area that is assessable during mid to high tide. The right

of way width proposed that would allow boaters to use that location, after the monument is erected, is not efficient for any hauls that are over 8 feet.

- **Mr. Haliburton** emphasized the marina's tourism value, its reliance on volunteers for its operation and the need for unrestricted equipment access to install, remove and store the dock floats that are in the area of the proposed Scallop structure.
- **Ms. Sluth** spoke about the frequent use of the boat launch and the assistance marina members provide to boaters when there is a need. She expressed concern that the proposed location of the monument could affect the sense of community that exists now among boaters who reside here and for the ones who visit the area. She supported the concept of the monument but hopes that the committee hears the concerns of the residents and consider another location.

No decision was made on the location during this meeting.

L. NEW BUSINESS

L.1 NSFM Conference Nov. 03- Nov. 06, 2026

The NSFM Conference will be held November 3 to 6, 2026. Rooms have been secured. Members wishing to attend were asked to notify the Deputy CAO or reception promptly so rooms could be retained or released. Members are responsible for completing their own conference registration.

L.2 Name of Basin's Edge Park

Council discussed the need for a policy governing the naming of streets, parks and other public spaces. Staff advised that earlier research and a draft Street-naming policy could be expanded.

Direction:

Staff are to prepare an expanded or new public-space naming policy for consideration at either the next Committee of the Whole meeting or a Bylaw and Policy meeting.

L.3 Seasonal Banner & Flag Schedule

The proposed schedule coordinates seasonal changes, assists Public Works planning and provides earlier and longer recognition of veterans through the Legion banner program. The circulated version incorporated minor date adjustments recommended by the Executive Committee, including coordinating removal and installation dates to reduce repeat Public Works trips.

Motion:

Moved by Mayor Bartlett and second by Councillor Weir that the Committee recommend to Council that the seasonal banner and flag schedule, as amended, be approved.

Motion carried.

L.4 Community Transportation Network Conference.

Councillor Foote requested authorization to attend the Community Transportation Network conference in Halifax on September 23, 2026. The conference is expected to include government and transportation organizations and may support the work of the Town's transit committee. Mileage and an overnight stay may be required because of the early start time.

Motion:

Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Mayor Bartlett that Councillor Foote's conference attendance and related travel and accommodation request be forwarded to Council for approval.

Motion carried.

Council recognized CAO Tom Ossinger's more than 28 years of service and expressed appreciation for his leadership, dedication, and commitment to the Town of Digby and wished him all the best in his retirement.

M. IN-CAMERA

M.1 None

N. ADJOURNMENT

Motion:

Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Mayor Bartlett that we adjourn the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

Motion Carried



Mayor



Clerk