

## **Cape Breton Regional Municipality**

### Special Council Meeting Minutes

March 6, 2025

10:02 a.m. at City Hall Council Chambers

### **Council**

Mayor Cecil P. Clarke

Councillor Gordon MacDonald

Councillor Earlene MacMullin

Councillor Esmond "Blue" Marshall

Councillor Steve Gillespie

Deputy Mayor Eldon MacDonald

Councillor Glenn Paruch

Councillor Steve Parsons

Councillor Steven MacNeil

Councillor Dave MacKeigan

Councillor Paul Nickituk

Councillor Darren O'Quinn

Councillor Kim Sheppard-Campbell

### **Staff**

Demetri Kachafanas, KC, Interim Chief Administrative Officer

Jennifer Campbell, Chief Financial Officer

Christa Dicks, Municipal Clerk

Wayne MacDonald, Chief Engineer and Director of Engineering and Public Works

Kirk Durning, Director of Recreation, Parks and Grounds, and Buildings and Facilities

Deanna Evelyn, Director of Human Resources

Ray Boudreau, Director of Water and Wastewater

Robert Walsh, Chief of Police

Mark Bettens, Fire Chief and Director of Fire and Emergency Services

Tyson Simms, Director of Planning and Development

Stephen MacKinnon, Deputy Chief of Police

Reg Hutchings, Superintendent

Craig MacNeil, Deputy Fire Chief

John Phalen, Senior Manager of Engineering and Public Works

Bruce MacDonald, Manager of Emergency Management

Paul MacDonald, Facilities Manager

Greg Campbell, Manager of Technical Support Services - Utilities

Matt Viva, Manger of Wastewater Operations  
Francis Campbell, Manager of Solid Waste  
Cory Youden, Manager Engineering Services  
Brandon Talbolt, Manager of Water and Wastewater  
Kyle Quinn, Manager Technical Support Services, Water and Wastewater  
Jamie Gillis, Manager of Parks, Grounds & Buildings  
Wil Van Hal, Manager of Recreation  
Sean Tobin, Chief of Staff  
Toni Delorenzo, Principal Secretary, Mayor's Office  
Tyler MacKeigan, Human Resources Manager  
Karen Neville, Senior Planner  
Jennifer Collins, Supervisor, Water and Wastewater  
Christina Lamey, Communications and Information Officer  
Desiree Magnus, CBRPS Communications and Public Relations Advisor  
Jenna MacQueen, Communications Advisor  
Kirk MacNeil, Financial Services Clerk, Engineering and Public Works  
Spencer Merrill, Information Technology Technician  
Kelly McDonald, Administrative Assistant – Clerk's Office  
YueCong Cao, Administrative Assistant – Clerk's Office  
Sharon MacSween, Senior Administrative Assistant, Recording Secretary

The following does not represent a word for word record of the proceedings of this meeting. The agenda, reports, supporting documents, information items circulated, and video (if available) are online at [www.cbrm.ns.ca](http://www.cbrm.ns.ca).

**Mayor Cecil P. Clarke called the meeting to order.**

**Land Acknowledgement**

**Roll Call**

**1. Approval of Agenda**

**Motion**

Moved by Councillor Paruch, seconded by Councillor Parsons, to approve the March 6, 2025, Special Council Agenda for Budget Deliberations as presented.

**Motion Carried**

Mayor Clarke advised that discussion will take place in a rotating series of two minutes for each councillor as long as there are questions before proceeding to the main motion. Council agreed.

## **2. Operating**

### **a) Amended Policy – Low Income Tax Exemption Policy**

Jennifer Campbell, Chief Financial Officer, reviewed the staff report included in the Special Council agenda package.

In response to a question regarding information on the CBRM website, the CFO advised that the information provided is current and that low income tax exemption rate is maintained at the current policy. She reminded that consideration is being made to amend the policy at this meeting, and the staff report specifically stated that the exemption amount would be the rate going forward into the future budget year and not the current taxation year.

#### **Motion**

Moved by Councillor MacMullin, seconded by Councillor Marshall, to approve the Low Income Tax Exemption Policy as amended.

#### **Motion Carried**

At 10:07 a.m., staff circulated to Council a summary document of the 2025-26 capital and operating budget.

### **b) Draft Operating Budget Presentation 2025-2026**

Mayor Clarke introduced the draft Operating Budget and advised that the staff presentation was completed at the Special Council Stakeholder Session which took place last evening. The floor was then opened for questions for the Chief Financial Officer.

Discussion took place on expenses, cost recovery, contracts and agreements, and various projects and initiatives.

The following motion was put forward:

**Motion**

Moved by Councillor MacMullin, seconded by Deputy Mayor Eldon MacDonald, to approve the Operating Budget for 2025-26 of \$187,850,713 and associated tax rates as presented.

Discussion:

During discussion, it was clarified that the Police Budget is included in the Operational Budget, and that an annual grant to Destination Cape Breton will continue until a MOU is signed.

**Motion Carried**

A recorded vote took place and was carried unanimously.

**3. Capital**

**a) Debt Management Policy and Repeal of Borrowing Policy**

Jennifer Campbell, Chief Financial Officer, provided background on the issue as previously presented at the Audit Committee meeting of March 5, 2025.

**Motion**

Moved by Councillor Sheppard-Campbell, seconded by Councillor Paruch, to approve the Debt Management Policy and repeal of the Borrowing Policy presented.

**Motion Carried**

**b) Infrastructure Prioritization Framework**

Matt Viva, Senior Manager Engineering Services, reviewed the staff report included in the agenda package. After discussion, the following motion was put forward:

**Motion**

Moved by Deputy Mayor Eldon MacDonald, seconded by Councillor Gordon MacDonald, to adopt the CBRM Infrastructure Prioritization Framework as the official replacement of the 2000 Infrastructure Needs Assessment Model.

**Motion Carried**

At 12:30 p.m., the WasteWater Operating Budget was addressed.

#### **4. DRAFT Water / Wastewater**

##### **a) Waste Water Operating Budget**

##### **Motion**

Moved by Councillor MacMullin, seconded by Councillor Gordon MacDonald, to approve the Wastewater Operational Budget for 2025/26.

##### **Motion Carried**

#### **3. Capital (Continued)**

##### **c) DRAFT Capital Budget 2025-2026**

Mayor Clarke introduced the Capital Budget following by an opportunity for questions for the Director of Engineering and Public Works.

Discussion took place on projects and initiatives, demolitions and upgrades and the debt management plan.

##### **Motion**

Moved by Councillor Paruch, seconded by Councillor Gordon MacDonald, to approve the:

- Capital Budget for 2025-26
- Approval of Temporary Borrowing Resolution
- Transfer from Operating reserve
  - Parks Community Initiatives \$583k
  - J-Class Road Contribution \$150k
  - Building Efficiency Upgrades \$100k
- Transfer from Capital Reserve
  - Building upgrades \$160k
  - C200 \$713k

##### **Motion Carried**

A recorded vote took place and was carried unanimously.

Mayor Clarke thanked Council for their engagement and facilitating bringing citizens together, and to the CFO, CAO and Directors and staff for their work and efforts during the budgetary process.

**5. DRAFT Water / Wastewater**

**a) Waste Water Operating Budget**

This item was dealt with earlier in the meeting.

**Meeting adjourned at 1:24 p.m.**

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**Cecil P. Clarke**  
**Mayor**

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**Christa Dicks**  
**Municipal Clerk**  
/slm