

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 Evely, 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, Manager of Wastewater Operations

Francis Campbell, Manager of Solid Waste

Cory Youden, Manager Engineering Services

Brandon Talbott, 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.

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.

Cecil P. Clarke
Mayor

Christa Dicks
Municipal Clerk
/slm