Cape Breton Regional Municipality
Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes
February 3, 2026
10:00 a.m. at City Hall Council Chambers

Council
Mayor Cecil P. Clarke (Left at 1:30 p.m.)
Councillor Gordon MacDonald
Councillor Earlene MacMullin
Councillor Esmond “Blue” Marshall (Left at 1:31 p.m.)
Councillor Steve Gillespie (Arrived at 10:37 a.m.)
Councillor Eldon MacDonald
Deputy Mayor Glenn Paruch
Councillor Steve Parsons
Councillor Steven MacNeil
Councillor Dave MacKeigan
Councillor Darren O’Quinn (Left at 2:25 p.m.)
Councillor Kim Sheppard-Campbell (Left at 12:52 p.m.)

Staff
Demetri Kachafanas, KC, Chief Administrative Officer
Christa Dicks, Municipal Clerk / Director of Corporate Information Services
Tony Mozvik, KC, Director of Legal Services
Tyson Simms, Director of Planning and Development
John Phalen, Director of Public Works
Mark Bettens, Fire Chief / Director of Fire and Emergency Services
Bruce MacDonald, Manager of Emergency Management
Craig MacNeil, Deputy Fire Chief
Chris March, Deputy Fire Chief
Sheila Kolanko, Property Manager
Toni Delorenzo, Principal Secretary, Mayor’s Office
Jenna MacQueen, Communications Advisor
Christina Lamey, Communications Manager
Roschell Clarke, Regional Educations Coordinator
Dana Milley, Solid Waste Manager
Daniel Munden, CBRPS Constable
Spencer Merrill, Information Technology Technician
Kelly McDonald, Administrative Assistant, Clerk’s Office
Yuecong Cao, Recording Secretary

Absent
Councillor Paul Nickituk (Leave of absence)

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 Parsons, seconded by Councillor O'Quinn, to approve the February 3, 2026, committee of the whole agenda as presented.

Motion Carried

2. Presentations

2.1 Catalone Lake Restoration Committee Briefing

Mayor Clarke introduced the representative from Catalone Lake Restoration Committee to provide a presentation on the restoration project. The presentation included topics such as the Google Maps view of Mira Bay and Catalone Gut, early map of Mira Bay and Catalone, and pre-Fiona hurricane shoreline erosion. Discussion took place regarding third-party funding for the Catalone Lake restoration project. It was noted that Ducks Unlimited has offered support and the province is focused on bridge related work. The Catalone Lake Restoration Committee aims to secure additional funding to support dredging and armor stone. A council agenda request will advocate for this, which is included in the agenda package.

For Information Only

Deputy Mayor Paruch assumed the Chair at 10:10 a.m. for the Fire and Emergency Services portion of the agenda.

3. Fire and Emergency Services

3.1 Fire and Emergency Services Updates

Mark Bettens, Fire Chief and Director of Fire and Emergency Services, provided an update on the items outlined in the letter included in the agenda package. Discussion took place regarding provincial burn units and wildland urban interface training. The province announced new burn units that will be accessible to CBRM initially due to local trained staff. CBRM participated in wildland urban interface training for nearly 100 firefighters, including fifty-five fire fighters from CBRM, with another session planned. Regarding the foam trailer for Imperial Oil, it has arrived and two staff trained; CBRM has full authority to deploy it without going through Esso, with additional training scheduled for spring, and two career firefighters and one airport firefighter completed training in Texas.

For Information Only

3.2 Manager of Emergency Management Report

Bruce MacDonald, Manager of Emergency Management, reviewed the staff report included in the agenda package. Discussion took place to request an updated report to Council, which will be provided in approximately one year, and will included the hazard risk vulnerability assessment.

For Information Only

3.3 Training, Fleet, Volunteer Operations, and Fire Prevention Report

Craig MacNeil, Deputy Fire Chief, reviewed the staff report included in the agenda package. Discussion took place regarding details of the smoke alarm program, paging issues in Dominion and Bateston, details regarding Medical First Responder (MFR) training course and the cost, Emergency Health Services (EHS) cost, MFR levels of service and call response, and 96 CBRM volunteer firefighters registered for the new Certified Level One Course. The

Committee requested Municipal Clerk, Christa Dicks, to gather background information regarding MFR and EHS cost recovery.

For Information Only

At the request of Rod Beresford, Cape Breton Regional Fire Chiefs' Association (CBRFCA) Chairperson, Deputy Mayor Paruch asked the Committee to consider item three point seven at this point in the meeting; Council agreed.

3.7 Medical First Responder Services

CBRFCA Chairperson Beresford, reviewed the letter regarding MFR services included in the agenda package. Discussion took place regarding the funding and jurisdiction of volunteer firefighter MFR services, cost analysis and potential provincial reimbursement, clarification that there is no intent to eliminate the service, improving communication, and exploring formal mutual aid agreements. The following motion was then put forward:

Motion

Moved by Councillor Gillespie, seconded by Councillor Parsons, that Committee of the Whole recommend to Council to direct CAO and Fire Chief Bettens to direct Deputy Chief MacNeil who is a member of Fire Services Association of Nova Scotia (FSANS) to discuss the Medical First Responder (MFR) and report back to CBRM Council.

Motion Carried

Discussion continued regarding fire department support, MFR, cost breakdown and recovery, service downloading, and CBRM Fire and Emergency Services stand alone committee reformation.

Councillor Eldon MacDonald assumed the Chair at 11:34 a.m.

Deputy Mayor Paruch resumed the Chair at 11:37 a.m.

The following motion was then put forward:

Motion

Moved by Councillor Parsons, seconded by Councillor Sheppard-Campbell, that Committee of the Whole recommend to Council to direct staff to implement Fire Services be set up as a stand alone committee under its own policies and bylaws as it was prior to 2024.

Discussion:

- Need of new policies and structure

Motion Carried

3.8 Report to CBRM Regarding Fire and Emergency Services

CBRFCA Chairperson Beresford reviewed the letter included in the agenda package. The following motion was then put forward:

Motion

Moved by Councillor Parsons, seconded by Councillor Gordon MacDonald, that the Committee of the Whole recommend to Council to direct staff to implement a Cape Breton Regional Municipality Firefighter Recognition Program consisting of 5, 10, and 15 year service awards, along with a Long Service Award for 50 years of service.

Discussion:

- Create awards recognizing firefighter service milestones

Motion Carried

3.9 Cape Breton Regional Fire Chiefs' Association Letter

CBRFCA Chairperson Beresford reviewed the letter included in the agenda package.

For Information Only

3.4 Fleet List and Fire Underwriters Survey

Deputy Fire Chief MacNeil noted that the item was submitted for the Committee's review and information.

Information Only

3.5 Average Medical First Response Cost

Chris March, Deputy Fire Chief, reviewed the staff report included in the agenda package. Discussion took place regarding call volumes and cost breakdowns. Requests were made for volunteer station data, inclusion of station sitting costs and detailed breakdowns, including provincial reimbursements for items such as blankets, masks, mileage, and equipment deterioration.

For Information Only

3.6 Operations Report

Deputy Fire Chief March reviewed the operations report included in the agenda package.

Councillor Gillespie requested to ask a question regarding item three point four, Council agreed. Discussion took place regarding insurance quote rates regarding the insurance quote rates.

Item three point four discussion ended and discussion continued regarding Nova Scotia Medal of Bravery. Discussion took place regarding hazmat safety training budget and costs, and equipment.

For Information Only

Council recessed at 12:23 a.m.

Council reconvened at 12:52 p.m.

Mayor Clarke resumed the Chair at 12:52 p.m.

4. Corporate Services Issues

4.1 Request for Street Closure

Sheila Kolanko, Property Manager, reviewed the staff report and recommendation included in the agenda. The following motion was then put forward:

Motion

Moved by Councillor Eldon MacDonald, seconded by Deputy Mayor Paruch, that Committee of the Whole recommend Council to pass a motion directing staff to initiate the process and schedule a public hearing for consideration of the street closure for that portion of the undeveloped section of George Street identified in the report, which is included in the agenda package, pursuant to the *Municipal Government Act*.

Motion Carried

4.2 Deputy Mayor Policy

Christa Dicks, Municipal Clerk / Director of Corporate Information Services, reviewed the staff report and recommendation included in the agenda package. Discussion took place regarding Deputy Mayor compensation, policy language for terms under eight point three, and a potential travel policy for concurrent travel by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. The following motion was then put forward:

Motion

Moved by Deputy Mayor Paruch, seconded by Councillor Gordon MacDonald, that Committee of the Whole recommend Council repeal the Policy Respecting the Deputy Mayor (approved on January 20, 1998, and amended on March 11, 2005) to be replaced with the Deputy Mayor Policy.

Motion Carried

4.3 Acceptable Use of Information Technology Policy

Christa Dicks, Municipal Clerk / Director of Corporate Information Services, reviewed the staff report and recommendation included in the agenda package. Discussion took place regarding users and clarification on monitoring intent. Council requested that Elected Officials be excluded from the proposed policy. Discussion continued regarding Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy process, the code of conduct, policy language, training and awareness, and the CBRM policy priority list.

Deputy Mayor Paruch assumed the Chair at 1:30 p.m.

4.4 Litter and Illegal Dumping

John Phalen, Director of Public Works, provided a presentation titled, “CBRM Solid Waste Department – Litter and Illegal Dumping”. The presentation included topics such as the school education program, business engagement program, community engagement program, litter cleanup promotion, litter prevention initiatives, community-driven litter cleanups, student programs, safe sharps drop-off program, illegal dumping program, curbside non-compliance program, reducing roadside litter and debris, drive-thru monitoring program, and the problem and the solution. Discussion took place regarding illegal dumping and littering concerns, challenges in enforcing littering penalties, efforts by local groups and enforcement strategies, community involvement, and education programs.

For Information Only

5. Council Agenda Request

5.1 Catalone Lake Restoration Update

Councillor MacNeil reviewed the council agenda request form and recommendation included in the agenda package. The following motion was then put forward:

Motion

Moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Parsons, that Committee of the Whole recommend to Council to request Mayor to write letters to the Honourable Minister of Public Works, the Honourable Minister of Environment, and the Honourable Premier Tim Houston in support of the dredging and restoration of Catalone Lake and Catalone Gut in conjunction with the Catalone Gut bridge project.

Discussion:

- Ducks Unlimited funding commitment
- Linking bridge removal to lake restoration.

Motion Carried

5.2 Policies and Procedures for the Port Side Asset

A Point of Order was raised by Councillor Gillespie regarding committee quorum.

Councillor MacNeil reviewed the council agenda request form and recommendation included in the agenda package. The following motion was then put forward:

Motion

Moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor MacKeigan, that Committee of the Whole recommend to Council to direct the CAO to direct staff to organize and schedule a workshop (before the next Committee of the Whole meeting in March 2026) to establish proper procedures and next steps for a potential Request for Proposal (RFP) or expression of interest seeking development of the municipality's port site asset.

Discussion:

- Timeline constraints

Amended Motion

Moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor MacKeigan, that Committee of the Whole recommend to Council to direct the CAO to direct staff to organize and schedule a workshop with an updated timeline provided at the next committee of the whole meeting in March 2026, to establish proper procedures and next steps for a potential Request for Proposal (RFP) or Expression of Interest (EOI) seeking development of the municipality's port site asset.

Discussion:

- Budget schedule

Main Motion Withdrawn

Amended Motion Carried

For the above amended motion, Council ratified the seconder at its February 10, 2026, meeting.

5.3 Street Light Policy

Councillor MacNeil reviewed the council agenda request form and recommendation included in the agenda package. The following motion was then put forward:

Motion

Moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Gordon MacDonald, that Committee of the Whole recommend to Council to direct the CAO to direct staff to review the CBRM's Street Light Policy, perform a jurisdictional scan of best practices, coordinate with provincial counterparts, and report new options back to Council that consider solar lighting as options for lights of convenience and options for areas of inadequate lighting that may be outside the current policy.

Discussion:

- Jurisdiction and funding responsibilities related to streetlights on provincial roads
- Policy review requested

Motion Carried

5.4 Presentation of Petition – Old Town Post Office Redevelopment

Councillor MacMullin reviewed the council agenda request form and recommendation included in the agenda package. The following motion was then put forward:

Motion

Moved by Councillor MacMullin, seconded by Councillor Gordon MacDonald, that Committee of the Whole recommend Council receive the petition requesting the demolition and redevelopment of 17 Archibald Avenue, North Sydney, known as the old town post office, as part of the public record and

consider the necessary steps and budget implications with community and government stakeholders.

Discussion:

- Hazardous vacant buildings
- Demolition costs
- MGA requirements regarding taxes

Motion Carried

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

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Cecil P. Clarke
Mayor

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Christa Dicks
Municipal Clerk
/yc