

Notes of a Meeting of the REMO Advisory Committee

Virtual Meeting held on Microsoft Teams
January 26, 2026 – 10:00 a.m.

Attendance

Municipality of the District of Chester

Warden Allen Webber
Deputy Warden Abdella Assaf
Councillor Andre Veinotte
Tara Maguire, CAO
Erin Lowe, Deputy CAO

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

Mayor Elspeth McLean-Wile
Tom MacEwan, CAO
Alex Dumaresq, Deputy CAO

Town of Bridgewater

Mayor David Mitchell, Chair
Councillor Braden Newell
Mark Flint, Deputy CAO

Town of Lunenburg

Mayor Jamie Myra, Vice-Chair
Deputy Mayor Rachel Bailey
Councillor Gale Fullerton
Paul Nopper, CAO

Town of Mahone Bay

Mayor Suzanne Lohnes Croft
Councillor Kelly Wilson
Councillor Penny Carver
Dylan Heide, CAO
Eric Levy, Deputy CAO

Regrets

Councillor Martin Bell - MODL
Deputy Mayor Chasidy Veinotte - MODL
Deputy Mayor Jennifer MacDonald – Town of Bridgewater
Tammy Crowder, CAO – Town of Bridgewater

Staff

Angela Henhoeffler, REMO Manager

Rebecca Baccardax, Community Readiness Coordinator

Other Attendees

Mark Furey, Executive Director NS Department of Emergency Management (DEM)

Ryan Doherty, Region 6 Manager NS Department of Emergency Management (DEM)

1. Call to Order

Mayor Mitchell called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

2. Nomination & Election of Chair & Vice-Chair

The nomination and election of Chair and Vice Chair was deferred to the following REMO Advisory Committee meeting on Monday March 16th, 2026.

3. Approval of Agenda

A change was requested to defer the election of Chair and Vice Chair to the following REMO Advisory Committee on March 16th, 2026, and to add a discussion about the ECC Training Expression of Interest to the Agenda under section 10 - Added Items.

Moved by Mayor McLean-Wile, seconded by Councilor Newell that the Agenda be approved as amended. Carried unanimously.

4. Approval of Notes – November 17, 2025

The notes of the November 17th, 2025 REMO Advisory Committee meeting were approved as circulated.

5. Business Arising from Notes

5.1 Updated DEM Standards (Mark Furey, Executive Director)

Mark Furey, Executive Director of the Department of Emergency Management (DEM) provided an update on the following:

The final draft of the updated DEM standards was circulated to REMOs and CAOs on November 28, 2025.

At the upcoming Emergency Resilience Forum in Truro NS (January 28-29), CAOs and Emergency Management Coordinators will be given a final opportunity to ask questions and provide input. Following the forum, the finalized standards document will be circulated.

Mr. Furey noted that productive engagement has occurred over the past 6 months, particularly at the CAOs table. DEM's intent is that the updated standards help to streamline processes and improve resource sharing. DEM's intent is to maintain open dialogue with municipal units, with questions directed to Ryan Doherty, Region 6 Manager.

Questions arose as to whether the PCC will be taking a larger role in emergency response, with municipal REMOs taking on more responsibility for preparedness. Mr. Furey clarified that DEM will continue in a supporting role, stepping in only when additional support is required.

Mayor McLean-Wile noted that while the intent of the document is clear through discussion, the existing standards document does not fully reflect the nuance of those conversations. Mr. Furey assured the REMO Advisory Committee that this concern will be considered in the final revisions.

5.2 Governance Documents for Partner Council's Review

Ms. Henhoeffler reminded CAOs that the final draft of the Inter-Municipal Services Agreement (IMSA), updated on November 17, 2025, should be brought forward to individual Councils for final review and approval as soon as possible.

5.3 Generator Suitability – Forest Heights and NSCC

Ms. Henhoeffler noted that work is ongoing to determine the suitability of the generators offered by donation to Lunenburg REMO for the sites of consideration. An update will be provided at the next REMO Advisory Committee meeting on March 16, 2026.

6. Correspondence

6.1 Kings County Hazmat - Suspension of Service

Mr. Furey, Executive Director of DEM, noted that the suspension of Kings County's Hazmat Service came into effect December 19, 2025. He noted that in the interim, DEM has secured a commitment from HRM's Hazmat team to support Southwest Nova Scotia, however, concern remains about response times. DEM is engaged in ongoing conversation with Kings County Hazmat about what would be required to reinstate their service.

7. New Business

7.1 REMO Vision Statement Review

Ms. Henhoeffler presented a draft of the REMO Vision Statement for the Committee's review and approval.

Moved by Councillor Newell, seconded by Warden Webber that the REMO Advisory Committee adopt the vision statement as presented. Motion carried.

7.2 REMO 2025-26 Year in Review and 2026-27 Budget Presentation

Ms. Henhoeffler provided updates on key activities that took place over the 2025-26 year, including staff participation in training, exercises, and stakeholder meetings. She also highlighted various outreach activities and a summary of ECC activations throughout the last year. Finally, Council was reminded about REMOs Readiness Grant and the proposed budget for the 2026-27 fiscal year.

In 2025, a new staff person was hired, and the process for hiring a new Community Readiness Coordinator for Chester began. Changes to the AEC team were noted, as was the staff turnover affecting the Information Officers team. With reviews to REMO Governance, new DEM standards, the ongoing the Fire Services Review, future GSAR review, and threat hazards assessments, many additional meetings took place in 2025 compared with the year prior and will continue in future.

Commitments for the 2026-27 work plan have been outlined in the 3-Year Work Plan which was presented to the CAOs and Advisory last year. Ms. Henhoeffler detailed the specific commitments staff will fulfill in 2026-27, including offering 10 training/exercises, 100 hours of stakeholder engagement, and continuing to work through After-Action Report items.

In late 2025, REMO was awarded a Readiness Grant from the Department of Emergency Management, and will receive \$100,000 for four years, with offset contributions from the municipal units. This funding will be put towards upgrades to the Emergency Coordination Centre in Chester, the installation of additional phone lines, and the hiring of a consultant to revamp REMO's staff training program.

Ms. Henhoeffler presented a proposed budget for 2026-27. In the upcoming fiscal year, REMO will use a new cost sharing formula as presented via the Governance document presented to each council (each municipal unit paying a 20% base rate + uniform assessment). Also, per the Governance agreement, this budget is to go to each partner Councils for discussion and feedback, after which a final budget will be presented to REMAC and back to each unit for approval.

Moved by Mayor Myra, seconded by Mayor Lohnes-Croft that the REMO draft 2026/27 budget be presented to partner units for discussion and feedback to the REMO Advisory Committee for final budget deliberations. Motion carried.

7.2.1 2025-12-15 Search & Rescue Financial Statements

Ms. Henhoeffler noted that the Lunenburg County Ground Search and Rescue team has provided their financial statements for the period of January 1, 2025 – November 30, 2025, and is requesting the same amount in the 2026-27 fiscal year. This request has been accounted for in the 2026-27 budget proposal.

7.3 NOTICE: March 16, 2026 – State of Local Emergency (SOLE) Training

Ms. Henhoeffler noted that as part of the upcoming REMAC meeting on March 16, 2026, the committee will be reviewing the processes for declaring a State of Local Emergency (SOLE). The intent is to review this process twice annually during REMAC meetings.

8. NS DEM Updates

Ryan Doherty, DEM Region 6 Manager, reiterated that the updated DEM standards, along with other important DEM updates, will be provided at the Emergency Resilience Forum this week in Truro.

9. REMO Coordinator Updates

Ms. Henhoeffer provided updates to the committee on staff activities related to governance, training and exercises, public education, outreach and stakeholder engagement, and noted the following:

There are now 58 staff supporting REMO from across all 5 municipal units, and that staff turnover in Communications has led to changes in the Information Officer team. Once the new staff are hired, work will proceed to integrate them into REMO processes.

Two ICS 200 courses were held in November and January, one for firefighters and one for municipal staff. Scribe training was also delivered for municipal staff. REMO participated in community emergency exercises at Shoreham Village (Chester) and Ryan Hall (Bridgewater).

REMO has launched an engagement campaign called Emergency Management Mondays to increase public awareness of preparedness and local emergency resources. REMO is also organizing the Emergency Preparedness Expo on Saturday, May 9, 2026 at the South Shore Exhibition Grounds. This free event is part of National Emergency Preparedness Week.

Upcoming work includes presentations for vulnerable sector organizations of Lunenburg County, and quarterly meetings with local care facilities to build preparedness capacity.

Staff are continuing work with the Accessibility Coordinator to ensure REMO is in alignment with regional accessibility goals.

10. Added Items – ECC Expression of Interest

Ms. Henhoeffer provided updates on the following:

In December 2025, REMO drafted an Expression of Interest to hire a consulting, allocating \$25,000 from the DEM Readiness Grant, to hire a consultant to revamp training efforts. Five applications were accepted, with costs ranging from \$59,000 - \$300,000. After scoring, the consultant with the second lowest cost received the highest marks.

Staff are proposing to select the highest scoring candidate, while also proposing changes to the initial proposal to lower the cost of the work, while also spreading the costs over 2 years. These adjustments are reflected in the proposed 2026-27 budget.

11. Next Meeting

Monday, March 16, 2026 at 10:00 AM virtually and at MODL Council Chambers.

12. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:21 AM.