

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg Minutes of a Meeting of Municipal Council

Held in Council Chamber, 10 Allée Champlain Drive, Cookville, N.S.
Tuesday, January 13, 2026– 6:00 p.m.

Attendance

Mayor Elspeth McLean-Wile
Deputy Mayor Chasidy Veinotte, District 10
Councillor Morgen Reinhardt, District 1
Councillor Martin Bell, District 2
Councillor Wendy Oickle, District 3
Councillor Pam Hubley, District 4
Councillor Cathy Moore, District 5
Councillor Alison Smith, District 6
Councillor Edgar Burns, District 7
Councillor Ben Brooks, District 9 (Via Teams)

Regrets

Councillor Kacy DeLong, District 8

Staff

Tom MacEwan, Chief Administrative Officer
Alex Dumaresq, Deputy CAO
April Whynot-Lohnes, Municipal Clerk
Tina Robichaud-Bond, Executive Assistant

1. Call to Order

Mayor McLean-Wile called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and began by acknowledging that the meeting was held in Mi'kma'ki, the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

2. Announcements/Acknowledgements/Recognition

Mayor McLean-Wile recognized long-serving Council members Cathy Moore (20 years of service) and Martin Bell (25 years of service) for their dedication and contributions to the Municipality and presented service recognitions on behalf of Council.

2.1 Proclamation – Alzheimer Awareness Month

Mayor McLean-Wile proclaimed January 2026 as Alzheimer Awareness Month in the District of Lunenburg, noting the growing prevalence of dementia in Nova Scotia and recognizing the work of the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia.

3. Public Input - Nil

4. Approval of Agenda

The following additions/changes to the agenda were requested:

- Add the approval of the Minutes of the November 25, 2025 Special Council Minutes
- Move Item 11.1.1, the Broad Cove Community Association Stewardship Agreement, to follow Item 8.1, to accommodate public attendance.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Veinotte, seconded by Councillor Bell that the Agenda be approved as amended. Carried unanimously.

5. Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of the December 9, 2025 Special Council meeting were approved as circulated.

The Minutes of the December 9, 2025 Council meeting were approved as circulated.

The Minutes of the November 25, 2025 Special Council meeting were approved as circulated.

6. Business Arising from Minutes – Nil

7. Awarding of Tenders/RFPs

7.1 Purchase of Accessible E-Bike from Hamilton Trike

Moira Frier, Active Living Coordinator, reviewed the report, “Accessible E-Bike” (circulated with the agenda) providing details on the e-bike and the sole source procurement process under Policy 033.

2026-001 Moved by Councillor Hubley, seconded by Deputy Mayor Veinotte that Municipal Council award the purchase of an accessible e-bike to Hamilton Trike in the amount of \$18,593, exclusive of HST and shipping cost.

It was noted that:

- \$4,680 would come from Active Transportation budget;
- The e-bike would be stored at the LCLC.

The motion on the floor was voted on and carried unanimously.

8. Presentations/Scheduled Times

8.1 Bridgewater & Area Food Bank

John Biddle, Food Bank Coordinator, and Kevin Keddy, Treasurer, gave a presentation titled “Bridgewater and Area Interchurch Food Bank” (circulated with the agenda), providing details on the following:

- Food Insecurity
- Bridgewater and Area Interchurch Food Bank mandate and membership
- Hours of operation and provided services
- Regions served
- Client visits
- Challenges re expenses/revenue
- Ask of Council

The food bank asked that Council consider a \$20,000 grant in 2026. Mayor explained that this ask would be factored into the budget process.

Mr. Biddle and Mr. Keddy left the meeting.

11. Staff Reports

11.1 Recreation, Parks & Tourism

11.1.1 Broad Cove Community Association – Stewardship Agreement

Trudy Payne, Director of Recreation, Parks & Tourism, reviewed the report, “Broad Cove Community Association – Request re PID 60592581” (circulated with the agenda), providing details on the Stewardship Agreement with the Association regarding lands located adjacent to Broad Cove Beach.

Ms. Payne advised that the Stewardship Agreement was drafted by the Municipality’s Chief Information Officer and refined through consultation with the Broad Cove Community Association. The purpose of the Agreement was to authorize the Association to manage the lands adjacent to Broad Cove Beach, including permitted and prohibited uses, and to continue the long-standing partnership between the Municipality and the community.

2026-002 Moved by Councillor Reinhardt, seconded by Councillor Bell that Municipal Council authorize the Mayor and Municipal Clerk to sign the Stewardship Agreement with the Broad Cove Community Association for the purposes of managing the lands adjacent to the Broad Cove Beach, PID 60592581, as presented. Carried unanimously.

9. Consideration of Correspondence - Nil

10. Recommendations from Committees & Boards

10.1. Dangerous & Unsightly Committee

10.1.1 Property Clean up – 4388 Cornwall Road, Union Square

A recommendation from the Dangerous & Unsightly Committee, including a report titled, “Property – 4388 Cornwall Rd, Union Square PID 60284536 AAN 02818671 LU-DU2025-004” was circulated with the agenda.

Amanda Esterbrooks, Building Official, reviewed the report and outlined enforcement actions taken under the **Municipal Government Act**. She advised that the report showed a discrepancy between the quoted amount and the amount shown in the recommendation. She confirmed that the correct amount was \$7353.69.

2026-003 Moved by Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor Moore that Municipal Council accept the recommendation of the Dangerous & Unsightly Committee and award RFQ 2025-01-312 for the cleanup of the demolished house and property located at 4388 Cornwall Road, Union Square, PID 60284536, to the lowest bidder, Steward-Lucas Inc., in the amount of \$7353.69 plus HST, subject to confirmation of WCB and insurance.

It was clarified that awards are based on qualifications, insurance, and the lowest bid.

The Motion on the floor was voted on and carried unanimously.

10.1.2 Property Clean up – 68 Cove Road, Conquerall Bank

A recommendation from the Dangerous & Unsightly Committee, including a report titled, “Property – 68 Cove Rd, Conquerall Bank – Earl McAlpine PID 60337169 AAN 00889547 LU-US2024-021” was circulated with the agenda.

Amanda Esterbrooks, Building Official, reviewed the report and outlined enforcement actions taken under the **Municipal Government Act**.

2026-004 Moved by Councillor Bell, seconded by Councillor Moore that Municipal Council accept the recommendation of the Dangerous & Unsightly Committee and award RFQ 2025-01-314 for the demolition and cleanup of the property located at 68 Cove Road, Conquerall Bank, PID 60337169, to the lowest bidder, Steward-Lucas Inc., in the amount of \$8771.93 plus HST, subject to confirmation of WCB and insurance.

It was clarified that should the successful bidder not be able to provide confirmation of WCB and insurance, the award would be given to the next lowest bidder who could provide the required documentation.

Concerns were raised that the project was being awarded prior to receiving confirmation of WCB and insurance. It was explained that the bidders were providing quotes only and would not have to provide confirmation prior to being awarded the project.

The Motion on the floor voted on and carried unanimously.

10.1.3 Property Clean up – Dorey Mills Road, Clearland

A recommendation from the Dangerous & Unsightly Committee, including a report titled, “Property – Dorey Mills Rd, Clearland PID 60226453 AAN 04159403 LU-US2024-002” was circulated with the agenda.

Amanda Esterbrooks, Building Official, reviewed the report and explained that the property had been found to be dangerous and unsightly.

2026-005 Moved by Deputy Mayor Veinotte, seconded by Councillor Hubley that Municipal Council accept the recommendation of the Dangerous & Unsightly Committee and award RFQ 2025-01-311 for the demolition and cleanup of the property located at Dorey Mills Rd., Clearland, PID 60226453, to the lowest bidder, Steward-Lucas Inc., in the amount of \$3939 plus HST, subject to confirmation of WCB and insurance. Carried unanimously.

11. Staff Reports

11.2 Finance Department

11.2.1 Interest Adjustment Consideration – Centre Scolaire de la Rive-Sud (CSAP)

Elana Wentzell, Director of Finance, reviewed the report, “Interest Adjustment Consideration – Centre Scolaire de la Rive-Sud (Conseil Scolaire Acadien Provincial)” (circulated with the agenda), providing details on the overdue interest charges on municipal sewer invoices.

2026-006 Moved by Councillor Burns, seconded by Councillor Moore that Municipal Council direct staff to write off interest related to the sewer billing for the Centre Scolaire de la Rive-Sud in the amount of \$28,664.53.

It was noted that the provincial inter-departmental memo (attached to Minutes), was clear that schools do not have to pay interest on past due accounts.

The Motion on the floor was voted on and carried. Those Opposed: Councillors Bell, Hubley, Brooks, and Deputy Mayor Veinotte

11.2.2 2026-2027 Draft Capital Budget Update, Draft Operating Budget Assumptions, and Communication Plan

A report titled, “2026-27 Draft Capital Budget Update, Draft Operating Budget Assumptions and Communication Plan” providing updates to the draft capital budget and reviewing key operating budget assumptions and timelines, was circulated with the agenda.

Elana Wentzell, Director of Finance, gave a presentation on “2026-27 Draft Capital Budget Update Draft Operating Budget Assumptions & Communication Plan” (attached to Minutes), providing an update on the following:

- Engineering, Public Works & Wastewater Projects
- Recreation, Parks & Tourism Projects
- Draft Operating Budget Assumptions
- Draft Budget Communication Plan
- Next Steps – Meeting Dates

Council discussed park planning, the use of parks evaluation criteria, and future capital considerations including Mush-a-mush Beach Park and public art funding.

Ms. Wentzell also outlined key operating budget assumptions, including a 3% cost-of-living estimate, no change to tax rates, and continuation of annual reserve contributions. Council discussed CPI assumptions, reserve planning, LCLC asset management, and long-term financial planning considerations.

Ms. Wentzell reviewed the budget communication plan and confirmed upcoming budget meeting dates.

11.3 Administration Department

11.3.1 Second Reading By-law 017A Repeal of By-law 017 Police Clearance Certificate Application Fees

Alex Dumaresq, Deputy CAO, reviewed the report, “Second Reading – By-law 017A Repeal of Fees Charged for Policy Clearance Certificate Application” (circulated with the agenda), providing details on the by-law repeal process taken.

2026-007 Moved by Councillor Smith, seconded by Deputy Mayor Veinotte that Municipal Council conduct Second Reading and adopt By-law 017A Repeal of Fees Charged for Police Clearance Certificate Application Fees to repeal By-law 017 Police Clearance Certificate Application Fees, as presented. Carried unanimously.

11.4 Planning & Development

11.4.1 Letter of Concurrence – MDL 69 Antenna Siting Protocol, Oakhill Rd, Oakhill PID 60248358

Jeff Merrill, Director of Planning and Development, reviewed the report, “Letter of Concurrence – MDL 69 Antenna Siting Protocol” (circulated with the agenda), providing details on proposed location of a telecommunication tower to be located on the Oakhill Road, Oakhill.

2026-008 Moved by Councillor Bell, seconded by Councillor Hubley that Municipal Council issue a letter of concurrence for a telecommunication tower at PID 60248358, Oakhill Road, Oakhill, as the application has met the requirements of Policy 069 Antenna Siting Protocol. Carried unanimously.

11.4.2 Levy Private Road Maintenance Charge – Atlantic Breezes Neighbourhood Lot Owners’ Association

Jeff Merrill, Director of Planning and Development, reviewed the report, “Request to Levy Private Road Maintenance Charge – Atlantic Breezes Neighbourhood Lot Owners’ Association” (circulated with the agenda), providing details on the Association’s request to levy a charge.

2026-009 Moved by Councillor Reinhardt, seconded by Councillor Burns that Municipal Council levy a maintenance charge within the Charge Area identified by the Atlantic Breezes Neighbourhood Lot Owners’ Association as a uniform amount per lot, with the 2026-2027 charge being set at \$700 per lot, subject to an agreement being entered into that satisfies Section 9 of By-law 040 Private Roads. Carried unanimously.

Council recessed at 7:52 p.m. and resumed at 7:58 p.m.

11.4.3 Coastal Protection Regulations – Annual Report

A report titled, “Coastal Protection Regulations – Annual Report”, outlining implementation results and key outcomes of the first year under the Coastal Protection Regulations, was circulated with the agenda.

Reid Shepherd, Deputy Director of Planning & Development, and Ella Gindi, Planner II, were in attendance. Ms. Gindi gave a presentation on “024-25 Annual Coastal Protection Regulations Report” (attached to Minutes), providing details on the following:

- Purpose and Scope
- Coastal Protection Areas (3)
- Development Activity (Year 1)
- Implementation Insights
- Strengthening Coastal Resilience

11.4.4 Coastal Protection Regulations – Request for Provincial Release of the CERFA Tool

A report titled, “Coastal Protection Regulations – Request for Provincial Release of the CERFA Tool”, providing details on how access to the Coastal Erosion Risk Factor Assessment tool would benefit the qualified professionals was circulated with the agenda.

Ella Gindi, Planner II, gave a presentation on “Coastal Protection Regulations – Request for Provincial Release of the CERFA Tool (attached to Minutes), providing details on the following:

- Why CERFA Matters
- Benefits of Release of Tool

2026-010 Moved by Deputy Mayor Veinotte, seconded by Councillor Reinhardt that Municipal Council authorize the Mayor to submit a letter to the Minister of Environment and

Climate Change, with a copy to the Premier of Nova Scotia, formally requesting the public release of the Coastal Erosion Risk Factor Assessment (CERFA) tool for use by qualified persons; and further, that the letter highlight the significance of the CERFA tool in ensuring consistent, science-based erosion assessments in supporting the effective implementation of the Municipality's Coastal Protection Regulations. Carried unanimously.

12. Mayor's/Deputy Mayor's/Councillors' Matters

12.1 Committee Recruitment Advertising

Councillor Oickle explained the Nominating Committee's concerns about a decline in applications for municipal committees and the need to improve how recruitment is advertised. It was suggested that updating the look and approach of ads and adding an education and awareness component to it so residents might better understand what committees do and what is expected of members.

Discussion followed regarding:

- planning ahead to advertise all upcoming committee vacancies together;
- holding information or drop-in sessions;
- improving ad design; and
- having Councillors help promote opportunities through their own networks and social media.

Mr. MacEwan noted capacity constraints, including a full work plan, lack of a communications position, and other priority projects (planning, budget work). He explained that any major new initiative would require Council to identify something to remove or delay from the current work list. Mr. MacEwan also emphasized the importance of meaningful engagement.

It was noted that the various committees needed review and clarity on their roles before launching a more robust recruitment and education program, and that smaller improvements to advertising and promotion could be made in the short term.

12.2 MJSB Update

Councillor Oickle's update from the December 3, 2025 MJSB meeting is attached to the Minutes.

12.3 Deputy Mayor's Update

Deputy Mayor Veinotte advised that due to the holiday break, her only update was that she attended the agenda briefing meeting.

12.4 Mayor's Update

Mayor McLean-Wile's updates are attached to the Minutes.

13. Added Items

The draft Minutes of the Special Council meeting of November 25, 2025 were added to the agenda and approved under Item 5.

14. In Camera

At 8:38 p.m., it was moved by Councillor Oickle, seconded by Councillor Burns that Municipal Council go In Camera to discuss Item 14.1 Contract Negotiations under section 22(2)(e) of the MGA. Carried.

Municipal Council In Camera in session.

At 9:01 p.m., it was moved by Councillor Moore, seconded by Councillor Oickle that Municipal Council come out of In Camera and return to open session. Carried.

Municipal Council in session.

15. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

To: Municipalities and Regional Centres for Education

From: Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Re: Payment of Invoices by RCEs

The Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing (DMAH) and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) have been working collaboratively to get a better understanding of the charges municipalities and villages have invoiced to the Regional Centres for Education (RCEs), particularly considering *Education Act* amendments made in 2018 and what impact these amendments might have on charges being levied under the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA).

A long-term approach is under development; however, it is not ready at this time. In the short-term, outstanding invoices for municipal charges such as fire, sewer and wastewater will continue to be paid by RCEs without interest charges and, until a long-term approach is in place, new invoices from municipalities and villages will continue to be paid, as appropriate. As the long-term approach is determined, municipalities will be kept apprised through the appropriate methods outlined in the MGA.

I trust this letter and the plan outlined clears up any confusion about the payment of municipal charges.

Sincerely,



DM LaFleche



DM Penfound

2026-27 Draft Capital Budget Update
Draft Operating Budget Assumptions
& Communication Plan

Council Meeting
January 13, 2026



2026-27 Draft Capital Budget Update



Engineering, Public Works & Wastewater Projects

Cookville Wastewater Treatment Plant (Year 2 of 4): \$9M

- Continue with construction of plant to support housing development
- Accelerated Construction Schedule in 2025-26

2024-25 Actual	2025-26 Budget	2025-26 Forecast	2026-27 Budget	2027-28 Budget	Total
\$2.5 M	\$6.5 M	\$12 M	\$9 M	\$1 M	\$24.5 M

- Funding from ICIP Grant 73.33% (\$12M) and MCGP 50% (\$4M)
- Debt Estimate \$8 M



Engineering, Public Works & Wastewater Projects

Annual Large Pump Replacement Program: \$20,000 (**NEW)

- Spare pump for New Germany Treatment Plant used in December
- Purchase a replacement spare pump that can be used at multiple pump stations

- Funding Sewer Reserves



Engineering, Public Works & Wastewater Projects

Osprey Village Sidewalk Enhancement Project: \$ 5,125,000

Carry over \$125,000 from 2025-26

- Sidewalks, Curb and Gutter, Water Course Crossing, Stormwater Infrastructure, Traffic Signal Lights & Pedestrian Crossing, Lighting & Seating along Nathan Cirillo and Pine Grove Roads.
- Grant Funding: ICIP \$1.8M, MCGP \$1.1M, and AT Fund \$504,000.
- Municipal General Operating Reserve \$1.8M



Municipality of the District of Lunenburg
Financial Services

Recreation, Parks & Tourism Projects

Sawpit Park Construction: \$2,100,000 (Year 1 of 2)

Carry over \$100,000 from 2025-26

- \$4M Project over 2 fiscal years based on Sawpit Wharf Park Concept Plan
- Year 1 – park water features including wharf removal/replacement
- Year 2 – park land features
- Pre-budget approval requested for Year 1
- Funding Depreciation Reserve



Municipality of the District of Lunenburg
Financial Services

2026-27 Draft Operating Budget Assumptions & Communication Plan



Draft Operating Budget Assumptions

- **Cost of Living (CPI) Budget Estimate 3%**
- **Assume no change in Tax Rates**
- **Annual Contributions to Reserves from Operating Fund (no change)**

	Forecast Balance March 31, 2026	2026-27 Budget	Forecast Balance March 31, 2027
Election Reserve	\$55,578	\$50,000	\$105,578
Open Space Reserve	\$820,616	\$60,000	\$880,616
Sewer System Reserve	\$1,782,456	\$175,000	\$1,807,456
Fire Training Facility Reserve	\$300,000	\$100,000	\$400,000
Municipal Road Reserve	\$374,400	\$25,000	\$399,400
LCLC Depreciation Reserve	\$734,569	\$165,000	\$899,569
Depreciation Reserve	\$6,434,763	\$1,600,000	\$4,069,036



Draft Budget Communication Plan

- Engage site is created at <https://engage.modl.ca/budget26-27>
- As each agenda is released for the remaining budget meetings, an email newsletter to Engage site followers will be sent
- Upcoming meetings will be shared through Facebook posts, the District Digest, and App updates
- Mayor's Message in the South Shore Breaker once the budget is approved
- Budget highlights document shared
- Budget book will be published after final budget approval

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg
Financial Services



Next Steps – Meeting Dates

- Council (night) meeting February 12 – Introduce Draft Operating Budget
- Finance Committee March 3 – Operating Budget (update & review)
- Finance Committee March 24 – Final review of all budgets
- Council (night) meeting March 31 - Budget approval

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg
Financial Services



2024-25 Annual Coastal Protection Regulations Report

Ella Gindi, Planner II
January 13, 2026



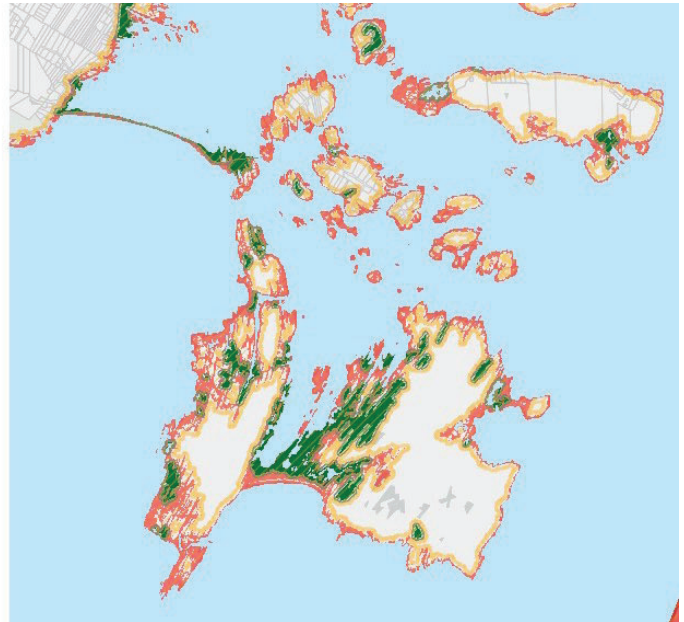
Purpose and Scope

- **Coastal Protection Regulations Year-1 update**
- **Adopted:** June, 2024
- **Purpose:** Manage coastal development and protect people, property and ecosystems
- **Scope:** Applies to 7,153 properties
 - 6,446 properties affected by one or more regulated areas
 - Regulations are protective, not prohibitive with built-in flexibility.



Three Coastal Protection Areas

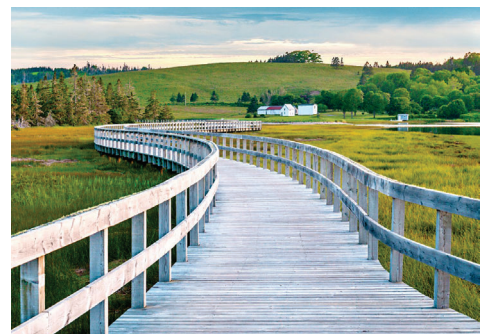
1. Erosion Risk Area
2. Flood Risk Area
3. Sensitive Coastal Ecosystems Area



Municipality of the District of Lunenburg
Planning and Development Services

Development Activity (year-1)

- Permits issued within Coastal Protection Area
- Total Permits: 139
- Construction: 86
- Renovations: 33
- Additions: 19
- New use: 1
- Erosion setback reduction assessment: 1
- Wetland removal assessment: 2



Municipality of the District of Lunenburg
Planning and Development Services

Implementation Insights

- **Erosion Risk Area**
 - Professional assessments successfully used to refine setbacks
 - CERFA methodology referenced; tool not yet publicly released
- **Flood Risk Area:**
 - No significant implementation challenges
- **Sensitive Coastal Ecosystems:**
 - Most complex to administer due to provincial mapping inaccuracies
 - Built-in flexibility allows professional confirmation where wetlands are absent



Municipality of the District of Lunenburg
Planning and Development Services

Strengthening Coastal Resilience

- **Continue monitoring erosion, flooding and ecosystem conditions**
- **Advance education and awareness i.e nature-based solution training, pilot projects**
- **Use implementation findings to inform refinements during the five-year review**
- **National and International leadership, Knowledge sharing and 2025 CAP award**



Coastal Protection Regulations – Request for Provincial Release of the CERFA Tool

Ella Gindi, Planner II
January 13, 2026



WHY CERFA Matters?

- **30m erosion setback, reducible to 15 m with a CERFA report by a qualified person**
- **Coastal Erosion Risk Factor Assessment (CERFA) tool not yet publicly released**
- **Regulations explicitly rely on the provincial CERFA methodology**
- **Result:**
 - Reduced consistency in erosion assessments
 - Increased uncertainty for qualified professionals
 - Limited ability for property owners to use setback flexibility



Request Province publicly release the CERFA tool

- **Benefits of release:**

- Consistent, science-based erosion assessments
- Clear, defensible methodology for professionals
- Improved efficiency and predictability
- Stronger alignment with climate adaptation goals



Recommendation

“That the Mayor and Municipal Council submit a letter to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, with a copy to the Premier of Nova Scotia, formally requesting the public release of the Coastal Erosion Risk Factor Assessment (CERFA) tool for use by qualified persons; AND THAT the letter highlight the significance of the CERFA tool in ensuring consistent, science-based erosion assessments in supporting the effective implementation of the Municipality’s Coastal Protection Regulations.”

MJSB (Municipal Joint Service Board)

Wednesday, December 3, 2025

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Update

For Information only.

Nova Scotia is transitioning to a new recycling model under the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program, which shifts responsibility for residential packaging and paper products (PPP) from municipalities to producers. This program began on December 1, 2025.

MJSB staff negotiated with Circular Materials (CM) under the opt-in model. This allows MJSB partners to continue providing curbside recycling while being reimbursed for service costs.

Delays caused by provincial and insurance concerns have now been resolved, and the contracts with Circular Materials are ready to move forward.

To ensure consistent messaging to residents, Region 6 communications have been shared on the South Shore Waste Solutions website, Facebook and Instagram pages. Sorting and collection schedules are also included in the annual municipal collection calendars distributed each December.

Also curbside collection for the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg (MODL) and Town of Bridgewater (TOB) will move to a Tuesday–Friday schedule starting April 1, 2026. This is a reminder that the new schedule will be included in the municipal collection calendars distributed in December 2025, and residents will also be informed through the South Shore Waste Solutions website, social media, radio, and print advertisements.

Compost Equipment

The compost screener is approximately 16 years old and is nearing the end of its useful life. Over the past year, the equipment has deteriorated significantly. Temporary repairs were made this summer, and a full inspection was completed once the screening season ended. Completing the recommended repairs would extend the screens service life by 5 to 10 years, delaying the need for a major capital replacement. The Board award the compost screener repair work to Vermeer Canada Inc. at a cost of \$23,262.00.

Corporate Identity Project Update

Board approved “Municipal Shared Services, South Shore Region” as the operating name for the Municipal Joint Services Board, effective mid-January 2026, and the board authorize staff to proceed with implementation across corporate communications, templates, and the new MJSB website.

Mayor's Report

January 13, 2026

Happy New Year. As we begin 2026, we do so in a period of significant global turbulence and uncertainty. The past year has underscored the economic and geopolitical vulnerabilities facing Canada, particularly our long-standing reliance on the United States for economic prosperity and defence. The risks associated with that dependence have been exposed in ways not experienced under any former American presidents in living memory.

While these forces are largely beyond our control at the municipal level, they do matter. Global uncertainty, geopolitical unrest, and the renewed presence of imperialism from our southern neighbour have both overt and subliminal impacts on the psyche of our residents. In this context, I believe our role locally is to take deliberate, practical steps to build a strong, vibrant, and resilient community—one that can withstand economic and political pressures in the years ahead.

Councillor Hubley and I met with representatives of the Tri-District Fire Service to explore potential funding sources for the renovation of the fire hall in Newcombville. Department representatives were seeking funding options for the proposed expansion.

I was pleased to participate in several community events throughout the holiday season. These included the Christmas parades in Lunenburg and Bridgewater, the annual seniors' party at the Best Western, the Bridgewater and Area Chamber of Commerce Christmas gathering, the tree lighting in New Germany, holiday socials with neighbouring municipalities, and our staff Christmas lunch at the Newcombville fire hall. These events, while social in nature, are important opportunities to maintain strong relationships and stay connected to residents, volunteers, staff, and regional partners.

Council also completed a series of four meetings to provide direction to staff on our Municipal Planning Strategy, informed by the *What We Heard* report and our individual conversations with residents. This was an important phase of the process, allowing Council to clearly articulate priorities and concerns before moving forward. I look forward to receiving Draft #2 of the Municipal Planning Strategy in February and continuing this work throughout late winter and early spring.

I met with two residents from Wileville who raised concerns regarding the proposed housing development in Auburndale on Upper Branch Road. Their concerns focused on potential impacts to the water table, sewage capacity, and broader pressures on infrastructure, including the regional hospital, schools, and road network. These conversations reinforce the importance of thoughtful growth planning that balances housing needs with infrastructure capacity and environmental considerations.

I participated in a strategic planning session with the Municipal Joint Services Board and took part in interviews for a new Chief Operating Officer. Strong governance and leadership at the MJSB are critical to effective service delivery across municipalities, and I was encouraged by the depth of discussion during this process. We have just completed the hiring of a new COO who will officially start on February 4, 2026.

I attended a webinar hosted by the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities and led by the Canada–Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator on the regulatory approval process for offshore wind development. Three sites have been identified for the first round of development, and this session provided helpful context as offshore wind continues to emerge as a significant economic and environmental consideration for the province.

I participated in the launch of new EV charging stations at the Lunenburg County Lifestyle Centre, hosted by Nova Scotia Power. An additional charging station is expected to open at the Emera Centre in Liverpool early this year, further supporting the transition to electric vehicles in our region and extending the infrastructure needed to support electric vehicles.

The Deputy Mayor provided me with a tour of the MARC buildings being considered as part of the redevelopment of the MARC site. There are significant issues related to the physical condition of the buildings, as well as the need to better align future amenities with the evolving needs of the community. These observations will be important as Council continues its discussions on the future of this site.

As a Council, we also face a demanding and consequential year ahead. We will be required to make decisions that balance growth with affordability, environmental responsibility with economic opportunity, and community expectations with the realities of municipal capacity and funding. Our work will involve continued collaboration with neighbouring municipalities, difficult but necessary discussions about infrastructure and service levels, and a disciplined focus on long-term sustainability rather than short-term fixes. I believe it is essential that we approach this work with clarity, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to the public interest, recognizing that the decisions we make this year will shape our district for decades to come.

As I look ahead to 2026, I am encouraged by the progress made and focused on advancing several projects that began taking shape in 2025. This will be an important year to capitalize on the learning we achieved in our first year as a Council and the relationships that we established. Many of these initiatives are significant for the long-term development of our district and will demonstrate to residents that we are working collaboratively with neighbouring municipalities to achieve shared goals, in the best interests of our residents.