



MUNICIPALITY OF THE DISTRICT OF ARGYLE
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2025

Council Members Present: Warden Nicole Albright, Deputy Warden Ted Saulnier, Councillor Malcolm Madden, Councillor Gordon Boudreau, Councillor Greg Foster, Councillor Darryl LeBlanc, Councillor Kathy Bourque, Councillor Glenn Diggdon, and Councillor Racheal Surette

Absent with Regrets:

Staff Present: Chief Administrative Officer Alain Muise, Director of Finance Marsha d'Eon and Accounting Clerk Julie Atkinson

1. Call Meeting to Order

Deputy Warden Ted Saulnier called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Invitation to Stand and Move

Deputy Warden Ted Saulnier reminded Council that they are permitted to stand and move as they need to during the meeting. This is an initiative by Argyle Recreation which normalizes movement in meetings.

3. Approval of Agenda

*It is **MOVED** by Councillor Glenn Diggdon and **SECONDED** by Warden Nicole Albright to approve the agenda as presented.*

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. Presentation – Doane Grant Thornton Audited Financial Statements

Council received a presentation of the Municipality's Audited Consolidated Financial Statements for the year ending March 31, 2025. The audit committee has already met and recommended the approval of the statements as presented. Gloria Banks was present and confirmed a clean audit opinion with no qualifications required. Highlights of the presentation included:

- The consolidated statements reflect the Municipality's operations along with its proportionate share of controlled entities (Mariner Centre Management Authority, Health & Wellness Fund, Yarmouth Area Industrial Commission, Yarmouth International Airport Corporation, Yarmouth County Solid Waste Management Authority, and the Canadian Shores Tourist Association).
- Revenues grew by \$3.6M from the prior year, driven by assessment growth (approx. \$600K), significant donations related to the Mariners Centre Jumpstart project, and an increase in federal and provincial grants.
- Expenditures increased by approx. \$846K over the prior year, including election costs, increases in policing and salaries, and contributions to the Mariners Centre project.
- The Municipality recorded an annual surplus of \$4.78M, compared to \$1.96M in 2024.



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- The accumulated surplus increased to \$32.3M, with strong net financial assets of \$7.7M, meaning the Municipality could cover all liabilities and retain a healthy balance.
- Cash balances increased to \$16.1M, though \$5M of this is committed to future projects.
- Tangible capital assets increased to \$39.5M, reflecting investments in track and field, sewer work, municipal building upgrades, and vehicles.

Overall, the auditor emphasized that the Municipality is in a very strong financial position with effective management and oversight in place. Gloria thanked staff for their cooperation during the audit.

5. **Approval of Minutes**

a. **September 11, 2025 – Regular Council Meeting Minutes**

By consensus, the September 11, 2025, Regular Council Meeting Minutes were approved as presented.

6. **Staff Reports**

a. **Department Head Report**

The Department Head Report is included in the agenda package.

The following projects were asked about in the department head report:

- **Redcap Lift Station:** Council discussed ongoing work to address long-standing issues with the sewer pumping station near the Redcap Restaurant and Credit Union. Funding has been secured, and excavation work is underway. The project aims to resolve problems with sludge buildup in the ditch area.
- **Explore Exit 31 Business Park (West Pubnico):** A question was raised regarding a possible rezoning of the business park to focus on commercial/industrial use. Staff advised that this item is in very early stages and more information will be provided to Council once available.
- **Rural Transportation Pilot Project (Hope Dial-a-Ride):** Council requested clarification on the pilot project underway with Hope, which is exploring transportation support for senior safety clients. Staff confirmed the project has begun on a small scale and a more detailed report will be brought back to Council.

b. **Clerks Report**

The Clerk's Report is included in the agenda package. There were no questions on the report.

c. **Building Permit Report**

The building permit report is included in the agenda package. There were no questions on the report.

7. **7-day Notice**

a. **REPEAL – Article C6 – Public Presentation Policy**

Council received 7-day notice to repeal Article C6 – Public Presentation Policy. The reason for this repeal is because recently, Article C50 – Council Procedural Policy was amended to include the content of the Public Presentation Policy.



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It is MOVED by Councillor Racheal Surette and SECONDED by Councillor Malcolm Madden to pass 7-day notice of the Repeal of the Public Presentation Policy.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

8. For Decision and Discussion

a. Acceptance of Audited Consolidated Financial Statements – March 31, 2025

It is MOVED by Councillor Gordon Boudreau and SECONDED by Councillor Kathy Bourque to accept the Audited Consolidated Financial Statements as of March 31, 2025 as presented.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The audited statements will be available on the Municipality's website for public viewing.

b. Acceptance of Compiled Non-Consolidated Financial Statements – March 31, 2025

Council reviewed the compiled, non-consolidated financial statements, which outline only the Municipality's directly controlled funds, assets, and liabilities (operating, operating reserve, and capital reserve). Staff reported an annual surplus of \$880,000 compared to a budgeted \$409,000, resulting in additional transfers to reserves. Both the operating reserve and capital reserve grew over the year, bringing the Municipality's accumulated surplus to approximately \$9.85M, with \$2.5M in long-term debt, leaving a net position of roughly \$7.2M. Council noted the importance of maintaining healthy reserves to balance future commitments, such as the Mariner Centre expansion, while keeping tax rates fair. As these are not audited statements, no formal approval was required, though Council agreed to accept them as presented.

It is MOVED by Councillor Darryl LeBlanc and SECONDED by Warden Nicole Albright to accept the Compiled Non-Consolidated Financial Statements as of March 31, 2025 as presented.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

c. Article C11 - Procurement

It is MOVED by Councillor Warden Nicole Albright and SECONDED by Councillor Kathy Bourque to approve the amendments to Article C11 – Procurement as presented.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

d. CSAP – Par-en-Bas Track and Field Maintenance Agreement

It is MOVED by Councillor Malcolm Madden and SECONDED by Councillor Racheal Surette to accept the CSAP contract as presented.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

e. First Reading – By-Law X22 – Civil Emergency Planning REPEALED

It is MOVED by Warden Nicole Albright and SECONDED by Councillor Gordon Boudreau to approve first reading of By-Law X22 – Civil Emergency Planning REPEALED.



MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

f. First Reading – By-Law X34 – Municipal Emergency Measures REPEALED

It is MOVED by Councillor Kathy Bourque and SECONDED by Councillor Racheal Surette to approve first reading of By-Law X34 – Municipal Emergency Measures REPEALED.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

g. Noise Exemption Request – Quality Concrete

It is MOVED by Councillor Glenn Diggdon and SECONDED by Warden Nicole Albright to approve the noise exemption request from Quality Concrete to allow Dexter Construction to operate between the hours of 4 a.m. to 9 p.m. until November 30, 2025.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

h. Public Wharf Signage – Councillor Madden

A request was brought forward to Councillor Madden regarding a wharf in Lower Eel Brook and its ownership. It was established that it is a public, provincially owned wharf. The wharf is not on the main road and Councillor Madden wishes to request a sign be erected by the Department of Public Works. Council expanded on the request to ask the Department of Public Works to look at providing signage for all provincially owned wharves in the municipality.

A question arose regarding municipal funding for the Lower Eel Brook wharf. CAO Muise clarified that the Municipality contributed to the publicly owned wharf to enhance its condition and ensure it could be used by multiple parties. He also noted that municipalities can invest in publicly owned wharves, but are not permitted to fund privately owned ones.

It is MOVED by Councillor Malcolm Madden and SECONDED by Councillor Glenn Diggdon to write a letter to the Department of Public Works to erect signs in identifying the location of all public wharves provincially owned in the Municipality of Argyle.

MOTION CARRIED (7 for and 2 against)

**AGAINST – Warden Nicole Albright
Councillor Gordon Boudreau**

i. Request for Letters of Support for New Horizons Grant

It is MOVED by Councillor Glenn Diggdon and SECONDED by Councillor Racheal Surette to write a letter of support to the Societe Bon Temps for their New Horizons Grant Application.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

It is MOVED by Councillor Greg Foster and SECONDED by Councillor Gordon Boudreau to write a letter of support to the Surettes Island Social Club for their New Horizons Grant Application.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY



9. For Correspondence and Information

a. Correspondence from Department of Justice to MODY re: Comprehensive Policing Review and Foundational Changes

Council received correspondence that was written by the Department of Justice to the Municipality of Yarmouth regarding comprehensive policing review and foundational changes.

b. Update: SPCA Services

CAO Muise provided an update on the status of the SPCA contract, noting that the municipality has not received any recent updates from the SPCA. He emphasized the need to clarify animal control services, especially given recent pressing incidents. Council discussed the potential for a shared, trained enforcement officer for the tri-county area and considered temporary arrangements with nearby municipalities like Digby for support.

CAO Muise explained that while minor dog bylaw issues (e.g., barking or off-leash non-dangerous dogs) could be handled by municipal enforcement, serious situations involving vicious or dangerous dogs require specialized intervention. The SPCA's role is limited to their mandate, and currently there is no internal municipal capacity for handling higher-risk animals, so outside resources would be needed.

Council members discussed the RCMP's role, noting they could respond in escalated cases but may not always be the best solution due to workload and equipment limitations. It was suggested that the municipality explore contracting outside agencies on a retainer or as-needed basis to ensure timely response. CAO Muise confirmed that these options are being actively pursued and that providing adequate public protection is a priority.

The council was also reminded that the municipality currently has no active SPCA contract and is not paying for these services.

c. Update: Light Pollution Community Engagement

CAO Muise updated council on light pollution community engagement, emphasizing that the municipality is far from passing a bylaw. He noted the memo provided an accurate status and outlined next steps, including one-on-one discussions with commercial users, engagement with other municipalities and dark sky organizations, and a report back to council. He stressed that public safety is not the concern—rather, the goal is addressing light trespass and protecting the dark sky designation.

Council members expressed concerns that the first reading of the bylaw may have been strict. They highlighted the need for broader public and industry engagement, including commercial fishing and seasonal industries, and suggested considering regional coordination rather than applying restrictions only locally. Several councillors recommended pausing or even repealing the first reading and focusing on education rather than enforcement, noting that an effective light pollution approach might rely more on awareness campaigns than a strict bylaw.

10. Financial Requests – None.

11. Agenda Topics for the next meeting/Notice of Motion by Councillors



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Councillor Madden asked to have “911 Signage/Beech Lane” brought back up to the agenda. CAO Muise explained that the road leading to the wharf, labeled “Beach Lane” on some maps, appears to be incorrectly named and may not match provincial records. This misnaming could cause confusion for emergency services. He noted that civic addressing, especially near the former fish processing plant, may have contributed to the issue and committed to investigating the correct road name and numbering in-house to ensure emergency access and proper signage.

CAO Muise mentioned that this issue would be tied into the wharf signage item when brought up again.

12. Question Period

Q: What is the status of sidewalks in the Municipality?

A: Two sidewalk request for proposals for Tusket and Plymouth were issued in late 2024. The Tusket study draft is received but has unresolved issues with the Department of Public Works and high cost estimates. The Plymouth study had public engagement, but results are not finalized. Both studies were expected to be completed by April 2025. Next steps involve reviewing funding models to support potential construction. Delays are due to study complexities and some consultant turnover.

Q: Has the independent lawyer started investigating the Conflict of Interest allegations yet?

A: CAO Muise indicated he is not involved in the process, however, advised that Stewart McKelvey is the firm investigating the allegations, any other details are subject to in-camera. The target completion date is December 31, 2025.

Q: If the municipality has funded upgrades with our tax dollars to upgrade this wharf in Eel Brook then the municipality needs to allow the public to use it. Is the Warden saying the public cannot use this wharf?

A: Warden Albright clarified she did not indicate that the public could not use the wharf. She indicated her questions were regarding signage, not access and emphasized she should not be quoted as restricting public use. CAO Muise stated that it is a public wharf owned by the province, not the municipality.

Q: Please clarify if this is Deons wharf or a public wharf we can use in District 1. Also please explain why my tax dollars are being used to upgrade this wharf. Can I launch my boat there? Can I swim there?

A: As previously clarified, the wharf is public, constituents can do what they want at this public wharf. \$4,000 municipal dollars were spent on the wharf for economic development and other reasons to improve the condition of the wharf for the public to use.

Deputy Warden Saulnier inquired about the governance of the wharf. CAO Muise indicated he was unaware of any governance but shall inquire with the Province.

13. In-Camera – None.

14. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:36 p.m.



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October 9, 2025

Date Approved

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ted Smith", written over a horizontal line.

Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Julia", written over a horizontal line.

Clerk/Recorder