



MUNICIPALITY OF THE DISTRICT OF ARGYLE
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
January 15, 2026 at 06:30 PM

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 and Executive Assistant Chantalle Newell

1. Call Meeting to Order

Warden Nicole Albright called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

2. Invitation to Stand and Move

Warden Nicole Albright 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 and Conflict of Interest Declaration

IT IS MOVED BY Councillor Racheal Surette

AND SECONDED BY Councillor Kathy Bourque

TO: approve the agenda as presented.

CARRIED (9 to 0)

4. Presentation

Heather MacDonald, Tony Dorian, and Clyde DeViller from the Yarmouth Community Health Board (YCHB) presented an overview of its role, Community Health Plan, and advocacy for a Guaranteed Livable Basic Income as a foundational approach to improving community health. YCHB is a volunteer board that supports local wellness initiatives through provincial funding and guides long-term planning through a five-year Community Health Plan built on research and community engagement. The Plan is organized around four pillars: access to basic needs, mental health, community environment, and the natural environment, with access to basic needs identified as the most critical determinant of health.

The presentation emphasized that poverty is a costly policy failure with significant downstream impacts on municipalities, including increased pressure on health care, housing, emergency services, and the justice system. Data presented showed rising poverty and food insecurity in Nova Scotia, particularly among children in Yarmouth County, where rates are among the highest in the province. Evidence from existing

targeted income programs and pilot projects demonstrates that income supports reduce poverty, improve health outcomes, and strengthen local economies.

YCHB urged Council to support advocacy for a Guaranteed Livable Basic Income by writing to federal and provincial leaders requesting the establishment of working groups and an all-party committee to examine implementation in Nova Scotia. The Board noted growing momentum across Canada and within Nova Scotia, with numerous municipalities already passing resolutions in support, and emphasized the important role municipalities play in advancing upstream policy solutions to address poverty and improve community well-being.

5. Approval of Minutes

5.a December 11, 2025 - Regular Council Meeting Minutes

There were no errors or omissions to the minutes of December 11, 2025, and therefore, they are approved as presented.

5.b January 8, 2026 - Special Council Meeting Minutes

There were no errors or omissions to the minutes of January 8, 2026, and therefore, they are approved as presented.

6. Council Announcements

Councillor Foster congratulated and thanked the volunteers who operate the social club on Surette's Island for their creativity and dedication to community building. He highlighted the club's inclusive and engaging events, such as meet-and-greets for new residents and themed social gatherings, including a 1950s car-hop event featuring antique cars. Councillor Foster noted that these events are well attended, foster strong community connections, and are enjoyed by residents. He emphasized that the volunteers receive no personal gain beyond the satisfaction of bringing people together and expressed appreciation for their outstanding contribution to the community.

Deputy Warden Saulnier expressed condolences on behalf of the municipality to the family and friends of Owen Atkison of Wedgeport and surrounding communities, noting his passing as a significant loss. Mr. Atkinson, who would have turned 103 on January 19, was a World War II veteran and believed to be the last surviving WWII veteran in the area.

Deputy Warden Saulnier also reported on a recent open house regarding the proposed multi-use pathway (sidewalk) project in Plymouth. The session was well attended, with public feedback resulting in only minor suggested adjustments. Overall support for the project was strong, and it is hoped that funding can be secured in the future to move the project forward.

The last thing Deputy Warden Saulnier highlighted was the municipality's Christmas Card Program, now in its second year in partnership with the Coastal Financial Credit Union. All elementary schools in the municipality participate, submitting over 100 designs, with the winning entry receiving a \$75 gift card and being used as the municipality's official Christmas card. This year, Deputy Warden, along with Chantalle and Julie, attended the Wedgeport School to present the award to the winner, Myles Pothier, noting the joy and positive impact of the experience on both the students and staff. He emphasized that, while small in scale compared to other council initiatives, programs like this foster community engagement and demonstrate

that small acts of recognition and celebration can have meaningful effects. He thanked the student, the staff, and the credit union for making the program a success.

7. Warden's Report

The Warden's Report is attached to the agenda. There were no questions on the report.

8. Committee Reports

Councillor LeBlanc made note that the new CEO of the Mariners Centre started on January 12, 2026. He welcomed Mr. Dave Tompkins to the area.

9. 7-day Notice

10. Old Business

10.a SPCA Update

CAO Muisse provided an update regarding the SPCA contract, noting there had been a temporary gap in services. The previous contract, which cost approximately \$30,000 annually, included both by-law enforcement and sheltering services. A new contract will take effect tomorrow. While the cost to the municipality is lower, the services are structured differently.

Under the new arrangement, all animal-related calls will come directly to the municipality and be handled by By-Law Enforcement Officer Mitch Coburn. Mitch will assess each situation and determine whether it requires his attention, the SPCA, or the RCMP. This approach is expected to improve response times, particularly for minor or “annoyance” complaints, while ensuring more serious issues receive the appropriate attention.

The SPCA remains committed to supporting the municipality by advising Mitch when situations are unclear and responding to calls as requested. They will continue to handle dog impoundment, pick-ups, and the sheltering of stray dogs, whether brought in by residents or by by-law staff.

The municipality will also review the current by-law to ensure it aligns with its objectives and incorporates best practices from other jurisdictions. Changes to enforcement or educational components will be brought to Council for approval.

For higher-risk situations, the RCMP will have an increased role in public safety matters related to animals, working collaboratively with the municipality. Residents are encouraged to report ongoing concerns, issues, or complaints directly to the municipality and by-law staff to ensure timely response and effective tracking.

Documentation will follow, and CAO Muisse emphasized that proactive communication from residents is crucial to ensure all issues are addressed effectively

11. For Decision and Discussion

11.a Article C60 - Security Cameras

IT IS MOVED BY Councillor Kathy Bourque

AND SECONDED BY Councillor Darryl LeBlanc

TO: approve Article C60 - Security Cameras as presented.

CARRIED (9 to 0)

11.b First Reading - By-Law X19 - Penalties REPEALED

IT IS MOVED BY Deputy Warden Ted Saulnier

AND SECONDED BY Councillor Glenn Diggdon

TO: approve first reading of By-Law X19 - Penalties REPEALED as presented.

CARRIED (9 to 0)

11.c Regional Modernization

IT IS MOVED BY Councillor Darryl LeBlanc

AND SECONDED BY Councillor Kathy Bourque

THAT: the following resolution be adopted by Council:

WHEREAS: The three municipalities in Yarmouth County share ownership in multiple organizations via intermunicipal agreement.

WHEREAS: These organizations deliver complex services to the region, with staffing, HR and other services varying significantly from organization to organization.

WHEREAS: The municipalities have identified the need for consistent application in financial reporting HR policies, governance policies and other services, which cannot be delivered with current service levels.

WHEREAS: These organizations are also entering into significant growth, accessing additional funding from other sources of government for major capital projects.

WHEREAS: The municipal Chief Administrative Officers, elected officials and staff are currently asked to support these organizations, including but not limited to decision making, corporate services, IT etc, and the organizations' growth will require more support than can be offered at the municipal level.

WHEREAS: Staff at the Department of Municipal Affairs led a discussion between the three CAO's that further confirmed and clarified the need to modernize and strengthen our regional organizations.

WHEREAS: The regional organizations subject to modernization were identified as the Yarmouth Area Industrial Commission, the Yarmouth International Airport Corporation, the Mariners Center Management Authority and the Yarmouth County Solid Waste Management Authority.

WHEREAS: The Yarmouth County CAO's jointly presented their findings to elected officials at a

regional discussion, obtaining important feedback and questions.

WHEREAS: The regional elected officials agreed that further work is required to determine a better path forward.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT: Council support continued exploration of a modernized regional service structure.

THAT: *Council authorize its CAO to engage with the other two CAO's from Yarmouth County to agree on approach*

THAT: *the CAOs be authorized to apply, jointly, to the Provincial Municipal Innovation Program funding, with a February 2026 deadline.*

CARRIED (9 to 0)

12. For Correspondence and Information

12.a Correspondence from Minister of Justice re: Additional Resource Request

Council received correspondence from the Minister of Justice re: the additional resource request.

12.b Western Counties Regional Library December 2025 Newsletter

The Western Counties Regional Library December 2025 newsletter is attached to the agenda for viewing.

12.c Correspondence from Minister of Municipal Affairs re: Funding

Council received correspondence from the Minister of Municipal Affairs regarding funding across Nova Scotia.

12.d Letter from Municipality of Antigonish to Premier Houston re: Declining Cellphone Service

Council was copied on correspondence from the Municipality of Antigonish to Premier Houston re: declining cellphone service in the area.

13. Financial Requests

13.a Council Community Grant Request - Association des Acadienne d'Argyle - District 8 - \$700

IT IS MOVED BY Councillor Glenn Diggon

AND SECONDED BY Councillor Malcolm Madden

TO: provide a Council Community Grant to l'Association des Acadienne d'Argyle in the amount of \$700.

CARRIED (9 to 0)

13.b Curling Club Funding Request

Council discussed the Curling Club motion made on October 10, 2024 regarding a funding commitment to the Yarmouth Curling Club. The original motion passed is as follows: *It is MOVED by Councillor Guy Surette and SECONDED by Councillor Richard Donaldson to fund the Yarmouth Curling Club upgrades in the amount of \$300,000, at \$100,000 a year for 3 years starting in the fiscal year 2025-2026, with the condition of Provincial and Federal funding and provide a letter of conditional support to the Yarmouth Curling Association.*

Since that motion was made, there has been no updates from the Curling Club and no other funding secured that the council has been aware of. The Council would like to rescind this motion and make a new one, to ask for an update on the project.

IT IS MOVED BY Councillor Darryl LeBlanc

AND SECONDED BY Councillor Racheal Surette

TO: rescind the motion from October 10, 2024 regarding the Yarmouth Curling Club.

CARRIED (9 to 0)

IT IS MOVED BY Councillor Darryl LeBlanc

AND SECONDED BY Councillor Kathy Bourque

TO: invite the Curling Club back to a presentation with Council for an update on their project.

CARRIED (9 to 0)

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

Warden Albright indicated she will be bringing up the Merger of the Community Navigator and Doctor Recruitment Committees at the next meeting.

15. Question Period

Q: Will modernization be a paid board or a volunteer board?

A: The structure of a modernized board will be determined by the study that will be conducted with Municipal Innovation Funding. However, it is likely elected officials will serve on the board given the magnitude of funding. But the exact composition would be determined by the study.

Q: In line with security camera, would those that review the tapes be required to sign a non-disclosure form so that private information is protected?

A: the policy is designed with privacy in mind. All staff members sign confidentiality agreements at the

beginning of their employment and annually after that. Anyone reviewing tapes would need to have some training and understanding of FOIPOP regulations.

16. In-Camera

IT IS MOVED BY Councillor Kathy Bourque
AND SECONDED BY Councillor Malcolm Madden
TO: go in camera at 8:00 p.m.

CARRIED

16.a Section 22:2 (e) Contract Negotiations

IT IS MOVED BY Councillor Gordon Boudreau
AND SECONDED BY Councillor Kathy Bourque
TO: bill the Mariners Centre \$15,000 for the CAOs Financial Services rendered from November 3 to December 31, 2025.

CARRIED (9 to 0)

17. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was called to order at 8:48 p.m.

Chair

Clerk/Recorder