

Present: Mayor Campbell
Councillor Garden
Councillor Land
Councillor Jonah
Councillor Coates
Councillor Elderkin

Absent: Councillor Ward-Russell

Staff Present Sean Wallace – Chief Administrative Officer
Kim Beers – Director, Legislative Services/Clerk
Ian Barrett – Director, Operations
Jillian Hutchinson - Treasurer

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Campbell called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

IT WAS MOVED by **Councillor Land** and **SECONDED** by **Councillor Elderkin** THAT the agenda be adopted as presented.

MOTION CARRIED (unanimously)

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

None declared.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

Dave Tuck

Mr. Dave Tuck, a resident of Curryville, addressed Council regarding concerns about potential tax increases. He noted that he had recently spoken with a neighbour who suggested that residents may see additional municipal taxes, which he found concerning as a senior on a fixed income.

Mr. Tuck stated that he was unfamiliar with the municipal governance structure and sought clarification on what services are provided by the Municipality, particularly within Curryville. He expressed support for both the Riverside-Albert and Hillsborough areas, noting that he frequently shops and obtains services locally. His primary question to Council was what specific services Curryville residents receive in return for their municipal taxes.

Council and staff provided clarification in response to a resident's inquiry regarding potential tax increases and municipal responsibilities. It was explained that, following provincial local governance reform and regionalization, the Municipality of Fundy Albert now encompasses the area from Lower Coverdale to Alma, including the former villages and surrounding local service districts. Shared municipal facilities such as the Alma Activity Centre, Hillsborough Arena, and Riverside-Albert Recreation Centre are now under the Municipality's ownership and operations.

Council and the CAO confirmed that no municipal tax increase is proposed, and efforts are being made to achieve a zero percent increase in the upcoming budget. It was further noted that municipal taxes fund local services, while provincial taxes support health care, education, and other province-wide services.

The CAO advised that the Municipality is preparing its 2026 budget, with a government-mandated submission deadline of November 15, though an extension to November 30 may be used to allow for public consultation sessions, which will be announced shortly.

Council members encouraged residents to contact their ward representative or the municipal office directly with any questions to ensure accurate information, rather than relying on social media sources.

David Knickle

Mr. David Knickle addressed Council to express concerns regarding the allocation of shared services and potential impacts on Local Service District (LSD) residents. He emphasized that his comments were not about tax increases for the current year, acknowledging Council's statement that a zero percent tax increase is being targeted.

The resident noted that, during early discussions following municipal reform, Public Works was not intended to be included as part of shared services. However, he expressed concern that over time, certain Public Works expenses are being reclassified as shared services, resulting in a greater portion of costs being shifted to LSD residents.

He referenced past tax increases imposed by the Province during the initial stages of regionalization and stated that LSD residents have already borne significant cost increases, while former municipal areas have experienced comparatively stable tax rates. He urged Council to avoid further reallocations of costs to the LSDs and to maintain the current financial balance among all areas within the municipality.

Council members acknowledged the resident's concerns and noted that all areas within Fundy Albert contribute to and benefit from shared services. Discussion also touched on property assessments and tax rate calculations, with Council reiterating that they are collectively striving to hold the line on taxes and ensure fairness across all wards.

Sean McGrath

Mr. Sean McGrath of Lower Coverdale addressed Council regarding ongoing concerns with shared services allocations. He stated that residents in Lower Coverdale continue to feel that the current cost-sharing model is disproportionately unfair, particularly given their distance from certain municipal amenities that they seldom use.

Mr. McGrath emphasized that Lower Coverdale residents have consistently raised this concern during previous budget deliberations, and they continue to advocate for shared services allocation reform. He cautioned against expanding shared service categories to include Public Works, expressing that doing so would set a concerning precedent and further increase financial burdens on Local Service District (LSD) residents.

He acknowledged Council's efforts to target a zero percent tax increase for the upcoming year.

INFORMATION ITEMS

The following reports were presented to Council as information items only:

[Development Activity Report – Plan 360 September Report](#)

[Maritime By-Law Enforcement Services Report September](#)

[NBSPCA Quarterly Report](#)

[Riverview Fire Department Quarterly Report](#)

[Hillsborough Fire Department Quarterly Report](#)

[Riverside-Albert Fire Department Quarterly Report](#)

[Alma Fire Department Quarterly Report](#)

Councillor Elderkin requested clarification on the process for issuing a Form 4 under the Unsightly Premises By-law. Ms. Beers explained that Maritime By-Law Enforcement Services follows a progressive enforcement approach, beginning with education and up to three written warnings to the property owner. If the property owner fails to comply within the established deadlines, a Form 4 – Notice of Registration is issued. This notice is then registered with the Provincial Land Registry Office in St. Stephen, authorizing the Municipality to proceed with cleanup or remediation. Associated cleanup costs are recorded and later brought to Council for direction on recovery or further action.

It was noted that issuing a Form 4 represents the final stage of the enforcement process.

COUNCIL DIRECTION REQUESTS

[Flag Policy](#)

Ms. Beers presented the proposed Flag Policy, which establishes clear and consistent standards for flag display, half-masting, and special occasion flags on municipal properties. The policy designates official flag locations, outlines procedures for community flag requests, and promotes

transparency, consistency, and respect in municipal flag practices.

Notable proposed changes include:

- The relocation of existing flagpoles from the Artisan Village to the Municipal Building.
- The Acadian flag at the Riverside-Albert monument to be flown year-round rather than for a three-month period, as the seasonal schedule is often overlooked.

Council discussed the previous 2023 motion that authorized the Acadian flag to be flown for a three-month period each year.

Administration clarified that the proposed Flag Policy would have the Acadian flag flown year-round for consistency and ease of implementation. However, Council may choose to maintain or reinstate the previous three-month display period if preferred.

Streetlight Policy

Ms. Beers presented the proposed Street Light Policy, which establishes a clear and consistent framework for the installation, management, and cost-sharing of municipal streetlights. The policy defines service levels, outlines approval processes, and clarifies administrative and Council responsibilities.

A key addition in the proposed policy is the introduction of a formal request and petition process designed to promote fairness, transparency, fiscal accountability, and to ensure that public safety needs are appropriately addressed.

Surplus Land & Land Acquisition Policy

Ms. Beers presented the proposed Municipal Land Acquisition and Disposal Policy, which establishes clear and transparent procedures for the acquisition, evaluation, and disposal of municipal lands in accordance with the Local Governance Act.

The policy outlines how lands are identified, assessed, and declared surplus, and introduces various disposal methods, including direct sale, public solicitation, and partnerships with non-profit housing organizations. It also includes a reversion clause to protect municipal interests and requires that at least 50% of net proceeds from land sales be directed toward housing initiatives or municipal reserve funds.

Adoption of the policy will promote fairness, accountability, and alignment with Council's strategic priorities for housing, transparency, and community development.

Council discussed the proposed policy clause requiring that a minimum of 50% of net proceeds from land sales be directed toward housing-related initiatives. A Councillor inquired whether this practice was common among other municipalities or originated as an administrative recommendation.

Administration clarified that this provision is modeled on practices in other municipalities, where the 50% allocation typically applies only when lands are sold for economic development or affordable housing purposes. The funds may be directed either to a housing reserve fund, for

example, to support future non-profit or seniors' housing projects, or to general reserves, depending on Council's direction.

It was noted that Fundy Albert does not currently maintain a dedicated housing reserve fund, and Administration suggested that until such a fund is established, revenues could be placed in general reserves, allowing Council flexibility in future decisions.

EMO By-Law

Ms. Beers presented the proposed Emergency Measures By-law, which establishes a unified emergency management framework for the Municipality of Fundy Albert in accordance with the Emergency Measures Act and the Local Governance Act.

The by-law replaces outdated versions from the former Villages of Alma, Hillsborough, and Riverside-Albert, ensuring consistent authority, coordination, and response procedures across the municipality. It clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of Council, the Emergency Measures Coordinator, and the Emergency Measures Committee, and outlines procedures for declaring a State of Local Emergency and entering into mutual aid agreements.

The by-law was prepared in consultation with NB EMO and reviewed by the municipal EMO Committee, with the goal of strengthening community safety, preparedness, and leadership during emergencies.

Shared Portion of Public Works Employees and Fleet

Ms. Hutchinson advised Council that, during budget preparation, it is essential to distinguish between shared and non-shared expenses to determine an appropriate and equitable tax rate across the municipality.

Ms. Hutchinson requested Council's direction regarding the allocation of Public Works wages, expenses, and fleet costs, noting that unlike larger municipalities, Fundy Albert does not have a separate Parks and Recreation Department. As a result, many recreation- and maintenance-related tasks are performed by Public Works staff, which complicates expense categorization. Administration provided examples from the work plan to illustrate approximate cost distributions and requested Council guidance on how these items should be treated in the upcoming budget process.

Councillor Elderkin raised several questions regarding the allocation of Public Works wages and expenses between utilities and shared services within the draft budget. She noted discrepancies between the work plan, which identifies 40% of Public Works time toward general operations, and the budget figures, which allocate up to 90% of two employees' wages to utilities.

The Councillor emphasized the need for accurate data to make informed budget decisions, particularly since wages represent one of the municipality's largest expenditures. She asked whether the newly implemented timesheet system provides clear tracking of where Public Works employees spend their time to support these allocations.

She further discussed concerns from constituents regarding fairness in cost and revenue sharing following amalgamation, noting that while revenues from municipal assets are shared across Fundy Albert, questions remain about whether expenses are distributed equitably.

The Councillor reiterated her support for maintaining a 0% tax rate increase, particularly communities, which has already experienced rising utility costs, an increase of approximately \$160,000 from the previous year without any change in service levels.

She concluded by advising that Council requires factual, detailed financial data showing how various allocations (e.g., shifting salaries between departments or services) will impact tax and utility rates, before making final budget decisions.

Councillor Garden sought clarification from the Treasurer regarding the allocation of Public Works employee wages between utilities and general operations. He noted that two positions are currently budgeted with 90% of their time charged to utilities and asked whether the remaining 10% of their time is included within the 40% allocation attributed to Public Works activities under the broader budget recommendation.

The inquiry aimed to confirm the accuracy and consistency of percentage allocations used to determine departmental cost distributions in the budget.

Ms. Hutchinson provided clarification regarding the 60/40 allocation used in the budget for Public Works activities. The distribution is based on the current year's work plan, reflecting how staff time was allocated across various municipal functions.

It was explained that work related to sidewalks and other village-specific infrastructure is classified as a village centre expense, while time spent on shared functions, such as facility maintenance, trail work, and similar activities, is categorized under the shared services portion. The Treasurer also confirmed that travel time was excluded from the calculation, as it does not directly relate to specific operational tasks.

Councillor Garden raised questions regarding the 90% wage allocations of two Public Works staff to municipal utilities, noting the significant financial impact on smaller utility systems, such as Riverside-Albert (an estimated \$160,000 increase) and Alma (approximately \$111,000).

Councillor Garden suggested that staff re-examine the accuracy of these allocations and explore possible efficiencies to mitigate rising costs.

Further discussion addressed the 40% Public Works time and 24% fleet usage currently assigned to shared services and facilities. The Councillor emphasized the importance of distinguishing between shared and non-shared expenses to support an equitable tax rate and to address resident concerns about fairness.

Councillor Garden also inquired whether, under the previous budget, these costs were billed as shared services across all wards or allocated differently, seeking clarification on how the new recommendations differ from past budget practices.

Ms. Hutchinson explained that in 2023, all Public Works employees and related equipment costs were budgeted under the village centres (Hillsborough, Riverside-Albert, and Alma). Shared facilities were

supported indirectly by staff working across locations, but all costs were charged to the village budgets for ease of reporting.

The recommendation going forward proposes that a portion of these expenses be treated as shared services, reflecting the time and resources used for shared municipal infrastructure and community-wide activities. This approach would provide a more equitable and transparent cost distribution across all wards.

Administration emphasized that this remains a Council decision and is being presented for discussion purposes only.

Councillor Land recommended that staff review Public Works timesheets from the past five to six months to verify where employees are allocating their time. He suggested creating graphs or visual summaries to provide a clearer picture of how staff resources are being used, noting that assumptions such as 40% or 90% allocations are insufficient without data-backed analysis. **Councillor Land** also requested that during budget deliberations, any proposed additions or changes be accompanied by information showing their impact on tax rates for each ward or LSD area, to help Council make informed decisions.

He emphasized the need to streamline operations and reduce inefficiencies, noting that some duplication of effort and unnecessary travel may be contributing to higher costs. He encouraged a focus on “needs versus wants” in budget priorities and suggested that trimming excess spending could allow for necessary purchases, such as equipment replacements, without increasing overall expenditures.

Finally, he noted that final 2023 financial results and potential surpluses should be reviewed before finalizing the upcoming budget, as this information will better inform Council’s fiscal decisions.

Councillor Elderkin raised concerns regarding the fleet cost allocations proposed in the draft budget, noting that 24% of fleet expenses were recommended for shared services and 30% for utilities, leaving 46% of fleet use unaccounted for. She questioned how the remaining fleet time was allocated and whether travel time should be reflected consistently in both employee time tracking and equipment cost calculations.

Ms. Hutchinson clarified that travel-related costs are captured within the equipment expense calculations, though not within staff time allocations. **Councillor Elderkin** emphasized the importance of obtaining detailed and accurate data on fleet and staff usage to ensure equitable cost distribution among village centres, shared services, and utilities.

She further agreed with previous comments that final 2023 financial data and any available 2024 figures should be reviewed before making final budget decisions, stressing that Council must have complete and factual information to make informed financial choices.

Ms. Hutchinson requested more information as to what Council is looking for. **Councillor Elderkin** outlined the specific information Council requires to make informed budget decisions regarding Public Works wage and cost allocations.

She emphasized the need for accurate data showing where staff time is actually being spent,

noting that budget allocations must reflect the true distribution of labour among utilities, shared services, and general operations. Referring to previous discussions, she highlighted that if two employees are billed 90% to utilities, then the corresponding water and sewer systems should receive 90% of their time and service, underscoring the importance of aligning expenses with actual work performed.

The Councillor clarified that discussing cost allocations does not imply any proposed tax increase but rather seeks transparency and factual data. She also advised that while work plans are helpful for estimating workloads, they may differ significantly from actual time usage, and Council needs that verified information to ensure fair and responsible budgeting across all areas of Fundy Albert.

Councillor Elderkin emphasized the importance of understanding the bottom-line impact of any budget adjustments or reallocations recommended by Administration or Council. She noted that when proposing to shift or reassign funds, for example, moving \$100,000 between departments or service areas, Council must be provided with a clear picture of how such changes affect the overall tax rate and municipal budget outcome.

She advised that both Council and residents are ultimately focused on the final financial result and having that information presented clearly is essential for transparent and responsible decision-making.

Mayor Campbell noted the importance of treating the Municipality's finances with the same accountability and discipline as a business operation. He emphasized that while the Municipality has both revenues and expenditures, it must ensure funds are spent responsibly and supported by clear policies, tracking systems, and oversight.

He reiterated that effective management requires knowing where staff are working, what tasks they are performing, and how much time is being spent on each function to ensure accurate budgeting and accountability in service delivery.

[Fleet Management – Truck Purchase](#)

Mr. Barrett acknowledged the complexity of accurately tracking Public Works time and travel, noting that when staff perform multiple tasks, such as shared services and public works duties during the same trip, it becomes difficult to allocate precise percentages of time or cost to each function.

It was noted that the Municipality has begun recording actual staff time spent on various activities to supplement the existing work plan estimates, recognizing that day-to-day operations often differ from projected plans. Administration committed to compiling these details for Council's review.

Additionally, Administration reported that the Municipality's Public Works fleet is aging, resulting in frequent breakdowns and higher maintenance costs. To improve reliability and efficiency, staff recommended the replacement of a fleet vehicle to support ongoing operational needs across

the municipality.

Councillor Garden expressed support for ensuring staff have the appropriate tools and reliable equipment to perform their duties effectively, noting that the Municipality has inherited an aging fleet from the former villages, some of which now require replacement or have been retired. The Councillor inquired about the funding source for the proposed \$60,000 vehicle purchase, which is currently designated under shared services, and asked whether this represents a change from past practice, where vehicles were typically purchased and funded by the individual former villages prior to amalgamation.

He suggested researching comparable municipalities, such as Fundy-St. Martins, to better understand how shared versus localized asset costs are managed in similar rural governance structures. The Councillor emphasized that having this context will help Council make an informed and transparent decision and allow the Municipality to clearly explain to residents the rationale behind future shared equipment purchases and funding models.

Councillor Land expressed caution regarding the timing of the proposed vehicle purchase, noting that the 2025 budget and potential surplus have not yet been finalized. He suggested deferring the decision until Council has a clearer understanding of available funds and updated financial projections.

He emphasized the importance of maintaining reserve and capital funds for emergency infrastructure needs, citing the example of aging clay water pipes in Hillsborough that could require significant future investment. The Councillor acknowledged the need to replace aging fleet vehicles but recommended exploring operational efficiencies, such as reducing mileage and stationing staff closer to their work locations, particularly in Riverside-Albert, to extend vehicle lifespan and reduce costs.

He concluded that while he supports replacing vehicles when financially feasible, Council should wait for confirmed budget figures before proceeding.

Councillor Jonah asked for an update on the 2023 financial statements, emphasizing that this lack of finalized information limits their ability to make informed budget and purchasing decisions.

Councillor Jonah expressed concern that the Municipality is effectively working two years behind, creating uncertainty in financial planning.

While supportive of providing Public Works with necessary equipment and resources, **Councillor Jonah** agreed that major spending decisions should be deferred until the 2023 financials are complete and the Municipality has a clearer understanding of its current fiscal position.

Mr. Wallace confirmed that the Municipality is still awaiting the finalized 2023 statements.

Confirming that the file is currently in the testing phase with the external auditors. It was noted that while the Municipality and its accounting support team (E6) submitted the required documentation several weeks ago, the auditors have not yet completed their review.

Administration emphasized that E6's preparatory work was thorough and complete, and that delays are likely due to capacity issues within the auditing firm, which may have taken on a

heavy workload. The Municipality continues to follow up with the auditors to expedite completion of the 2023 financial statements.

Councillor Jonah reflected on past practices in the former Village of Hillsborough, noting that the Municipality previously managed effectively with used vehicles due to shorter travel distances. However, since amalgamation, staff now travel daily between Hillsborough and Alma, causing greater wear and tear on vehicles and making second hand options less sustainable. While acknowledging the need for reliable equipment, the Councillor emphasized the importance of financial restraint until the Municipality has resolved its 2023 and 2024 financial statements, suggesting that major capital purchases should be deferred until the 2025 budget once prior-year figures are finalized.

Mr. Wallace discussed the potential for technology to improve efficiency and reduce operational costs, particularly related to travel between communities such as Hillsborough and Alma. It was noted that some Public Works tasks could eventually be managed remotely or through digital monitoring systems, minimizing the need for staff to travel for routine checks or maintenance. Administration confirmed that technology improvements in Alma are already being explored as part of an ongoing project. Future budget planning should consider opportunities to balance investments between equipment and technology to achieve long-term operational efficiencies across the Municipality.

Councillor Land exited the meeting at 5:22 pm and returned at 5:24 pm.

2026 PMHP Project – Scenic Drive Shoulder and Swale Reconstruction

Mr. Barrett advised that the 2025 Transportation and Highway Program (PMHP) project for scenic drive and swale reconstruction that the updated cost estimate provided by Englobe Engineering was higher than the original projection, creating a funding shortfall.

Several options were presented for Council's consideration:

1. Request additional funding from DTI, though the likelihood of approval is low due to pre-allocated provincial budgets;
2. Maintain the full project scope and cover the shortfall through municipal capital reserves;
3. Reduce the project scope to remain within the existing approved funding; or
4. Seek alternative proposals from other engineering firms to determine if a more cost-effective option is available.

Councillor Elderkin questioned why the Municipality would consider using its own capital reserves before first requesting additional funding from the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DTI) to address the cost increase for the project in Alma.

Administration confirmed that a funding request to DTI is already in progress, acknowledging that the project's original cost estimate dated back to 2022, and cost escalations since then are expected. **Councillor Elderkin** agreed that it is appropriate to pursue additional provincial funding

first before making any further financial commitments from municipal reserves.

Councillor Coates exited the meeting at 5:26 pm and returned at 5:28 pm.

Councillor Land inquired about the portion of the \$125,000 project cost allocated to Englobe Engineering and expressed dissatisfaction with the firm's previous performance on the Pound Hill project, noting that issues identified during that work were not adequately addressed. He recommended that the Municipality seek proposals from other engineering firms for future projects to ensure better value and accountability. The Councillor supported first requesting additional funding from DTI, and if unsuccessful, proceeding within the existing \$125,000 budget while reapplying for future funding opportunities if needed. He concluded that Fundy Albert must manage its finances prudently and equitably, ensuring projects and expenditures are distributed responsibly across the Municipality.

Councillor Elderkin advised that the cost breakdown noting that design, tendering, and construction administration are estimated at \$30,000, while construction costs are projected at \$155,000, bringing the total project estimate to \$185,000. This represents an increase of approximately \$60,000 over the original budget, or roughly 20% of the total project cost.

Councillor Garden expressed concern about potential delays in securing additional funding from the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DTI). While supportive of pursuing more funding, he cautioned against selecting an option that could prolong the project timeline for several years, noting that the original design dated back to 2022 and further deferral could push completion to 2028 or beyond. He emphasized that the affected section of road is visibly deteriorating, with erosion worsening over time, and that inaction could lead to higher repair costs and greater urgency later.

[Hillsborough Water Exploration](#)

Mr. Barrett provided an update on the Hillsborough Water Exploration Project, noting that Council had previously reviewed and approved the initial phase earlier in the year. The project has now progressed to the stage where Council is being asked to approve the next steps and related proposals in order to move forward with the implementation phase of this infrastructure transformation initiative.

Councillor Land emphasized the importance of advancing the Hillsborough Water Exploration Project to ensure a reliable long-term water supply for the Municipality. He noted that dry summer conditions have become more frequent and that increasing population and development are placing greater demand on municipal water systems. He urged Council to proceed proactively with next steps, including the construction of access

roads, test wells, hydrogeologic assessments, and public consultation, to secure future water sources and maintain service reliability for residents who depend on the municipal systems.

Arena Ventilation

Mr. Barrett reported that the arena's current ventilation system is not compliant with required safety standards in the event of an ammonia leak. The issue was identified earlier in the year, when it was noted that the existing system does not meet regulatory requirements.

Two quotes were sought to address the deficiency. Several contractors declined due to project scope, but Cimco Refrigeration submitted a comprehensive proposal, along with a quote previously provided by Black and MacDonald.

Administration recommended that Council approve the submitted quote to proceed with necessary upgrades and bring the arena ventilation system back into compliance as soon as possible.

Council reviewed quotes for the arena ventilation system upgrade required to meet ammonia safety compliance standards. After discussion, Council agreed that the most suitable option was to proceed with Black & MacDonald, noting the company's longstanding experience with the arena's existing system, comprehensive scope of work, and inclusion of disposal, demolition, freight, and delivery in its proposal, costs excluded from other submission.

Administration confirmed that project costs would be funded through the arena contingency, which currently has available funds. It was noted that the existing system remains operational but poses a potential risk, and prompt action is necessary to maintain compliance.

ADMINISTRATION REPORTS

Refer to the following reports:

Director, Legislative Services

Ms. Beers reported that five building permits were issued across Wards 2–6 in September 2025, with a total project value of \$44,604.

Key updates included:

- **Funding Initiatives:** The Municipality received \$96,000 through the FireSmart Program to develop a Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan in partnership with Forsite Consultants. The plan will assess wildfire risks, improve preparedness, and outline mitigation strategies, with completion expected by March 2026.
- **Infrastructure:** The Fundy Albert welcome sign will be installed at the Lower Coverdale boundary, with site work and an easement agreement with the landowner currently underway.
- **By-laws and Policies:** Work is ongoing on a Water and Sewer By-law, and amendments are being prepared for the Procedural By-law No. 2022-03.

- Community Projects: Veteran banners will be installed on October 27, weather permitting, and will remain in place for the month of November in recognition of Remembrance Day.

Director of Operations

Mr. Barrett provided further updates on water system projects and community infrastructure:

- Water Conservation: Despite recent rainfall, residents are asked to continue conserving water while wells and reservoirs recover. It was noted that full replenishment will take time, and public cooperation over the summer was appreciated, resulting in a strong overall position given the extended dry periods.
- Alma Gazebo Installation: The gazebo installation is scheduled for October 24, weather permitting, with conditions currently favorable for completion.
- Alma Water Project: The Alma Water Reservoir project is progressing well, with one reservoir nearly complete and work on the second expected to begin shortly. Commissioning of the wells is anticipated in December, followed by approximately one month of testing before the system is fully operational.

Councillor Elderkin requested clarification on the statement that “additional funding was identified through diligent financial review.” Specifically, they asked where the additional funds originated and how they were determined.

Mr. Barrett clarified that the additional funding identified resulted from cost savings in concurrent utility projects in Riverside-Albert. Specifically, funds remaining from the water main replacement project were reallocated to cover the final components of the water filtration project.

Councillor Elderkin inquired about the status of the Ward 6 lagoon project and the reason for ongoing delays. Administration responded that a meeting is being scheduled with Mr. Jeff Russell to review the project’s current status and determine next steps. The meeting is expected to take place within the next week to address the outstanding issues.

Councillor Jonah inquired about the status of the land agreement related to the Hillsborough water exploration project. Administration confirmed that progress is being made and that the property owner is satisfied with the most recent revisions to the agreement. The document has been forwarded to the landowner’s lawyer for final review, and Administration expects to meet with the owner later this week or early next week to finalize and secure the signed agreement.

Treasurer Report Alma Utility

[Hillsborough Utility](#)

[Riverside-Albert Utility](#)

[Fundy Albert General Operating](#)

Ms. Hutchinson provided an update on the Municipality's financial position, noting that overall operations remain stable.

Key points included:

- Revenue Adjustments: Work is ongoing with Circular Materials to correct revenue amounts owed. The Municipality has lost revenue from Anglophone East School District for the Recreation Centre after changes to their partnership agreement. However, unbudgeted revenues have allowed the Municipality to preserve its operating reserve for future use.
- Expenditures:
 - General equipment costs are over budget.
 - Recreation "Other" category shows overages but is offset by a grant from Canadian Heritage, allowing flexibility for additional community programming.
 - NB Power costs have increased across several facilities due to new meters and higher rates.
- Capital Reporting: In compliance with PSAB standards, capital items and related grants are being moved to capital accounts, resulting in clearer reporting of net income and project expenses. Council may request income statements for capital accounts going forward.
- Utilities:
 - Hillsborough Utility reserves remain intact, originally intended to support the Water Exploration Project,
 - Water treatment and wastewater systems in both Hillsborough and Riverside-Albert have exceeded budgeted repair and contingency amounts, largely due to leaks and increased NB Power costs.
 - Riverside-Albert and Alma capital-related grants and expenses are also being reclassified to capital accounts.
- Accounts Receivable: Collections are improving but remain below expectations.
- Student Employment Programs: The Municipality received \$13,000 in funding through SEED and Canada Summer Jobs, offsetting part of the \$51,000 total student wage cost.
- Visitor Information Centre: Repairs to the mini-split system exceeded the budget, but projections are being reviewed to reallocate funds and complete the work within the current fiscal year.

Councillor Elderkin commented on the high water and sewer receivables in Riverside-Albert, noting the challenges caused by recent Canada Post service disruptions. She emphasized the need for the Municipality to develop a plan to continue billing and communication in the event of prolonged postal interruptions.

The Treasurer confirmed that the Municipality is actively collecting email addresses to support

paperless billing, although some residents have requested to revert to paper invoices. Other municipalities have introduced incentive programs, such as draws for residents who switch to paperless billing.

Council agreed that the Municipality should explore similar strategies to encourage electronic billing and reduce dependency on postal services. The Councillor also noted that outstanding receivables, totaling approximately \$30,000, represent a significant burden on the small number of ratepayers in Riverside-Albert, underscoring the importance of improving collection and communication methods.

Councillor Coates expressed concerns regarding the total outstanding utility receivables, estimated at approximately \$176,338 as of September. A Councillor noted that a significant portion falls within the 91+ day category, raising questions about collection effectiveness and fairness to residents who consistently pay their bills.

The Treasurer explained that some of the long-term arrears relate to accounts where services have already been discontinued, and these amounts are secured through automatic liens on the properties, ensuring recovery upon property sale, though the process can be lengthy.

Council discussed whether other municipalities use different enforcement or collection methods to address persistent non-payment. Administration agreed to consult with other municipalities to explore additional strategies or best practices for managing overdue utility accounts and improving collection timelines.

MAYOR AND COUNCILLOR STATEMENTS AND INQUIRIES

Councillor Garden presented his report:

1. Public Safety Concern – Alma Well Road:

A resident reported a potential traffic safety issue near the Alma well access road where increased construction traffic has raised concerns. **Councillor Garden** asked whether installing a stop or yield sign could be installed to improve safety. Administration confirmed that security gates for the Alma well site—and similar gates in Hillsborough and Riverside-Albert—are part of the ongoing well project and will be installed toward project completion, with the Alma gate repositioned closer to Forest Drive for better control.

2. 2023 Audit Update:

Administration advised that the 2023 municipal audit remains in the testing phase. The auditor postponed a scheduled meeting, and staff are following up with both E6 Consulting and the audit firm's lead partner to expedite progress. The municipality is prepared to move forward with 2024 financial work once the 2023 audit is finalized. Council requested continued updates to keep residents informed.

3. RCMP Crime Report Inquiry:

Councillor Garden requested a copy of the RCMP crime activity report. Staff clarified that

RCMP data is publicly available online by detachment area and noted that crime activity has recently increased. The RCMP will attend Council in November for discussion. The link to the online crime data to is posted on the municipal website under "Frequently Asked Questions."

4. Alma Fleet Launch:

Councillor Garden noted the annual fleet launch took place October 10–13 in Alma with strong community participation. The event is considered an important part of the local fishing economy. **Councillor Garden** requested staff explore available budget or grant funding to assist with volunteer and event costs in recognition of the community's contribution.

5. Fundy National Park Update (October 2025):

Highlights included:

- Improved Atlantic salmon return numbers following early-October rainfall after drought conditions.
- Seasonal facility closures began October 13; automated fee terminals now operational at park entrances.
- Canada Strong Pass renewed for the 2025–26 holiday and summer periods.
- Park remains open year-round, with winter recreation opportunities and ongoing facility access at Headquarters Campground.

Councillor Land inquired whether any payments have been issued for the Golf Club Road project. Administration confirmed that electronic money transfers have replaced paper cheques for project payments. The first payment has been sent, and the second payment is currently being processed.

Councillor Coates expressed frustration over repeated postponements despite multiple target completion dates since early August, noting the impact on Council's ability to provide financial updates to residents.

The Treasurer explained that the municipality has faced challenges finding qualified municipal auditors, as only a limited number of firms in the province handle this specialized work. The current auditor was engaged after the previous firm's partner retired, with outreach extending as far as Sussex and Saint John to secure services.

Administration confirmed they are actively exploring alternative audit firms and have raised the issue with E6 Consulting to identify an auditor with greater capacity to meet deadlines. The Treasurer emphasized that all financial documentation is fully prepared and ready for review, and the delays lie solely with the auditing firm.

Councillor Jonah requested an update on the Golf Club Road project; Administration confirmed that construction on Golf Club Road is approximately 75% complete. Despite recent weather

delays and minor issues with anchor bolts, a solution has been implemented. The estimated project completion date is around November 10, possibly sooner if conditions remain favourable.

2. Hillsborough Christmas Parade:

It was announced that the annual Hillsborough Christmas Parade will take place on December 6, 2025. Residents or organizations wishing to participate are encouraged to contact Becky Snider, who is coordinating the event.

3. Acknowledgement of Staff Efforts:

Council extended appreciation to Mr. Wallace and the municipal administrative team for their leadership and productivity. Members noted significant progress in policy development, project management, and interdepartmental coordination.

Councillor Elderkin advised:

1. Remembrance Day ceremonies will take place as follows:

- November 10 – Riverside-Albert
- November 11 – Alma and Hillsborough

A special thank-you was extended to Peter Jubb for coordinating and ensuring participation across all former villages each year.

2. Community Acknowledgements:

Councillor Elderkin expressed appreciation to the organizers of the Shepody Food Bank fundraiser, recognizing their efforts to support a vital local cause.

3. Financial Audits:

Council Elderkin reiterated the urgency of receiving the 2023 and 2024 audits, emphasizing that timely completion is essential for informed financial decision-making.

4. RCMP Presentation:

Councillor Elderkin is happy to hear that the RCMP will attend the November Council meeting to provide an update and answer questions from Council and the public.

5. Council and Administration Collaboration:

Council Elderkin recognized that recent meeting packages have been extensive but necessary to support informed decision-making. She thanked the administration team for their detailed work and acknowledged the importance of mutual support between Council and staff to ensure decisions are well-founded and communicated effectively to residents.

Mayor Campbell reaffirmed his commitment to representing all residents across Fundy Albert, from Alma to Lower Coverdale and surrounding areas. He expressed appreciation for Council's and staff's ongoing efforts to strengthen municipal unity and service delivery.

Mayor Campbell advised that in September, he participated in 21 meetings, noting a high level of engagement and emphasizing that Council and staff are actively working to address community priorities.

During October, the Mayor attended the three-day municipal conference in Saint John, describing it as informative, with valuable discussions and networking among mayors and councillors across the province.

The Mayor noted that October he has attended eight meetings to date.

Councillor Elderkin advised that there is an upcoming fundraiser in support of the local library, scheduled for November 1st. The event aims to raise funds for ongoing library initiatives and community programming, and residents were encouraged to attend and support the cause.

PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND INQUIRIES

Resident Jason Horsman addressed Council to express concerns regarding shared costing, taxation, and fleet management within the Municipality of Fundy Albert.

Mr. Horsman noted that although the provincial tax rate for LSD areas has not formally increased, residents' property assessments have risen significantly, resulting in higher tax bills. He advised that the province has not adjusted its financial contributions to municipalities to reflect these increases and urged Council to advocate more strongly with the Province of New Brunswick for fair funding rather than increasing costs to residents.

He emphasized that residents in LSD areas already contribute through both provincial taxes and user fees for recreation and other services, questioning additional shared service costs for facilities such as the Alma Activity Centre and Hillsborough Arena.

Drawing from his background as a CUPE Local 51 executive member, Mr. Horsman stated that amalgamation in New Brunswick has been poorly managed compared to other provinces, leading to administrative inefficiencies and accountability issues.

Regarding municipal fleet management, he cautioned against the premature replacement of aging vehicles, suggesting that refurbishment or maintenance is often more cost-effective than new purchases. He encouraged Council to carefully monitor operating costs and consider delaying fleet replacements until broader economic and regulatory changes.

Mr. Horsman concluded by reaffirming his willingness to assist with local issues and encouraged Council to direct its lobbying efforts toward the provincial government rather than imposing further costs on residents.

Resident Todd Geldart addressed Council to support previous remarks and emphasize the need for stronger efforts to secure provincial and federal funding for infrastructure and tourism improvements.

Mr. Geldart expressed concern that Route 114, despite being a key tourism corridor connecting major attractions such as Hopewell Rocks, Cape Enrage, and Fundy National Park, is not officially designated or maintained as such. He urged Council to advocate for provincial recognition of Route 114 as a tourism corridor, which would open access to funding for road repairs, beautification, and community development.

The resident highlighted the deteriorated condition of Main Street and other local infrastructure, noting that poor visual appearance discourages investment and tourism. He stated that improving roads, signage, and streetscapes would attract travelers who currently pass through without stopping, thereby increasing local business activity and municipal revenue.

Council acknowledged the concerns and confirmed that advocacy efforts with both provincial and federal governments are ongoing to seek infrastructure funding and tourism development support.

Councillor Land reminded attendees that with the next municipal election expected next Spring, new candidates will be needed to step forward and continue supporting local progress.

Mr. Geldart concluded by thanking Council for their transparency and communication during the meeting and reaffirmed his desire to see the municipality grow and thrive through coordinated development efforts.

Mr. Sean McGrath reiterated ongoing concerns about budget allocation fairness and to commend Council for their commitment to data-driven decision-making, particularly during discussions about Public Works resource distribution.

He expressed appreciation that Council members requested additional data and analysis before making financial decisions, noting that this approach demonstrates transparency and accountability.

However, he restated his concern about a perceived village-centric focus in municipal budgeting and operations, emphasizing that approximately 70% of the municipality's population resides in the former Local Service District (LSD) areas. He urged Council to ensure that allocations of services and resources reflect this demographic reality and that rural areas, particularly Coverdale, receive equitable consideration.

Mr. McGrath also stated that while he believes tax rates are high, he equally supports the principle that revenues generated within former village areas should remain available to those areas to help balance service levels fairly across all wards.

He referenced an independent analysis he conducted using municipal financial data from the past three years since amalgamation, which examines population, local versus shared expenses, and taxation trends. He invited Council to review and challenge the data if any inaccuracies were found and offered to continue sharing it publicly for transparency.

He concluded by thanking Council for their engagement and reaffirming his intent to continue participating constructively in future meetings to advocate for fair and balanced municipal service delivery.

Mr. David Knickle expressed appreciation for Council's commitment to fact-based decision-making and acknowledged the challenges faced in managing municipal services. He noted that the limited user base in smaller communities makes it difficult to sustain infrastructure and utilities without either raising taxes or reducing services, and since utilities are essential, reductions aren't an option.

Mr. McGrath suggested that during the past few years, shared contributions across the municipality could have helped offset some of the financial strain, emphasizing that "as costs rise, we all have to pay together."

Council members clarified that:

- Utility systems (water and sewer) are separate from the general operating budget.
- These services are funded only through user fees, not through general taxation, as

required by provincial regulations.

- Each former village is responsible for the costs of its own utility systems, and funds from one system cannot be used to pay for another.

Council also noted that major infrastructure projects, such as the \$12 million Alma water project, rely heavily on federal and provincial funding, as no municipality could afford such costs independently.

Mr. Knickle thanked Council for their efforts, recognizing the complexity of managing growth and service delivery across Fundy Albert, and Council reaffirmed their commitment to collaboration and transparency.

CLOSED SESSION

Mayor Campbell read a statement to clarify the purpose and legal necessity of Council's closed (in-camera) sessions. It was emphasized that municipalities are required by law to hold certain discussions in private under the Local Governance Act and the Right to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (RTIPPA).

Closed sessions are used to protect sensitive information related to:

- Personnel matters,
- Legal advice,
- Contract negotiations, and
- Issues involving identifiable individuals.

Mayor Campbell noted that these sessions are not about secrecy, but rather about protecting the privacy, legal rights, and financial interests of residents, employees, and organizations.

Mayor Campbell further explained that disclosing confidential information improperly could expose the municipality to legal action or financial penalties, which would ultimately be borne by taxpayers.

Mayor Campbell concluded that by holding in-camera meetings when required, Council is acting in compliance with legislation and safeguarding both the public interest and the municipality's financial integrity.

Councillor Garden requested two additional points of discussion under an existing Closed Session item pursuant to Section 68(1)(b) of the *Local Governance Act*, relating to personal information as defined under the Right to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (RTIPPA).

IT WAS MOVED by **Councillor Land** and **SECONDED** by **Councillor Coates** that Council have an in-camera session at 6:28 pm.

MOTION CARRIED (unanimously).

68 (1) (c) information that could cause financial loss or gain to a person or the local government or could jeopardize negotiations leading to an agreement or contract.

Mr. Barrett exited the meeting at 7:20 pm.

68 (1) (b) personal information as defined in the Right to Information and Protection of Privacy Act

IT WAS MOVED by **Councillor Land** and **SECONDED** by **Councillor Jonah** to return to the regular session at 7:50 pm.

MOTION CARRIED (unanimously)

ADJOURNMENT

IT WAS MOVED by **Councillor Coates** **THAT** the meeting be adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Mayor

Clerk