

Present: Mayor Campbell
Councillor Ward-Russell
Councillor Coates
Councillor Elderkin
Councillor Land
Councillor Jonah

Staff Present Sean Wallace - CAO
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

Norman Woodworth – Culvert Questions

Council received questions regarding the recent culvert installation on Golf Club Road, specifically the change in materials, project cost, and the placement of large rocks within the culvert.

It was clarified that the culvert consists of a steel pipe with a concrete base, rather than a full concrete box structure as initially assumed. Staff noted that the original design had changed during the project.

With respect to cost, it was advised that final figures have not yet been received; however, the total cost is expected to be approximately \$1 million, slightly less than the previously referenced \$1.3 million. The project costs are fully covered by the Province.

Staff further explained that the rocks placed within the culvert are part of an approved fish passage design required by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). The steel culvert design includes internal dividers and rock placement to function as a fish ladder, eliminating the need for a separate ladder structure. Approximately 25% of the culvert is filled in accordance

with the approved design.

Concerns were raised regarding the potential for large rocks, debris, and trees to obstruct water flow during significant rainfall events, referencing past culvert failures under similar conditions. It was noted that some large rocks appear to have shifted since installation.

In response, staff advised that DFO and engineering inspections were part of the project process. The Director of Operations will be asked to follow up with the project engineers and DFO to address the concerns raised and confirm ongoing monitoring and mitigation measures.

INFORMATION ITEMS

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

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

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

Fire Department Quarterly Reports ([Alma](#), [Riverview](#), [Hillsborough](#), and [Riverside-Albert](#))

[Maritime By-Law Enforcement \(October & November\)](#)

[NBSPCA Quarterly Report](#)

Resident Correspondence

- [Gray Brook Culvert Project](#)
- [Eric Steeves Charity Golf Tournament](#)

[Fundy National Park Update](#)

COUNCIL DIRECTION REQUESTS

[Council Meeting Schedule During the Election Transition – COW May 19th](#)

Ms. Beers advised Council that the municipal election will take place on May 11, 2026. In accordance with Section 56 of the *Local Governance Act*, restrictions apply to the authority of the outgoing Council from election day until the first meeting of the incoming Council. During this period, municipal staff maintain a neutral, administrative role and do not participate in election activities.

Council was advised that the May 5, 2026 Regular Council Meeting occurs prior to election day and represents the final meeting at which the outgoing Council retains full authority. Any

meetings held after May 11, 2026 fall within the election transition period and are subject to statutory restrictions.

It was noted that the Committee of the Whole meeting scheduled for May 19, 2026 would occur during the transition period. While meetings are permitted under the Act, agenda items must be limited to day-to-day operational matters. Given that Committee of the Whole meetings typically involve broader discussion, future planning, and direction-setting, there is an increased risk of exceeding the authority permitted during the transition period.

Administration recommended that the Committee of the Whole meeting scheduled for May 19, 2026 be cancelled to ensure compliance with Section 56 of the *Local Governance Act*.

Council received the information and expressed no questions or objections

Procedural By-Law

Ms. Beers introduced a newly drafted Procedural By-Law for Council's information, discussion, and feedback only. It was noted that, under the *Local Governance Act*, municipalities are required to establish rules governing how Council and its committees conduct meetings, including meeting procedures, decision-making processes, and interactions between Council, staff, and the public.

Administration advised that the draft by-law is intended to reflect current legislative requirements, align with best practices used by other New Brunswick municipalities, and improve consistency and clarity in meeting procedures.

Council was advised that the purpose of the discussion was to provide direction to Administration on any revisions prior to scheduling the Procedural By-Law for first reading at a future Council meeting.

Council reviewed several elements of the draft Procedural By-Law and raised questions and concerns for further clarification and potential refinement.

Virtual Meetings

Council discussed the absence of limits on virtual attendance and expressed concern that unrestricted use could reduce in-person participation and public accountability. Councillors noted that attending meetings in person is generally considered part of a councillor's obligation, with virtual participation more appropriate for circumstances such as illness, travel, or emergencies. Questions were raised regarding whether a percentage limit should apply, what meetings would be included (regular, Committee of the Whole, or special meetings), and whether mayoral permission or defined criteria should be required. Council agreed that additional clarity and guidance would be beneficial, and staff will research practices in other municipalities and bring back recommendations.

Motions, Debate, and Voting (Section 5.6)

Council identified a lack of clarity regarding when debate occurs after a motion is moved and seconded and before the vote is called. It was noted that the sequencing of discussion versus voting was not clearly articulated and could be confusing, particularly for new councillors. Staff advised they would review this section, including its relationship to decorum and limits of debate, and return with clarification or revisions as appropriate.

Business Arising

Council suggested adding a "Business Arising" item, particularly under Committee of the Whole agendas, to allow for structured follow-up on questions or issues raised during previous meetings or reports. It was noted that this could help ensure matters are not overlooked. Council generally supported exploring this addition, with the Clerk managing what items would be included.

Meeting Cancellations

Council raised concerns with provisions suggesting that cancelled meetings be rescheduled for the next day, noting the logistical challenges for councillors, staff, and the public. It was suggested that wording be adjusted to allow rescheduling at the next available or reasonable time, particularly for regular Council meetings.

Meeting Times

Council discussed meeting start times and noted challenges with both earlier and later starts, balancing councillor availability, staff scheduling, and public attendance. While no change was decided, Council acknowledged the issue and the need to consider residents' ability to attend meetings.

Mayor's Voting Role

Council discussed whether the Mayor should vote on motions or only vote in the event of a tie. Arguments were raised both for maintaining the Mayor's vote, to ensure transparency and clarity for residents, and for limiting the vote to preserve a neutral leadership role. Questions were also raised regarding implications for quorum and tied votes. Staff advised they would review legislative requirements and practices in other municipalities and report back.

Staff committed to further research on the identified items and to returning with clarification and potential recommendations for Council's consideration.

[2023/24 CCBF Allocation – White Birch Estates Playground](#)

Ms. Hutchinson advised that the Community Funding Branch of the Department of Environment and Local Government has requested confirmation of project end dates and advised that any

extensions must conclude no later than March 31, 2027. It was noted that failure to expend the approved funding within the allowable timeframe would result in the loss of funds.

Administration sought Council direction regarding the procurement of playground equipment and the execution of a liability insurance agreement. These steps were identified as necessary to ensure project completion within the remaining project timeline of approximately 14 months.

Administration recommended that Council authorize Administration to proceed with procurement within the approved budget of \$15,000 and provide the necessary contact information for the White Birch Estates Playground Board to allow the liability agreement to be finalized.

Council inquired whether remaining funds from the 2023–2024 projects had been fully expended. Administration advised that, aside from final work related to the Asset Management Plan, the remaining project funds have largely been spent and reimbursed.

Councillor Ward-Russell provided an update on the White Birch Estates playground, noting that the committee which originally spearheaded the project is no longer in existence. Efforts have been made to contact former committee members and local residents; however, no responses or direction have been received to date.

It was noted that while residents continue to informally assist with basic upkeep and monitoring of the playground, there is no active committee, no formal management structure, and no new expenditures currently occurring.

Discussion followed regarding ownership, liability, and maintenance responsibilities. **Councillor Ward-Russell** advised that there is no indication from current residents that they wish the playground to be owned or operated by the Village of Fundy Albert. The playground is not located on municipal land, and the remaining funds associated with the project are held separately. It was noted that while there are funds available that could potentially be used to contract maintenance services, there is currently no committee in place to manage or direct those activities.

Council expressed concern about potential liability and the risk of funds expiring or needing to be returned if no action is taken. Administration indicated that, without a formal committee or clear direction from residents, it is difficult to proceed with improvements or equipment purchases, despite previous requests for suggestions.

Councillor Ward-Russell requested up to two months to continue outreach efforts with residents in the area to determine whether there is interest in re-establishing a committee or providing direction on the future of the playground. **Councillor Ward-Russell** committed to bringing a report back to Council with findings and recommendations.

[2026 Alma Utility Rates](#)

Ms. Hutchinson advised that the water and wastewater rates submitted to the Department of Environment and Local Government for the Alma Utility differed from the rates approved by

Council resolution. Administration reviewed the rate-setting process, noting that adjustments between water and wastewater rates had been considered previously, with the combined rate remaining unchanged overall.

Administration confirmed that discussions were held with the Department's Finance Officer to determine whether Council could correct the discrepancy. It was advised that Council may pass a corrective resolution to adjust the rates, provided the approved utility budget remains balanced.

Administration recommended adjusting the Alma Utility rates from \$982 (water) and \$528 (wastewater) to \$940 (water) and \$570 (wastewater). It was noted that this adjustment would have no impact on the approved budget and would provide additional capacity for capital investment, particularly given that the Alma Utility has a higher number of wastewater users than water users.

Council discussed a discrepancy between the water and wastewater rates approved by resolution and the figures included in a letter prepared for residents. Concern was raised regarding how a letter containing different figures than those approved by Council resolution was issued, particularly given Council's expectation that all outgoing correspondence reflect approved resolutions and include appropriate administrative review and signature.

It was noted that the discrepancy was identified prior to the issuance of utility bills and that billing had been paused to prevent further issues. Council acknowledged and appreciated that the issue was identified before charges were applied to residents. Council emphasized the importance of adherence to Council resolutions, noting that even minor differences in rates can impact revenue allocations between water and wastewater utilities and potentially alter the direction previously approved by Council. Discussion followed regarding the separation of water and wastewater budgets, historical practice, and the limitations on transferring funds between utility accounts.

Administration advised that while operating budgets for water and wastewater are tracked separately, capital reserves are maintained jointly, allowing some flexibility if required. However, Council expressed concern that this approach differs from long-standing practice and may have implications for financial transparency and intent.

Options discussed included:

- Amending the original resolution to align with the revised figures, or
- Proceeding with the originally approved rates and adjusting expenditures accordingly to avoid a deficit.

Administration advised that maintaining the original resolution would potentially result in a minor utility deficit (approximately \$500), which could be addressed through expense adjustments or spread over future utility budgets in accordance with legislation.

Council indicated a preference for maintaining the original resolution and rates as approved, issuing corrected correspondence to residents, and avoiding changes to the approved budget and financial structure. Council requested additional information if further adjustments are to be considered.

Administration advised that a decision requires Council consensus and confirmed that no utility bills had been issued at the time of discussion.

[Approval for Hillsborough Water Exploration Tasks](#)

Ms. Barrett advised that Phase Two of the Hillsborough Water Exploration Project, including the hydrological surveys and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process, is nearing completion following ongoing correspondence with the Department of Environment.

Administration advised that the next phase of the project will involve construction of the access road, drilling of test wells, and preliminary testing. This phase was approved as part of the 2026 budget with an allocated project cost of \$191,000. Administration confirmed that the consultant has submitted a revised engineering proposal aligned with this approved budget.

Administration recommended that Council approve advancement to the next phase of the Hillsborough Water Exploration Project at a total project cost not to exceed \$191,000, and authorize the Chief Administrative Officer and Mayor to approve and execute all expenditures, contracts, and related work within the approved financial limit to allow the project to proceed in a timely and efficient manner.

Council reviewed a revised project budget, noting that the original estimate was approximately \$218,000 and had been reduced to \$191,000 following discussions with the project consultant. Administration advised that the cost reduction was achieved by having the Village assume responsibility for construction of the access road rather than fully contracting the work.

Council sought clarification regarding the impact of this approach on Public Works staffing and scheduling, particularly during peak operational season. Administration advised that the access road construction is estimated to take approximately two weeks and that while the Village would manage the project, certain components may still be contracted as required. It was noted that this approach is expected to remain more cost-effective than issuing a full tender.

Clarification was provided that the project is funded through the utility budget. Council confirmed that the \$191,000 figure was the amount approved as part of the adopted budget.

Council requested a detailed cost breakdown to better understand the variance between the original and revised estimates. Administration reviewed the revised budget components, including engineering, access road construction, drilling and testing, construction costs, and contingency allowances. Administration committed to circulating both the revised and previous budget versions to clearly identify changes and cost differences.

Council emphasized the importance of transparency and clarity in financial reporting and requested confirmation of engineering and construction fee percentages.

Several members of Council expressed support for proceeding with the project, noting that the issue has been under discussion for an extended period and that timely action is needed to address ongoing infrastructure concerns. Council indicated that while they support moving forward, they wished to review the detailed breakdown before final confirmation.

[3 Tonne Dump Truck/plow truck replacement](#)

Mr. Barrett advised that Administration advised that the replacement of a three-ton truck had been identified during both the current and previous budget deliberations as a capital priority. While previously approved, the purchase was deferred due to supply constraints. Administration noted that the existing vehicle has now exceeded most accepted key performance indicators for this class of municipal vehicle, and that repair and operating costs have become significant. Administration advised that quotes were obtained from multiple suppliers, and that the proposal outlined in the Council Report Form represents the best value for money. Further discussions with the preferred supplier resulted in an additional price reduction.

Administration recommended that Council approve the purchase of a three-ton truck from Riverview Ford with an aluminum dump body, together with a 9-foot snowplow, at a revised total cost of approximately \$135,840, which is lower than the amount previously presented. Funding is proposed to be drawn from the Capital Renewal Fund, with the remaining balance of approximately \$52,800 to be funded through either debenture financing or the Village Core Capital Reserve.

Administration further recommended that Council authorize the Chief Administrative Officer and Mayor to approve a price variance of up to \$5,000 to allow for the purchase of an equivalent alternate vehicle should the quoted unit become unavailable, noting the risk of vehicle availability following deposit.

Council discussed financing options for the replacement of a Public Works truck, including the feasibility of issuing a debenture. Administration confirmed that a debenture is not currently an option, as audited financial statements for 2023 and 2024 have not yet been completed. Council therefore focused on funding the purchase through available capital reserves.

Administration clarified the funding sources, noting that \$84,000 would be drawn from the Capital Renewal Fund approved in December. This fund is a grant-based program administered through the Province to support the renewal of existing municipal assets and does not require repayment. The remaining portion of the purchase would be funded from Village Core capital reserves. It was noted that sufficient capital remains available for emergencies even after accounting for the truck purchase and other planned projects.

Council reviewed how the Capital Renewal Fund may be used, noting that it is restricted to the replacement of existing assets and cannot be used to expand the fleet. Administration confirmed that the proposed replacement aligns with program requirements, as it replaces an existing three-ton truck.

Council discussed the allocation of funds between the Capital Renewal Fund and Core capital reserves and confirmed the proposed funding split. Administration advised that proceeds from the sale or trade-in of the existing truck would be returned to Core capital reserves.

Council expressed strong support for proceeding with the truck replacement, citing operational challenges caused by aging equipment and service disruptions when vehicles are out of service. Council emphasized the importance of maintaining a reliable Public Works fleet to meet service expectations.

Discussion also touched on broader considerations regarding shared services, asset use across the municipality, and the long-term need for Council to review how capital and operating costs are allocated among service areas. While recognizing these concerns, Council indicated support for moving forward with the proposed purchase at this time.

Council reached consensus to proceed with funding the truck replacement using available capital funds rather than delaying for a future debenture.

Truck Mounted Sander Procurement

Mr. Barrett advised that winter servicing challenges experienced this year have highlighted limitations in equipment inherited prior to amalgamation, particularly with respect to sanding capacity and coverage distances. These issues were noted in areas such as the Riverside-Albert Recreation Centre parking lot and utility service roads, where icy conditions have required increased reliance on contractors.

Administration advised that multiple suppliers were contacted to obtain pricing for a truck-mounted sand spreader capable of being transferred between vehicles and adjusted for sidewalk sanding. This equipment would allow Public Works to service roads, parking lots, and sidewalks more efficiently and reduce dependence on contracted services.

Administration recommended that Council approve the purchase of a truck-mounted sand spreader from Work and Play at a cost of \$21,249, to be funded from the Capital Reserve Fund. Administration further recommended that Council authorize the Chief Administrative Officer and Mayor to approve a price variance of up to \$250 should the quoted pricing no longer be available, provided the total expenditure remains within the approved limit.

Council discussed the proposed purchase of a new Public Works truck as a package, including the potential addition of a sand spreader. Administration was asked to confirm whether a quote could be obtained for a spreader compatible with sidewalk and street sanding, and whether this option would be more cost-effective.

Council expressed support for including a spreader with the truck, noting the operational benefits of being able to sand sidewalks, parking lots, and streets safely and efficiently without relying on manual labour or external contractors. It was noted that having in-house equipment would allow for faster response times during winter weather events.

Administration advised that all spreader options reviewed meet the same performance specifications, including hopper capacity and adjustable spread capability to accommodate sidewalk operations. Council discussed logistical considerations, including the need for local sand storage to avoid transporting fully loaded equipment over long distances.

Council emphasized the importance of proper storage, maintenance, and care of the new equipment. Administration advised that a standard operating procedure for daily vehicle inspections has been implemented to improve fleet maintenance and longevity.

Council expressed overall support for proceeding with the truck purchase, including appropriate accessory equipment, subject to confirmation of pricing and operational requirements.

[Comfort Station Activation Policy](#)

Mr. Wallace advised that a draft policy has been developed to guide the activation of warming centres during non-emergency situations. While an emergency activation policy currently exists, Administration noted that no policy is in place for non-emergency circumstances.

Administration explained that the purpose of the policy is to ensure decisions are made in a consistent and defensible manner. The policy outlines criteria for when a warming centre may be activated and provides clear guidance on roles and responsibilities.

Under the proposed policy, Council would authorize activation of a warming centre, after which Administration would be responsible for implementation and operations.

Council discussed the proposed Comfort Centre policy, focusing on the activation criteria during extended power outages. It was noted that the policy does not prescribe a fixed activation timeline and instead provides Council with discretion to authorize activation based on

circumstances, including weather conditions, duration of outage, and community need. While a general guideline of 72 hours was referenced, Council acknowledged that activation may be warranted sooner in extreme weather conditions.

Comfort Centres are intended for daytime use only and are not designed for overnight accommodation, as they do not provide sleeping facilities or shower access. Activation would be authorized by Council, which may be done electronically if required, following notification of need from residents or emergency officials.

Council discussed the locations of designated Comfort Centres, noting that these are already established through existing by-laws and emergency planning documents and do not need to be repeated within the policy. Administration advised that coordination is ongoing with neighbouring municipalities, including Riverview, to allow residents in certain areas to access closer facilities where appropriate.

Council reviewed staffing and volunteer provisions, noting that volunteers may be utilized under the supervision of Emergency Measures Organization (EMO) personnel or designated municipal staff. Administration confirmed that once Council authorizes activation, Administration is responsible for coordinating staffing, supervision, and volunteer support.

Council reflected on previous extended outages, noting the strong role of community volunteers and partner organizations in staffing and supplying Comfort Centres. Administration advised that while limited expenses may be incurred (e.g., food or water supplies), costs are expected to be minimal and dependent on the duration of the event.

[Inclement Weather Policy](#)

Mr. Wallace advised that the Village does not currently have a policy in place for this matter and noted that such a policy is commonly adopted by other municipalities. Administration recommended that a policy be developed to provide clear guidance and consistency going forward.

Council received the information and expressed no questions or objections

Councillor Land exited the meeting at 5:51 pm.

[Disposal of Surplus, obsolete, or damaged equipment](#)

Mr. Wallace advised that the Village does not currently have a policy governing the disposal of surplus, obsolete, or damaged equipment. It was noted that such a policy is required for audit purposes, financial accountability, and proper tracking of asset disposition, including write-offs and the handling of proceeds.

Administration advised that developing this policy would provide consistent guidance on how municipal assets are disposed of and recorded.

Council acknowledged the need for such a policy and supported its development for future consideration.

Respectful Communications

Mr. Wallace introduced a draft Respectful Communications Policy, noting that it is distinct from existing Respectful Workplace and Harassment policies. The purpose of the policy is to provide staff with guidance and protocols for addressing inappropriate, aggressive, or abusive behaviour from external parties.

Administration advised that staff have experienced incidents of verbal abuse and aggressive conduct, and that the absence of a formal policy limits the ability to respond consistently and efficiently. It was noted that having a policy in place would provide clear options for staff, reduce the need for external legal intervention, and support workplace health and safety obligations. Administration advised that the policy would establish guidelines for handling inappropriate communications and interactions, providing staff with a consistent and defensible framework for response.

Council acknowledged the rationale for the policy and supported its development for future consideration.

Councillor Land returned at 5:54 pm

Economic Development Committee

Mr. Wallace recommended that Council approve the Terms of Reference for an Economic Development Committee. Mr. Wallace advised against activating the committee prior to the upcoming municipal election but recommended adopting the Terms of Reference at this time to allow preparatory work to occur so the committee can be operational following the election.

Administration noted that economic development has been identified as a community priority and advised that the municipality is not currently undertaking active economic development initiatives. It was emphasized that a passive approach is not sufficient to attract investment, population growth, or expand the municipal tax base.

Administration advised that establishing the committee would support proactive efforts to attract investment, increase population, strengthen utility systems, and improve municipal services.

Finance Committee

Mr. Wallace advised that a draft Terms of Reference has been prepared for a Finance Committee. It was noted that while a Councillor had previously been appointed with responsibility for finance matters, a formal Finance Committee with adopted Terms of Reference had not been established.

Councillor Elderkin explained that the absence of a formal committee was due in part to transitional challenges following amalgamation and recommended that the Terms of Reference now be adopted to allow the committee to be established and operational following the next Council term.

Mr. Wallace advised that adopting the Terms of Reference would improve accountability and transparency by enabling the participation of qualified community members in financial oversight and advisory roles.

Council discussed whether the municipality is now in a better position to benefit from broader committee involvement. Mr. Wallace expressed confidence that having a formal Terms of Reference in place would strengthen financial governance and provide clearer direction moving forward.

Council acknowledged the recommendation and supported adopting the Terms of Reference in preparation for the next Council.

ADMINISTRATION REPORTS

Refer to the following reports:

Chief Administrative Officer

The Chief Administrative Officer, Mr. Wallace provided highlights from the CAO Report, focusing on equipment upgrades, operational efficiencies, infrastructure issues, and strategic initiatives.

Administration advised that a sewer push camera has been ordered and will be used as part of a preventative inspection and asset management program. The equipment will allow the municipality to conduct in-house inspections, locates for new services, and diagnostics, resulting in immediate cost savings beginning in 2026.

Council was advised that a Mobile Elevating Work Platform has been received, enabling Public Works to complete tasks such as banner installation, Christmas lights, tree trimming, and certain building maintenance internally, reducing reliance on external contractors.

Administration provided an update on the implementation of Public Works analytics and fleet tracking software. Training has commenced for supervisory staff and will be rolled out gradually to operational staff. The system will support cost tracking, preventative maintenance, and asset management documentation.

Administration noted ongoing work related to several by-laws and policies will be brought forward in the coming months to address gaps and modernize governance prior to the incoming Council.

Water system updates were provided. In Alma, a recent service issue was traced to improperly installed infrastructure, which has since been replaced with proper fittings by Public Works staff. Water storage levels have stabilized. In Riverside-Albert, elevated water consumption has returned to normal levels and remains under investigation.

Administration advised that a municipality in the United Kingdom has expressed interest in establishing a sister municipality relationship. The CAO will seek Council's permission to meet with representatives during upcoming travel. An application for CanExport funding to support international marketing efforts is also being prepared.

On government relations, Administration advised that meetings with provincial ministers are scheduled in Fredericton as part of a more formal government relations approach.

Finally, Administration advised that snow removal issues on Grays Island have been addressed, and service delivery has been adjusted accordingly.

[Director, Legislative Services](#)

Ms. Beers provided highlights from her report, advising that a Council orientation and training session has been scheduled for May 28, 2026, following the municipal election.

Grant and funding updates were provided. Administration confirmed that the Shoreline Trail Project has received an extension, with a revised project completion deadline of October 29, 2026. It was noted that \$79,736 remains in project funding and that the Village has contributed \$34,410 to date. Administration advised that next steps will include planning, landowner agreements, and tendering.

Administration advised that FireSmart public engagement sessions are being planned for February 10 and February 11, with further details to be shared with Council and the public in due course.

An update was provided on Footloose in Fundy Albert. The working group has met to review winter programming and begin early planning for expanded activities in 2026. Current

collaboration includes February Frolic programming, with both indoor and outdoor activities planned. The group is also preparing for participation in ParticipACTION in June 2026, with a focus on increasing participation, visibility, and partnerships.

Administration advised that the signage easement remains under review by the landowners' legal counsel.

Policy and by-law updates were provided. Administration advised that work is ongoing on the Water and Sewer By-Law, and that the draft Procedural By-Law has been shared.

Administration further advised that, based on public feedback, a "Who to Call" document has been posted on the municipal website under the "Contact Us" tab. Council was encouraged to provide feedback, noting that the document will be maintained as a living document and updated as needed.

Director of Operations

Mr. Barrett noted that trail development has been a key focus following recent Trail Town meetings. Feedback from those meetings was reported to be positive. Administration advised that work is underway to explore how the Village could be involved in trail initiatives without assuming full ownership, and that a proposed approach will be shared with the CAO for Council's consideration once further developed.

Administration advised that Trans Canada Trail has provided approval to reroute the Trans Canada Trail through White Rock rather than around it. This rerouting is expected to improve access to external funding opportunities for trail improvements in the area.

Administration further advised that provisional approval has been received to extend the shoreline section of the Trans Canada Trail in Riverside-Albert from Water Street to the future lighthouse location. This extension would support further development of the area and would be pursued in collaboration with the CCRC and Friends of Fundy, which hold a licence of occupation.

Administration provided a brief update on water consumption in Riverside-Albert, noting that elevated usage has significantly decreased and returned to normal levels. The situation continues to be monitored, as the cause of the temporary increase remains undetermined.

Ms. Heather Cail, Water operator in Charge advised that a recent period of increased water consumption in Riverside-Albert appeared to begin and end abruptly at specific times, suggesting a temporary and isolated cause. The issue has since been resolved, and water usage has returned to normal levels. Ms. Cail advised that monitoring will continue, and any additional information regarding the cause would be welcomed.

Mr. Wallace expressed appreciation to Mr. Barrett for his work on the trail initiatives, noting the effort invested in attending recent trail meetings and advancing opportunities for external funding.

Mayor Campbell noted that the Trail meetings were informative, well attended, and generated positive feedback and constructive discussion.

[Treasurer Report](#)
[General operating](#)
[Alma utility](#)
[Hillsborough utility](#)
[Riverside-Albert utility](#)

Ms. Hutchinson advised that the Finance Department is currently completing year-end activities for 2025 while continuing utility billing and working collaboratively with auditors to finalize the 2023 and 2024 audits and financial statements.

Council was advised that, on December 19, 2025, the Village received a deposit of \$314,481 from the Municipal Finance Corporation. Administration provided a breakdown of the source of the funds and advised that, in accordance with requirements, incurred debt related to short-term borrowing for ministerial orders and approved projects must be repaid prior to reimbursing operating costs from capital. Administration is working with the bank to obtain the necessary documentation to retire the related loans.

Administration noted that all reported net income and loss figures are preliminary and subject to change pending completion of the annual audit and reclassification adjustments.

Administration advised that annexes within the budget section currently reference the 2026 year, due to system settings and confirmed this will be corrected in future reporting.

Administration advised that work is ongoing on the Water and Wastewater By-Law, which will include a clear framework for billing, collection, and enforcement processes for both residential and commercial users.

Council was advised that Finance and Operations staff are coordinating utility disconnections for accounts that have disregarded disconnection notices issued in the previous month.

Administration noted that winter conditions present logistical challenges, as door notices are required to be posted in advance. Additional disconnection warning notices are being prepared for accounts with no response or payment arrangements, as accounts receivable balances over 91 days remain higher than desired.

Mr. Wallace advised that future financial reports will be reformatted to include budget, actuals, and variance information. This enhancement is intended to improve transparency and provide Council with more detailed financial reporting. The updated reporting format is expected to be implemented beginning in February.

Council discussed the format and content of financial reports, emphasizing the importance of including budget, actual, and variance information together with written explanations for significant variances. It was noted that clearer variance explanations would improve transparency, reduce questions, and assist Council in understanding year-over-year fluctuations.

Administration clarified that the figures presented compare the 2025 budget to 2025 actuals, and that limited detail was provided at this stage due to ongoing year-end adjustments.

Administration advised that a more detailed and finalized variance report for 2025 is anticipated by late February, with review at a Committee of the Whole meeting in March, subject to audit timelines and workload.

Council noted several significant variances, particularly within utility accounts, and expressed the need for explanations where expenditures differed materially from budgeted amounts.

Administration advised that some variances relate to timing differences, financing arrangements, and adjustments still under review.

Administration confirmed that year-end processes are being completed in coordination with E6 and external auditors, using a more thorough and standardized approach than in past years. Council acknowledged the importance of completing the 2023 and 2024 audits alongside the 2025 year-end work.

Council requested additional information regarding audit costs to date for the 2023 audit, anticipated remaining costs, and the use of new financial software. Administration advised that audit contract costs are fixed and that additional information will be provided to Council.

Administration further advised that finance systems are being consolidated and transitioned to improve efficiency, reduce the number of accounts, and strengthen financial controls. This transition will continue through 2026.

Council emphasized the importance of timely and well-explained financial reporting and noted that detailed variance explanations will support improved financial oversight going forward.

MAYOR AND COUNCILLOR STATEMENTS AND INQUIRIES

Councillor Ward-Russell advised she will wait for an update from the Mayor in regards to the

2023 audit.

Councillor Ward-Russell acknowledged the recent building permit activity and noted significant development activity in Ward 6 over the past two months. **Councillor Ward-Russell** requested an update on the municipality's assessed tax base as of the end of 2025.

Councillor Ward-Russell requested an update regarding the potential transfer of the Steeves House museum, noting that funding appears in the budget and seeking clarification on the status and timing of any transfer. Mr. Wallace advised that the matter remains under review and that work is ongoing, with no immediate changes at this time.

Councillor Jonah provided comments on recent trail discussions, noting strong community interest and enthusiasm following recent meetings. It was noted that participants expressed a willingness to collaborate and advance trail development initiatives across the municipality. While perspectives varied among the former villages, overall engagement was positive, and trail development was identified as having potential benefits for community well-being and local economic activity.

Councillor Coates advised that while EMO has provided tools, guidance, and support frameworks, the municipality continues to face capacity challenges related to staffing and resources needed to fully implement emergency preparedness measures.

Councillor Coates advised that EMO is willing to provide assistance where possible and emphasized the importance of allowing emergency responders, particularly the Fire Department, to focus on their core response duties during incidents. It was noted that logistical and support functions, such as food, supplies, and coordination, should be managed separately to avoid diverting fire service resources.

Councillor Coates acknowledged that while the municipality was fortunate to experience no major fire events recently, fire services play a central role in emergency response situations.

Councillor Elderkin provided an update on discussions with Forestdale Home regarding ongoing projects on Water Street and the possibility of a local credit union. It was advised that the proponent is currently applying for funding and that the process has been progressing slowly.

Councillor Elderkin noted that additional shareholder support has recently been secured, which is a positive development.

Councillor Elderkin advised that the Water Street project required a redesign due to flood mitigation considerations, as the original design directed water flow toward the school, which was not acceptable. The revised design is expected to be completed shortly, after which the proponent has indicated a willingness to present an update to Council outlining next steps.

Councillor Elderkin advised that, together with the Mayor, they attended a Fire Department training session on the new TMR radio system. It was noted that the system will represent a significant operational change for fire services, and the session provided valuable insight into how calls are managed and coordinated.

Councillor Elderkin advised that she attended one of the recent trail engagement meetings and echoed Council's comments regarding the strong interest and positive momentum surrounding trail development. While perspectives varied among communities, discussions were described as constructive and engaging, with continued enthusiasm for advancing trail initiatives.

Councillor Elderkin reminded Council that evaluation forms previously circulated must be completed and returned by the specified deadline.

Councillor Land raised concerns following recent calls from residents regarding a police incident in Albert Mines involving firearms and a vehicle seizure. Residents questioned why a public alert was not issued, given uncertainty at the time about the level of risk. Mr. Wallace advised he will seek further clarification on alerting thresholds and what information can be shared.

Councillor Land also discussed concerns raised by residents and local business owners regarding the vacancy of the X-ray technician position at the Albert County Community Health Centre. It was noted that changes to travel or mileage arrangements may be affecting recruitment and retention. Council emphasized the importance of maintaining diagnostic services locally, particularly given recent investments in the facility.

Mr. Wallace advised that the matter is scheduled for discussion with the Mayor and the Minister of Health at an upcoming meeting. Council discussed potential interim solutions, including advocacy, partnerships with local organizations, or other supports to encourage service continuity, recognizing that broader policy and collective agreement considerations may apply.

Mayor Campbell advised that he attended as many meetings as possible during the reporting period and participated to the extent feasible, noting some scheduling limitations earlier in the month.

PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND INQUIRIES

Ms. Kathy Weir requested an update on the status of discussions with the auditor. **Mayor Campbell** advised that meetings have taken place with both the auditor and E6 and that productive discussions were held. **Mayor Campbell** advised that the 2023 audit is nearing completion, although there are no substantive updates to report at this time. Ms. Hutchinson noted that auditors continue to seek clarification on specific items, including minute references and documentation related to certain purchases, rather than requesting additional information.

Ms. Weir advised that portions of the discussion were difficult to hear. It was acknowledged that improvements to office facilities and meeting room audio are being considered as part of upcoming enhancements.

Ms. Weir also commented positively on recent trail engagement sessions, noting appreciation for the attendance of the Mayor and three Councillors at various meetings. It was acknowledged that community organizations, including CCRC and other local groups, are actively engaged and looking forward to collaborating on next steps for trail development.

Ms. Heather Cail expressed appreciation to community members who assisted during the recent water leak response in Alma, specifically acknowledging Martin Collins, Doug Butland, and others who remained on site late into the night to help locate the leak and provide tools and support. It was noted that the response reflected strong community cooperation and that the leak was successfully located and repaired.

Ms. Cail acknowledged that historical infrastructure challenges pre-amalgamation were addressed to the best of prior councils' abilities given the financial constraints at the time, and that the failed component was due to deterioration of older materials.

Ms. Cail advised that progress continues on the Alma water project. Ms. Cail reported that one well pump has been installed, with a second pump scheduled for installation, and that pump testing is expected to begin shortly. Mr. Wallace advised that the project remains on schedule, with completion anticipated by the end of March

Councillor Elderkin inquired whether an update will be provided to Alma residents regarding the status of the Alma project. Mr. Wallace advised that updates can be provided to Alma residents regarding the project. It was noted that an update was shared informally in December through social media.

Councillor Elderkin requested additional information regarding the Alma project finances and current status. Ms. Hutchinson advised that clarification is being sought from the project engineer and that a follow-up update will be provided once verification is complete.

CLOSED SESSION

IT WAS MOVED by **Councillor Elderkin** and **SECONDED** by **Councillor Land** that Council have an in-camera session at 6:50 pm.

MOTION CARRIED (unanimously).

Local Governance Act 68 (1)(j) labour and employment matters, including the

negotiation of collective agreements

Local Governance Act 68 (1)(f) information concerning legal opinions or advice provided to the local government.

IT WAS MOVED by ***Councillor Land*** and **SECONDED** by ***Councillor Elderkin*** to return to the regular session at 8:00 pm.

MOTION CARRIED (unanimously)

ADJOURNMENT

IT WAS MOVED by ***Councillor Ward-Russell*** **THAT** the meeting be adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Mayor

Clerk