

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

Mayor Campbell requested the addition of Marc Landry from the Southeast Regional Service Commission as a speaker under Item 4.2 to discuss infrastructure sharing.

IT WAS MOVED by *Councillor Coates* and **SECONDED** by *Councillor Land* **THAT** the amended agenda be adopted.

MOTION CARRIED (unanimously)

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

None declared.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

[Ms. Brenda Lee](#) – New Brunswick Age-Friendly Communities initiative

Ms. Lee provided a presentation on age-friendly initiatives, clarifying the distinction between three related programs: the global *Age-Friendly Communities* initiative, the *New Brunswick Age-Friendly Community Recognition Program*, and *Age-Friendly Active Communities New Brunswick (AFAC-NB)*, the supporting organization.

An age-friendly community is designed to promote the health, well-being, and quality of life of older adults, which in turn benefits all residents. The initiative, established by the World Health Organization in 2007 and adopted in New Brunswick in 2012, takes a proactive and preventative approach to addressing barriers such as accessibility, transportation, and social isolation.

The program is citizen-led and provides a structured framework for residents, particularly older adults, to identify local challenges and propose solutions. Key benefits include improved community cohesion, enhanced quality of life, support for aging in place, and access to partnerships and funding opportunities.

The process to become a recognized age-friendly community includes:

- Passing a Council resolution of support
- Establishing a local steering committee (with recommended Council/staff liaison)
- Conducting a community assessment
- Engaging residents through surveys or consultations
- Developing and implementing an action plan (typically 4–5 actions over three years)

Council's role is primarily supportive, including endorsing the initiative, promoting awareness, and considering recommendations brought forward by the committee.

AFAC-NB provides guidance, networking opportunities, and a \$2,500 startup contribution to assist with the assessment phase. The initiative emphasizes collaboration with local partners and leveraging existing resources. It is described as an ongoing process focused on cultural change and long-term community improvement rather than a one-time project.

Discussion included potential partnerships (e.g., nursing homes, community organizations), funding considerations, and the flexibility for communities to implement actions based on local priorities and available resources.

Mayor Campbell asked for a recess at 5:03 pm to set up for the next presenter **MOVED** by **Councillor Land** and **SECONDED** by **Councillor Elderkin**.

MOTION CARRIED (unanimously)

It was **MOVED** by **Councillor Land** and **SECONED** by **Councillor Elderkin** to return from recess at 5:05 pm.

MOTION CARRIED

At the time of the vote, **Councillor Coates** was absent from the Council Chambers.

[Mr. Marc Landry – Southeast Regional Service Commission - infrastructure sharing SERSC Phase 2: Regional Sport, Recreation and Culture Infrastructure Collaboration Framework.](#)

Representatives from the Southeast Regional Service Commission provided Council with an update on the regional infrastructure cost sharing initiative. Presenters included Marc Landry from the Commission, Mayor Rob Campbell as a member of the Infrastructure Cost Sharing Committee, and Mike Roma of RC Strategies, the consulting firm supporting the process.

Councillor Coates returned to the meeting at 5:07 pm.

Council was advised that the work has been completed in two phases: Phase 1 involved a regional needs assessment for sports, recreation, and cultural infrastructure, while Phase 2 focused on developing a collaboration framework to guide how municipalities could work together on eligible capital projects. The presenters noted that the framework has been developed over the past two years with extensive regional consultation, including over 60 engagement sessions with board members, CAOs, staff, subject matter experts, and councils.

During the presentation, there was a brief interruption due to a power outage; the meeting resumed without issue.

The framework is intended to address new capital infrastructure projects only and is described as a “living document” that can be revised as needed. It aims to establish a regional process before the Province imposes one. Presenters emphasized that the current model is intended to protect communities, particularly rural municipalities, by setting clear criteria, formulas, and opt-out provisions.

Key elements of the proposed framework include:

- A process to determine whether a project is local, sub-regional, or regional;
- Cost sharing formulas based on project priority, drive-time catchment areas, population, and property assessment;
- Recognition that the host municipality would still bear the majority of project costs;
- Requirements for business cases, regional consultation, and annual project planning;
- Opt-out provisions for municipalities facing financial or other legitimate constraints, with unresolved disputes potentially referred to the Local Governance Commission.

Discussion focused on the potential financial impact on rural communities such as Fundy Albert, especially given proximity to larger centres. Concerns were raised about affordability, stacked project costs, timing given ongoing amalgamation challenges, and the risk of funds flowing out of smaller communities without direct benefit. Presenters responded that safeguards, phased planning, annual prioritization, contribution agreements, and opt-out mechanisms are built into the model to reduce risk and allow communities to justify non-participation where appropriate.

It was also noted that any municipality contributing to a project would have the opportunity to negotiate the terms of that contribution, including governance, access, and benefits for residents, through a formal agreement.

Council was advised that an additional information session is planned for April 9, with the Commission expected to consider the framework at its annual meeting on April 28.

Mayor Campell encourage Council to review the material and provide guidance in advance of the upcoming vote.

It was **MOVED** by **Councillor Ward-Russell** and **SECONDED** by **Councillor Elderkin** to have a recess at 6:11 pm

MOTION CARRIED (unanimously)

It was **MOVED** by **Councillor Land** and **SECONDED** by **Councillor Elderkin** to return from recess at 6:21 pm.

MOTION CARRIED (unanimously)

INFORMATION ITEMS

The following report was presented to Council as information items only:

[Fundy National Park](#)

COUNCIL DIRECTION REQUESTS

[Council Chambers Audio Visual Proposal](#)

Ms. Beers presented a report outlining two proposals received for the installation of an audio-visual system in Council Chambers. The purpose of the project is to improve audio quality for meeting recordings and live streaming, as well as to modernize the overall meeting setup.

Administration contacted four companies and received two proposals:

- Ivan's Audio Visual submitted a turnkey council chamber system including digital microphones for Council and staff, a camera for recording and live streaming, a 75-inch display, wireless presentation capability, integrated audio system, and touchscreen controls, at a cost of \$43,395 plus HST.
- Creative Innovation provided a proposal focused on a video production setup with multiple cameras and switching equipment, with pricing ranging from \$36,471 to \$46,490 depending on configuration.

Administration recommended the Ivan's Audio Visual proposal, noting it is specifically designed for council meetings, offers a simpler user experience, and provides a complete turnkey solution including installation and training.

Funding for the project includes \$32,000 from the office equipment budget, with the remaining balance to be funded from shared capital reserves.

Council discussion noted the need for improved audio quality and acknowledged ongoing concerns with the current system.

Utilities Gap Analysis

Mr. Barrett presented a report recommending approval of a proposal from Englobe to conduct a utility gap analysis. The purpose of the study is to provide data on system capacity, identify infrastructure limitations (pinch points), and support future development planning by determining where additional services can be accommodated.

The analysis will also help inform capital planning by identifying priority areas for infrastructure upgrades and evaluating the most efficient locations for future expansion. It was noted that Englobe has prior experience with the municipality's systems, including completing the most recent asset management plan, making them well-positioned to undertake the work efficiently.

The project is proposed to be funded through the 2024 Community Building Fund allocation in the amount of \$189,500.

During discussion, Council raised questions regarding:

- Whether internal staff could complete the analysis versus requiring an engineering firm;
- The lack of multiple quotes for comparison;
- Funding availability within the Community Building Fund;
- Project timeline, estimated at approximately 3–6 months for completion.

Administration advised that the analysis requires specialized engineering expertise beyond operational staff capacity and that using a firm already familiar with the system avoids additional costs and time associated with onboarding a new consultant. It was also confirmed that funding for the project is already allocated and available.

Ford F550 Dump Body

Mr. Barrett presented a Council Report recommending approval for the sale of a 2012 F550 truck in accordance with the municipal Disposal Policy. The estimated value of the vehicle exceeds the CAO's delegated authority threshold of \$5,000, requiring Council approval. It was noted that market estimates were obtained to support the proposed sale value.

Administration recommended that the vehicle be sold via public tender with a reserve price. Council discussed advertising methods for the sale, with administration indicating that the vehicle would be promoted through the municipal website and online platforms such as Facebook Marketplace to ensure broad public reach.

Shoreline Trail – Gray Brook Bridge Project

Mr. Barrett presented a report recommending that Council commit to completing the Gray Brook Bridge project as part of the Shoreline Trail in 2026. Approval is required at this time to meet a deadline from the Trans Canada Trail, which has offered \$25,000 in funding (approximately 40%), contingent on confirmation of the Municipality's commitment by May 1.

The total estimated project cost is approximately \$63,500, which includes engineering, bridge installation, bank stabilization, development of a picnic area, and improvements to the parking area to enhance accessibility and user experience.

Administration advised that the Municipality would be responsible for the remaining project costs, estimated at approximately \$38,000, with efforts underway to secure in-kind contributions and sponsorships that could reduce the municipal share. It was noted that even without the grant, replacement of the existing bridge would still incur significant costs.

Council discussion included:

- The overall benefit of the project as a recreational and tourism asset;
- Concerns regarding prioritization of funding given other infrastructure needs (e.g., roads);
- Clarification that project funding is tied to grant requirements and cannot be reallocated to other purposes;
- Questions regarding project scope, design (including potential covered bridge concept), and parking improvements;
- Clarification on funding sources, including potential use of existing capital and reserves;
- Timeline considerations and the need for timely approval to secure external funding.

It was noted that any in-kind contributions or additional funding secured would reduce the Municipality's overall financial contribution, with savings returned to general funds for future use.

Unbudgeted EXP Services

Ms. Hutchinson advised Council that an invoice was received from EXP for engineering support services related to warranty work on the Riverside-Albert water treatment project. Administration noted that the invoice had been contested, as the work was believed to fall under warranty; however, EXP indicated that services provided during the warranty period are considered additional fees depending on the level of effort required.

It was noted that the issue requiring service was identified by the water operator, which resulted in calls being made and engineering support attending the site.

Due to the value of the invoice (approximately \$4,600), Administration initially recommended payment from the Riverside-Albert Water Utility capital transfer budget in order to close out the project.

Council expressed concerns regarding:

- The principle of being charged for work during a warranty period;
- Lack of prior authorization for the work;
- Timing of the invoice and ongoing cost pressures related to the project;
- The absence of clear communication and adherence to quoted costs.

It was noted that the work related to issues with system filters and that no material costs were included, only engineering labour and associated expenses.

Following discussion, Council directed Administration to return to EXP to negotiate a reduced settlement amount (potentially offering partial payment), and to bring the matter back to a future Council meeting for consideration prior to final payment.

[Application for Financing Spring – 2026](#)

Ms. Hutchinson presented a report recommending that Council proceed with a spring application to the Municipal Capital Borrowing Board to convert short-term debt to long-term financing (debentures) for two projects.

The first project relates to the completed water system upgrades. Administration recommended financing \$23,000, with the remaining \$2,968 to be funded through the water and sewer operating budget. Estimated interest for 2026 is approximately \$433, which can be accommodated within existing budget lines.

The second project involves the buyout of the 2024 Freightliner pumper tanker lease. The estimated buyout cost is approximately \$663,312 (net HST, including remaining lease payments). Administration recommended financing approximately \$616,000, with the remaining balance and associated fees funded through operating budget lines previously allocated for interest and debenture-related costs.

Administration noted that sufficient funds are available within existing budget lines to support the operating portion of both projects.

Council discussion included clarification on:

- The ability to proceed with debentures following receipt of a Ministerial Order (issued in 2024);
- Previous limitations due to lack of access to short-term borrowing/credit, which resulted in the lease arrangement;

- The benefit of transitioning to debenture financing as a lower-cost option for taxpayers;
- Clarification that operating contributions should be clearly identified as coming from the water and sewer operating fund.

Administration confirmed that the resolution wording would be updated accordingly prior to the next Council meeting.

[Welcome to Hillsborough Sign – Councillor Jonah](#)

Councillor Jonah advised that the “Welcome to Hillsborough” sign was removed due to deterioration and safety concerns after it had rotted. **Councillor Jonah** has received inquiries from residents regarding its removal and the intent to replace it.

It was noted that maintaining the identity of former villages remains important to residents, and replacement of the sign was proposed. Three options were presented:

1. Replace the sign with community input on design;
2. Replace with a standard municipal design;
3. Defer replacement.

Councillor Jonah recommended proceeding with replacement of the sign and conducting a brief community engagement process to gather input on design elements, with final design approval to return to Council.

Council discussion highlighted:

- The importance of preserving community identity while recognizing the unified municipality of Fundy Albert;
- Interest in timely replacement ahead of the tourism season;
- The need for cost estimates to be provided with a future report;
- Consideration of signage consistency across former communities;
- Potential regulatory requirements (e.g., permits/approvals) for signage placement.

Council expressed general support for replacing the sign, with further details to be brought forward for approval.

ADMINISTRATION REPORTS

Refer to the following reports:

[Director, Legislative Services/Clerk](#)

Ms. Beers provided an update on several ongoing initiatives.

It was noted that the deadline for the Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan (CWRP) under the FireSmart program has been extended from March 31 to April 15, allowing the plan to be presented to Council on April 7 prior to submission to the Province.

An update was also provided on rental spaces:

- At the Alma incubator units (below the activity centre), two of three lease agreements have been signed, with one pending;
- Of the six Artisan Village huts, four have been rented, with two still available. Promotion efforts are ongoing.

Council discussed challenges with summer student funding programs, noting fewer approvals than requested in recent years. It was suggested that concerns be raised with the local MLA and regarding the importance of such funding for municipalities.

[Director, Operations](#)

Mr. Barrett advised that, in addition to the written report included in the Council package, there are now 967 Voyent Alert subscribers, with 16 alerts issued year-to-date, including a recent boil water order for Alma directed by the Department of Health due to increased turbidity following snowmelt and rainfall.

Council was also advised that 46 facility rentals occurred during February, generating \$330 in revenue, bringing year-to-date rental revenue to \$475.

Black & McDonald has commenced ventilation work at the arena.

The Alma water project is now expected to be completed in mid-April, slightly later than originally anticipated.

During discussion, Council raised questions regarding water levels in the Alma wells and concerns expressed by residents. Administration advised that a hydrogeologist has been engaged to assess groundwater levels, turbidity, and overall system capacity, and that administration is awaiting a professional response before drawing conclusions.

Additional concerns were raised regarding traffic speed on Academy Street and ongoing culvert and drainage issues in several areas. Administration advised that drainage and culvert conditions had been reviewed throughout Hillsborough and Riverside-Albert, with priority concerns identified in several locations, including Golf Club Road and Academy Street. Temporary measures and further review were discussed, with replacement of the failing culvert on Academy Street being considered.

An update was also provided on the Golf Club Road culvert, which is functioning well overall, although some erosion has been noted and referred to Englobe for review. With respect to the Greensborough Lagoon, administration advised that draft tender details had recently been sent to the Province.

Council emphasized the importance of timely follow-up with external agencies and consultants, particularly where residents are awaiting information that may affect future costs.

Treasurer

Fundy Albert General Operating

Alma Utility

Hillsborough Utility

Riverside-Albert Utility

Ms. Hutchinson provided an update on financial operations and audit progress. The 2023 financial statements have been completed and are currently in final partner review with the auditor. Work is ongoing to finalize the 2024 audit package, which will be submitted once the 2023 statements are approved. Due to shifting priorities related to completing the 2023 audit, there will be a delay in presenting the 2025 unaudited financial statements.

Administration advised that overall financials remain stable with no major concerns. Some budget variances were noted, including higher public works equipment costs and increased power and pumping expenses due to repairs.

It was also noted that the overdraft will be closed as the Ministerial Order for short-term borrowing is expiring. Work is ongoing to address receivables, including issuing disconnection notices, and a portion of arrears has recently been collected.

Council received an update on the implementation of the new financial software system, which is currently being populated with historical data and is expected to be operational by late May.

The contract with E6 is expected to conclude at the end of May, with limited ongoing support budgeted. It was clarified that current E6 expenses are offset by deferred revenue and have not impacted the operating budget.

Council emphasized the importance of timely and accurate financial reporting moving forward.

Administration advised that the completed 2023 audit is expected to be returned by the auditor shortly.

MAYOR AND COUNCILLOR STATEMENTS AND INQUIRIES

Councillor Jonah had nothing to report

Councillor Ward-Russell had nothing to report

Councillor Coates had nothing to report

Councillor Elderkin raised concerns regarding the recent Provincial budget and its potential impact on the region, including tourism operations, local museums, and community institutions. While details of the budget were not yet confirmed, it was noted that there is uncertainty around future funding and that municipalities may need to reassess their support for local organizations during future budget planning.

Councillor Elderkin suggested that future Council may want to consider reviewing municipal funding for community organizations, particularly museums, depending on any changes to Provincial support.

Councillor Elderkin provided an update on a recent informal meeting with the Riverside-Albert Recreation Council, which is working to develop new programs, increase volunteer engagement, and organize a community potluck to help connect new residents.

Councillor Elderkin advised she was in attendance at an Albert County Exhibition training session, where the significant economic impact of the annual event was highlighted, including contributions to local organizations and schools, as well as regional tourism benefits.

Councillor Elderkin provided an update on the upcoming Volunteer Appreciation Coffee Morning scheduled for April 25, with Council members encouraged to attend. Appreciation was expressed to those who submitted volunteer nominations.

Councillor Land suggested that the Municipality consider hiring a dedicated staff resource focused on grant writing and funding opportunities. It was noted that while staff currently pursue grants as part of their roles, a dedicated position could proactively identify and secure additional funding to support community projects, infrastructure improvements, accessibility initiatives, and economic development.

Council discussed the importance of supporting local businesses and organizations, noting that Fundy Albert's economy is largely driven by locally owned enterprises. The significant economic impact of community events, such as the Albert County Exhibition, was highlighted, including benefits to local organizations and volunteer groups, such as fire departments, which rely on such events as key fundraisers.

It was also noted that volunteers play a critical role in sustaining community initiatives and should be further recognized and supported. Council discussed the importance of promoting Fundy Albert more effectively, recognizing it as a valuable asset with opportunities for growth in tourism and economic development.

Mayor Campbell provided an update on recent meetings and community engagement activities. It was noted that attendance at several Southeast Regional Service Commission meetings included discussions on infrastructure, with valuable input shared. Attendance at the Albert County Exhibition meeting further highlighted the significant economic contribution of the event to Fundy Albert.

Mayor Campbell met with several residents regarding various concerns, most of which were resolved with assistance from staff. A joint meeting with a local business owner highlighted the substantial economic impact of event-based tourism, including weddings, which bring visitors to the area, support local businesses, and generate employment opportunities.

Mayor Campbell discussed the importance of continuing to engage with local businesses and supporting economic development initiatives. It was suggested that regular engagement with Provincial representatives is important to advocate for municipal needs and opportunities.

Mayor Campbell provided on the upcoming Mayor's Roundtable, with strong interest and approximately 30+ participants registered. The event is expected to support collaboration among local volunteer groups, whose contributions to the community were acknowledged as significant and valued.

PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND INQUIRIES

Ms. Kathy Weir advised that there is a lack of appropriate cleaning equipment for the kitchen grill at the recreation centre. Administration advised that efforts are underway to improve access to cleaning supplies within facilities and that required equipment will be obtained.

Ms. Weir provided an update regarding the "Chase the Ace" program, noting that the previous round has concluded, and a new license application has been submitted, with the next draw anticipated to begin April 10.

Ms. Weir encouraged Council to continue supporting housing initiatives in the community.

Ms. Weir expressed appreciation for the detailed Council package and acknowledged the work of staff in preparing financial and operational reports.

Mr. Derek Lackey asked questions regarding the proposed Council Chambers audio-visual system, specifically whether the quoted cost included furniture or was limited to audio-visual components only.

Administration clarified that the quote presented was for audio-visual equipment only, and that a separate furniture budget would be required.

The speaker referenced a comparable project in another municipality, noting that their total costs, including furniture, appeared lower. It was acknowledged that differences in project scope, such as new construction versus retrofitting an existing space, could impact overall costs.

CLOSED SESSION

IT WAS MOVED by *Councillor Ward-Russell* and **SECONDED** by *Councillor Jonah* that Council have an in-camera session at 7:42pm.

MOTION CARRIED (unanimously).

Local Governance Act 68 (1) (d) the proposed or pending acquisition or disposition of land

IT WAS MOVED by *Councillor Jonah* and **SECONDED** by *Councillor Land* to return to the regular session at 8:14 pm.

MOTION CARRIED (unanimously)

ADJOURNMENT

IT WAS MOVED by *Councillor Elderkin* **THAT** the meeting be adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Mayor

Clerk