

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

Guests: Caleb Babin, Planner Plan 360
Laura Stewart, Forsite (virtual)
Jessica O'Dell, Maritime Ignite

CALL TO ORDER

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

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

MOTION CARRIED (unanimously)

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

None declared.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

[Caleb Babin, Plan 360 – By-Law 25 WAP-069-FA-3](#)

Mr. Babin, planner provided a review of the proposed rezoning application for PID 05036462. He noted that the New Brunswick Department of Transportation and Infrastructure has updated its requirements, confirming that a traffic impact study is not required; however, a sightline analysis and other conditions must still be satisfied prior to permit issuance. These conditions are intended to ensure outstanding technical requirements are addressed at the development stage, as they cannot always be completed during the rezoning process.

Mr. Babin outlined the public notification process, including mailed notices to property owners within a 250-metre radius, advertisements in Connecting Albert County, and postings on the

municipal website and Facebook page.

Examples of enhanced public notification practices from other municipalities were shared, including increased notification distances and the use of on-site signage. Mr. Babin advised that such measures could be considered by Council in the future to improve public engagement.

Councillor Ward-Russell advised the importance of ensuring that rezoning processes in Fundy Albert are carried out properly, particularly with respect to improving public notification practices. She suggested that Council may wish to consider developing a formal policy to guide rezoning procedures moving forward.

Concerns were raised about the current 250-metre notification radius, noting that in a largely rural municipality, this distance may not effectively capture impacted neighbouring properties—even in more populated areas. As such, it was recommended that Council revisit and potentially expand the notification area to better reflect the municipality's rural character.

Councillor Ward-Russell expressed support for the use of signage to notify the public of rezoning applications, suggesting the investment in a movable sign as a practical and effective communication tool, without the need to include specific civic addresses.

Mr. Mike O'Blenes explained that the quarry operation is part of a broader network of affiliated companies and emphasized a commitment to working collaboratively with local communities. He noted that consultation has already occurred with relevant stakeholders, such as the local snowmobile association, and that accommodations will be made where required.

It was highlighted that rezoning represents only the initial step in a longer regulatory process, with additional requirements, such as site studies, environmental considerations, and provincial approvals, still to be addressed. Mr. O'Blenes also indicated that the site had previously been zoned for similar use in 2013, though this designation was not reflected during a recent permit renewal.

He described their business model as operating multiple quarry sites on an as-needed basis, often through agreements with landowners, and stated that operations are not continuous year-round. Instead, quarry activity would occur intermittently depending on project demands. He advised that the intent is not to disrupt the area, but rather to contribute economically, potentially including local employment opportunities, as part of their long-term operational strategy.

Mr. O'Blenes advised that the property was purchased in 2012 and rezoned in 2013, with permits renewed several times since, although the site was never developed into an operational quarry. He indicated that the zoning designation appears to have been lost over time, likely due

to the site not being activated.

Mr. O'Blenes emphasized a commitment to safety, including proper signage, public notification, and consideration of recreational users in the area.

It was further noted that infrastructure improvements, including road upgrades, would be undertaken to support operations. While the goal is to begin development as early as 2026, timelines will depend on regulatory approvals. Mr. O'Blenes reiterated his willingness to engage with stakeholders, provide direct contact information, and maintain a positive relationship with neighbouring property owners, highlighting their experience operating similar sites responsibly in the region.

Councillor Elderkin requested a recess at 4:49 pm.

Mayor Campbell welcomed everyone back from recess at 4:59pm.

[Laura Stewart - Forsite - Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan](#)

Ms. Stewart introduced the Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan (CWRP), expressing appreciation to Council, staff, and project partners for their collaboration and engagement throughout the process. She noted that while a draft was submitted by the April 15 deadline, a revised version with minor enhancements and a summary section will be provided.

The presentation emphasized the growing wildfire risk across Canada, driven by climate change, forest conditions, and increased development in wildland-urban interface areas. Although Fundy Albert has not yet experienced a major wildfire, it was highlighted as being in a strong position to take proactive measures. The plan identifies priority areas for mitigation and aligns with available provincial funding opportunities.

Key local risk factors include mature and fuel-heavy forests, proximity of development to wooded areas, limited access and egress routes, and exposure risks associated with Fundy National Park. The plan is based on a detailed hazard and risk assessment, including over 70 critical infrastructure reviews, and identifies high-risk areas such as Lower Coverdale, Riverside-Albert, Alma, and Hillsborough.

The CWRP serves as a practical roadmap, prioritizing actions to improve wildfire resilience. Core recommendations include vegetation management, public education, enhanced emergency planning, improved development standards, and stronger inter-agency collaboration. Immediate, low-cost mitigation actions, such as removing combustible materials near structures and improving building resilience, were highlighted as effective first steps.

The presenter expressed the importance of forming a local FireSmart or similar committee to oversee implementation, ensuring shared responsibility and avoiding reliance on a single staff member. Overall, the plan is designed to guide phased, achievable action to reduce wildfire risk and strengthen community preparedness over time.

Mayor Campbell requested a recess at 5:43 pm.

Mayor Campbell welcomed everyone back from recess at 5:49 pm.

[Jessica O'Dell – Maritime Ignite](#)

Ms. O'Dell from Maritime Ignite Fire Academy presented a new nonprofit initiative aimed at engaging youth (ages 14–18) in firefighting through a two-week, hands-on training camp. The program is designed to build skills, confidence, leadership, and interest in the fire service, with one week dedicated to female participants and one week to male participants, supporting inclusivity and addressing gender gaps in recruitment.

The camp will accommodate up to 40 participants (20 per week) and include practical training such as hose and ladder work, extrication, fire simulations, CPR certification, fitness routines, and education on mental health and safety. The program is led by experienced firefighters and professionals, with a focus on mentorship and real-world exposure to the fire service.

The initiative responds to a recognized decline in volunteer firefighter recruitment and aims to create a pathway for youth to explore firefighting before committing to formal training or joining a department. Local delivery is prioritized, with classroom components in Hillsborough and practical training at a facility in Riverview. The program has received strong community support and significant in-kind donations of equipment, reducing initial funding needs.

The presenter highlighted the broader community benefit, including building a future pipeline of trained and motivated firefighters, and expressed intentions to expand outreach through local schools and regional promotion. The first camp is scheduled for August, with early registration already underway and growing interest from both local and out-of-province participants.

INFORMATION ITEMS

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

[NBSPCA Quarterly Report](#)

[Maritime By-Law Enforcement](#)

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

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

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

[EMO Coordinator Meeting Minutes – April 8, 2026](#)

COUNCIL DIRECTION REQUESTS

[Recreation Infrastructure cost sharing](#)

Council discussed a proposed regional recreation infrastructure cost-sharing arrangement, with the Mayor seeking direction ahead of an upcoming vote. Clarification from provincial representatives indicated that while the process is mandated through service commissions, forced participation is not the preferred approach.

Council members expressed a range of perspectives regarding the proposal.

Councillor Land indicated opposition, citing concerns that the process would not be fair.

Councillor Jonah noted that the change may be inevitable, whether through the current proposal or potential provincial direction. He raised concerns that the arrangement could result in a one-way flow of resources, with the municipality contributing more than it receives. He also questioned whether the municipality would generate sufficient activity in the near term to justify the financial impact, given its size and fiscal constraints, and indicated he remains undecided.

Councillor Coates suggested tabling the matter to allow for further research. He noted that residents in Wards 5 and 6 primarily access services in Riverview and questioned the feasibility of alternatives unless a new facility is developed, referencing current funding efforts and existing service commission arrangements.

Councillor Elderkin stated that their position remains unchanged, expressing that the municipality is not ready to proceed due to a number of unknowns.

Councillor Ward Russell expressed agreement with Councillor Elderkin, recognizing that there may be potential benefits to the proposal for both parties, including future opportunities for support. However, she indicated that the municipality is not prepared to move forward given the current level of information and raised concerns about the financial capacity of a small rural community to support such an initiative.

Canada Day

Staff sought direction from Council regarding planning for Canada Day 2026, noting that \$8,000 in funding has been secured through Canadian Heritage. The Recreation Committee supports hosting celebrations in both Hillsborough and Alma again this year, consistent with past practice. Input from the Alma community is pending following their upcoming fundraising efforts.

Council members noted that both events in 2025 were well attended and successful, particularly highlighting the suitability of the Alma rink location. There was general agreement to proceed with dual celebrations for 2026 and defer any broader changes to the format to the incoming Council following the municipal election.

Pool Repairs

Council reviewed updates on pool repair planning, including funding and outstanding quotes. Staff advised that confirmation of an RDC grant is still pending, though support from the local MLA provides confidence it will be approved. Current estimates indicate approximately \$40,000–\$45,000 is required to complete necessary repairs, including drain work and resurfacing, with \$20,000 already budgeted and additional funding anticipated through the grant (requiring a municipal contribution).

It was noted that quotes received to date vary and do not consistently include all required work, such as recoating or concrete repairs, and staff continue to seek comprehensive pricing. Council raised questions regarding discrepancies in quoted amounts and scope of work.

Discussion also focused on the long-term viability of continued repairs versus planning for a full replacement or major refurbishment. Staff indicated that proposed repairs should extend the pool's lifespan by approximately 7–10 years, while longer-term planning, including potential capital investment of roughly \$150,000, would be addressed through future asset management planning.

Arena Pressure Relief Valve Replacement

Staff provided an update on the replacement of the arena pressure relief valve, noting that the matter was previously outlined in a Council Report Form. Two quotes were obtained after other suppliers directed staff to specialized contractors familiar with arena refrigeration systems, specifically Black & McDonald and CIMCO.

The replacement was identified as part of routine inspection and maintenance during the arena's seasonal shutdown. It was clarified that this work is separate from prior ventilation repairs and is a scheduled maintenance requirement to ensure proper operation of the refrigeration system.

ADMINISTRATION REPORTS

Refer to the following reports:

[Director, Legislative Services](#)

Ms. Beers advised that an update to the report reflects approval of a request to reassign one worker to a lifeguard position.

Councillor Ward-Russell asked whether the mini-split has been installed at the VIC. Staff advised the goal of having it in place prior to July 1. Staff noted that timing will depend on ongoing transitions related to the Chambers renovation. It was confirmed that the approach remains consistent with prior discussions, focusing on replacing the existing setup with a larger, more efficient option that provides better overall value.

[Director of Operations](#)

Mr. Barrett advised spring operations are progressing well, with street sweeping largely completed and remaining minor tasks to be finalized. The hydrant survey is underway, with three hydrants in Hillsborough identified as out of service, two expected to be repaired easily once parts arrive, and one potentially requiring replacement. The Fire Department has been notified and will continue to receive updates as repairs are completed.

Planning is also underway for Trail Day in May, tentatively scheduled for May 9. Support for the event has been received, including donated items from Trans Canada Trail (Columbia Sportswear) and non-alcoholic beverages from Athletic Brewing Company.

A question was raised from **Councillor Elderkin** regarding the role of water operators in current cleanup and public works activities, specifically whether they are involved beyond the hydrant survey or assisting in other areas such as lagoons or general public works tasks.

In response, it was confirmed that water operators are currently dedicated solely to the hydrant survey, which is expected to take approximately 4–5 weeks, including repairs. Following completion, they will shift to other water system responsibilities such as lagoon vegetation cleanup and ongoing compliance requirements, including weekly reservoir checks as mandated by the Department of Health. They also handle operational needs like water turn-ons and shut-offs. At this time, they are not supporting general public works, as priority is being given to completing the hydrant survey.

Councillor Land asked whether the reporting platform (City Reporter) is used across all departments or limited to public works.

It was clarified that the platform is currently used only by public works employees to track their hours, primarily due to per-user licensing costs. As a result, office staff are not included in the

system, as it is not designed or implemented for broader organizational use.

Councillor Jonah asked regarding the current condition of the fleet, specifically how many service vehicles are still reliable given that all five are operational but demand may impact availability.

In response, it was noted that, excluding the 3-ton truck slated for sale, there are five vehicles in use. Of these, three are in good condition and align well with asset management lifecycle expectations. The remaining two present concerns: a 2012 one-ton truck is in poor condition and likely to break down, while a 2016 one-ton dump truck, despite recent axle repairs, requires close monitoring due to past issues.

From a future planning perspective, it was suggested that the ideal fleet would include two heavy-duty vehicles (e.g., 3-ton trucks) dedicated to heavy work, and several lighter vehicles (such as half-tons or service vans). A service van equipped as a mobile workshop was highlighted as a potential efficiency improvement, allowing staff to complete repairs in the field rather than returning to base. This approach would reduce wear and tear on heavy vehicles and improve overall operational efficiency over time.

Several questions were raised regarding the status and operation of the Alma well system, as well as fleet usage and efficiency.

Councillor Ward-Russell asked if there is an Alma well system timeline, an update was requested on when the system will be fully operational. It was noted that the system is close to being turned on following a Department of Health review; however, final approval depends on outstanding documentation and minor tasks. While water has been pumped into storage tanks, it has not yet been distributed. **Councillor Land** asked about how pumping will be managed, the impact on existing well levels, and whether the aquifer will recover adequately without causing turbidity issues. There was also a request to confirm whether treatment options (e.g., UV or other systems) are available to address turbidity and avoid boil water advisories. Staff indicated that ongoing monitoring and reporting by consultants will inform these operational decisions.

Councillor Elderkin asked questions focused on vehicle usage and fuel efficiency, specifically whether trucks could be stationed in different areas (e.g., Alma and Riverside-Albert) to reduce travel time and fuel costs. It was confirmed that, similar to the previous year, there are plans to station a vehicle in Riverside-Albert during weekends to service that area. Further discussion suggested exploring more efficient fleet strategies, including the potential use of smaller, fuel-efficient vehicles to reduce mileage costs and improve operational efficiency, as well as reviewing current mileage expenses.

Councillor Ward-Russell raised concerns and questions regarding recent progress on the Greensboro Lagoon (Ward 6) project, noting that after a long period of limited movement, there has been a sudden increase in activity, including potential tendering and a public meeting

timeline.

It was emphasized that Council should have thorough internal discussions and receive detailed information—particularly regarding costs, timelines, and service delivery options (e.g., municipal responsibility vs. contracted services)—before engaging the public. The concern is that without this clarity, Council may not be able to adequately respond to anticipated public questions.

Additional discussion highlighted recent developments, including possible infrastructure considerations (e.g., road raising) and prior delays related to archaeological matters. Given the rapid progression, it was suggested that the matter be brought forward for further Council discussion and that staff conduct a detailed analysis of costs and operational capacity. Concerns were also raised about whether the municipality has the resources to take on additional responsibilities at this time, with the option of contracting services identified as a potential interim solution.

[Treasurer Report](#)

[General Operating](#)

[Alma Utility](#)

[Hillsborough Utility](#)

[Riverside-Albert Utility](#)

Ms. Hutchinson provided an overview of audit preparation, current financial standing, and key reporting items.

Staff are finalizing minor adjustments to the 2024 audit file and preparing supporting documentation, with plans to submit to Ernst & Young shortly. Work has also begun on the 2025 audit file. As of the end of March, the general operating fund shows a healthy available balance and net income, with some concern noted around HST-related purchasing variances, largely tied to capital activity.

Several maintenance activities (e.g., tank cleaning, seasonal work) are scheduled for the summer, which will impact expenditures. Billing cycles have been completed, and enforcement actions (disconnection notices) have been issued, with at least one major receivable successfully collected.

From the 2023 audit, the municipality reported:

- A surplus in general operations,
- A small utility deficit,
- Surpluses in Hillsborough and Riverside-Albert utilities.

A key compliance item identified is the requirement to report Asset Retirement Obligations

(ARO) under new public sector accounting standards. This includes liabilities related to assets such as landfills, buildings with asbestos, and lagoons. The municipality is in the process of engaging an engineer to complete the required report and has confirmed with the Province that current progress is acceptable.

Additionally, an issue with loan covenant compliance was noted due to delays in audited financial statements. This has been temporarily addressed using unaudited statements, and updated financials have now been submitted to maintain borrowing arrangements.

Several questions were raised regarding Asset Retirement Obligations (ARO), audit timelines, utility finances, and financial reporting clarity.

Councillor Ward-Russell inquired about the anticipated cost of completing the ARO work. It was explained that costs are not yet confirmed and will depend on the scope and whether existing work (e.g., asset management plans) can be leveraged. The ARO will include liabilities related to lagoons, landfills, and buildings containing hazardous materials (e.g., asbestos), and is expected to be a significant undertaking. There is also interest in exploring potential provincial support for this requirement.

A question was also asked about the timeline for submitting audit materials. Staff confirmed a meeting with auditors is scheduled to establish timelines, with the goal of providing an update to Council shortly. Ongoing work to “map” funding sources for capital assets is expected to streamline the audit process and reduce time required by auditors.

Discussion then turned to utility deficits, specifically Alma’s 2023 deficit. It was clarified that the deficit will be addressed in 2025 through an accounting adjustment and will be borne by that utility (user-pay model), without impacting other utility areas. It is anticipated that existing surpluses may offset the deficit.

Further questions addressed:

- Whether E6 (financial consultants) will continue if budgeted funds are exhausted, this will be discussed in upcoming meetings, including potential contract adjustments.
- The status of a new accounting/planning system, with updates to be requested from E6.
- Whether additional funding support could be sought for E6 services, Mr. Wallace advised an inquiry has been sent but no response received yet.

Councillor Elderkin sought clarification regarding reported bank balances, noting that figures presented are point-in-time balances and do not reflect outstanding payables or restricted funds (e.g., capital grants). This distinction is important to avoid misinterpretation of the municipality’s overall financial position.

MAYOR AND COUNCILLOR STATEMENTS AND INQUIRIES

Councillor Land asked a question about the snow removal contract, Mr. Barrett confirmed it is currently in its third year and includes a renegotiation clause, which has been exercised to extend the agreement by an additional two years.

Councillor Land requested an update on the hiring of a Fire Chief. Mr. Wallace advised that no significant progress has been made to date, with a target timeline of late June for completion.

Councillor Land asked for an update regarding the trail project, Mr. Barrett advised that there is no firm timeline at this point, though meetings are expected within the next couple of weeks to explore funding opportunities and advance the project.

Councillor Jonah raised concerns about the recurring public interest in installing a crosswalk on Main Street in Hillsborough, noting recent community discussions. Historical context was provided, explaining that multiple attempts by past councils to install crosswalks in various locations were unsuccessful due to safety and regulatory constraints, primarily inadequate line of sight, road incline, lack of connecting sidewalks, and impacts on parking. It was emphasized that while there is support for a crosswalk, the physical and regulatory limitations have prevented approval. The current process would also require a traffic study by an engineer before submission to the provincial department for review.

Councillor Jonah noted the issue may resurface with a new council and offered to provide background information to assist future decision-making.

Councillor Coates raised questions about recently announced federal and provincial funding (reported around April 12) aimed at improving firefighting capacity and infrastructure, including support for volunteer fire departments. They inquired whether the municipality had received or would receive any of this funding, particularly given concerns about an anticipated severe wildfire season. It was noted awareness of separate support from the Department of Natural Resources involving donated equipment.

Additional discussion referenced investments in wildfire response capacity (e.g., staffing and equipment for wildland fires) and the importance of ensuring local fire departments benefit where possible.

Councillor Ward-Russell shared appreciation for attending a recent community breakfast and raised concerns about the discontinuation of large item garbage pickup by Eco360. She noted ongoing complaints from residents and requested that the Mayor explore, through Regional Service Commission discussions, the possibility of reinstating periodic bulk item collection, as current alternatives are insufficient.

Councillor Ward-Russell advised ongoing work with the CAO on a dry hydrant project in Ward 6

and requested it be added to a future Council agenda for further discussion and direction.

Councillor Ward-Russell emphasized the importance of early budget discussions and encouraged maintaining the current tax rate, acknowledging financial pressures on residents.

Councillor Ward-Russell requested a breakdown of legal costs incurred since the beginning of the year.

Councillor Elderkin provided an overview of recent activities, including attending a Department of Natural Resources presentation with local fire departments, a job fair hosted by CCRC, a Southeast Regional Service Commission meeting on shared services, and a joint fire department meeting, highlighting the value of having all departments collaborating.

Councillor Elderkin also attended the AGM of the Albert County Tourism Association, noting the need for municipalities to assess and support local assets, as some are struggling.

Councillor Elderkin emphasized the importance of training for incoming Council members, Ms. Beers advised accommodations have been arranged for the scheduled sessions in Saint John.

Councillor Elderkin provided a reminder to maintain public washroom access (outhouses) in Riverside-Albert for trail users, especially given tourism and trail usage.

Councillor Elderkin reminded everyone about the upcoming volunteer appreciation event for Saturday April 25.

Mayor Campbell noted a busy period of meetings, including discussions with other Mayors regarding recreation-related costs, as well as participation in Southeast Regional meetings. He highlighted that the remainder of April and early May will be particularly busy due to the ongoing election campaign.

A question was raised about organizing a candidate meet-and-greet event. It was confirmed that efforts are underway to coordinate a session involving all candidates, with a potential date being discussed for the upcoming Sunday. Additional smaller events are taking place across different communities, though there is interest in ensuring at least one centralized event where all candidates can participate.

PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND INQUIRIES

Ms. Kathy Weir advised that a meet the candidate event hosted by the CCRC is scheduled for April 30 at the recreation centre, with other events occurring in Alma and Riverside-Albert. An update was provided on the recent job fair, where attendance was lower due to school

absence, but employers reported receiving fewer, higher-quality applicants who were genuinely seeking work.

Discussion followed regarding the municipal alert system, with clarification that it is functioning but relies on residents signing up. Efforts to increase participation have included social media posts, utility bill inserts, and outreach at public events, with plans for continued promotion. Finally, comments were made on the FireSmart program report, noting its level of detail and the suggestion to establish a committee to support its implementation.

Ms. Elaine Ward expressed appreciation to Council for postponing the matter, citing significant confusion and concern within the Greensboro subdivision due to a lack of clear information about a proposed project. They described inconsistent and unconfirmed information circulating among residents, including questions about property access, road development, and project details, contributing to frustration and uncertainty.

M.s Ward emphasized the need for transparent communication and complete information before any public meeting is held.

She also raised concerns about the lack of attendance and engagement from election candidates at Council meetings, particularly given that this was the final Committee of the Whole meeting, noting disappointment in the perceived lack of interest from those seeking office.

CLOSED SESSION

IT WAS MOVED by *Councillor Elderkin* and **SECONDED** by *Councillor Land* that Council have an in-camera session at 7:32 pm.

MOTION CARRIED (unanimously).

Local Governance Act 68 (1)(j) labour and employment matters, including the negotiation of collective agreements

IT WAS MOVED by *Councillor Ward-Russell* and **SECONDED** by *Councillor Elderkin* to return to the regular session at 7:53 pm.

MOTION CARRIED (unanimously)

ADJOURNMENT

IT WAS MOVED by *Councillor Ward-Russell* **THAT** the meeting be adjourned at 7:53 pm.

Mayor

Clerk