

ATTENDING

Mayor Mike Trinacty, Chair
Deputy Mayor Johanna Kwakernaak
Councillor Justin Serino
Councillor Derrick Jamieson
Councillor Chris Goddard
Jen Boyd, Chief Administrative Officer
Lisa Walsh, Director of Finance
Katie Verrette, Manager of Community Development
Aaron Dondale, Director of Public Works
Krista Longmire, Executive Assistant

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

2 members of the public

ABSENT

Councillor Ty Walsh
Councillor Adam Lutz

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

IT WAS REGULARLY MOVED AND SECONDED THAT THE AGENDA BE AMENDED AS CIRCULATED.

f. INSURANCE TENDER AWARD

MOTION CARRIED

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 13, 2026, COUNCIL MEETING WERE ACCEPTED AS CIRCULATED.

4. REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS

CAO Boyd reviewed the Action items. She highlighted that the installation of the new crosswalk from the Brown Street connector trail to Chute Park was added to the budget discussions.

5. COUNCILLOR ANNOUNCEMENTS

COUNCILLOR SERINO– The U18C Apple Heritage Classic hockey tournament is this weekend at KMCC.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Information Report: 2026/27 Operating & Capital Budget

The budget timeline, including the council sessions and upcoming public meeting were highlighted. V1 of the operating budget reflected assumptions such as 7% benefits increase, a utility increase of 2.6%, an insurance increase of 8%, no transfer to operating reserves and no funding of capital expenditure from operating. Debt repayments, financial condition indicators, and equipment reserve forecasts were also reviewed.

Director Walsh gave the current property tax assessment, with the CAP set at 2.6%. She noted that 90% of the properties within Berwick are under CAP. The 2026 assessment saw a residential growth of 16.3% and a commercial decrease of 0.7% due to successful assessment appeals.

The total change in revenue at present is \$602,665. The total change in expenditure is \$586,262, resulting in a surplus of \$16,000.

Budget items that staff required Council direction were discussed, documents will be updated and reflected in V2.

- *Crossing guard* - it was recommended that a written confirmation from Berwick school be obtained that they have not received any concerns regarding the current reduction of one cross guard. It was agreed to maintain one crossing guard in the budget.
- *Community Safety Officer/Bylaw officer* – staff will explore various job scopes for this part-time position. At this time, it was felt to leave this position in the budget.
- *Bridge Entrance Garden* – Manager Verrette and Deputy Mayor Kwakernaak gave an overview of the garden concept. It was agreed to maintain this item in the capital budget.
- *Grants/Advertising* – Staff will provide Council with a summary of what was discussed, then provide direction on whether this reflects their intent or if current practices should continue.
- *HR Services* – This will be added to the budget, and staff will continue to work on a service delivery model for Council's review.
- *Leadership Training* – leadership training/coaching for the management team to be added to the budget. Additional information will be provided to Council on this matter.

- *Reserves* – Consensus was that a minimum of \$75,000 be transferred to operating and equipment reserves.

b. RFD002-2026: 2026/27 Annapolis Valley Regional Library Budget Request

CAO Boyd reviewed the AVRL's request for assistance with their budget shortfall. They have asked for a 50% increase in the Town's annual contribution, which would be an increase of \$8,700. Mayor Trinacty provided clarification that any additional funding provided to the AVRL board is not a guarantee that the funding would assist the local branch.

IT WAS REGULARLY MOVED AND SECONDED THAT Council directs staff to include an additional \$2,300 funding increase to the Town of Berwick's annual AVRL contribution, which is consistent with the municipal share under the cost-sharing model.

MOTION CARRIED

c. Insurance Service Tender Award

Director Walsh reviewed the insurance service tender (RFP BER2025-004). Two proposals were received: BrokerLink and Aon. Currently, both companies provide insurance services for the Town and Berwick Electric. It was noted that awarding the tender to Aon will result in a small cost savings in insurance premiums for the Town and BEC.

IT WAS REGULARLY MOVED AND SECONDED THAT Council award RFP BER2025-004 Insurance services to AON Reed Stenhouse Inc.

MOTION CARRIED

Director Walsh, Director Dondale, Manager Verrette and members of the public left the meeting at 8:38 pm.

d. RFD003-2026: 2026/27 Tidal Transit Budget Direction

CAO Boyd reviewed the Tidal Transit budget as it was presented. The annual contribution has increased by \$63,281 or 62% over the previous year.

IT WAS REGULARLY MOVED AND SECONDED THAT Council approve the 2026/27 Tidal Transit operating and capital budgets as submitted by Tidal Transit staff and reviewed by the CAOs Working Group, and direct the Mayor to approve the budget at the Valley Regional Services Board.

MOTION CARRIED

e. Info Report: 2026/27 Valley Waste Budget

CAO Boyd reviewed the 2026/27 Valley Waste operating budget, which reflects a 10% increase over the previous fiscal year; though, primarily due to the implementation of the EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility), there were net savings to municipal partners of \$1.161 million. The Town's contribution for Valley Waste for 2026/27 will be \$213,223 for operating and \$9,031 for capital, a total of \$222,254. This is a 13% decrease over the Town's previous year budget.

f. Berwick Mural Society funding request

The Berwick Mural Society has requested a grant in the amount of \$3,000 for their 2026 mural, which will be on the east wall at 287 Commercial Street (former Mainstreet Video). It was agreed that this request be considered as part of the budget process.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

a. Valley Faces of Business – request for participation in the 2026 edition. This request will be considered as part of the budget process.

b. The Order of Nova Scotia - for information

c. Enriched Housing Program at Fundy Villa – for information

8. MAYOR'S REPORT – as circulated. Reminder of the Seniors' Safety toolbox workshop tomorrow at the Fire Hall.

9. IN-CAMERA

IT WAS REGULARLY MOVED AND SECONDED THAT THE REGULAR MEETING OF COUNCIL BE ADJOURNED TO INCAMERA AT 9:41 PM.

MOTION CARRIED

IT WAS REGULARLY MOVED AND SECONDED THAT THE INCAMERA SESSION BE ADJOURNED TO THE REGULAR MEETING AT 9:54 PM.

MOTION CARRIED

10. ADJOURNMENT

**IT WAS REGULARLY MOVED AND SECONDED THAT THE REGULAR MEETING
BE ADJOURNED AT 9:55 PM.**

MOTION CARRIED

Approved by Town Council, March 10, 2026
As recorded by Krista Longmire, Executive Assistant