

Minutes

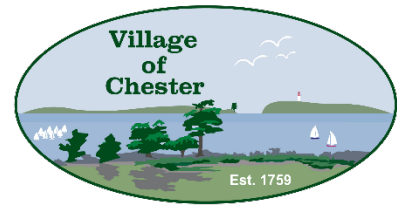
Village Commission Monthly Meeting

Wednesday, Feb 18, 2026 – 6:00 pm

In-Person & Virtual Meeting

27 Pleasant Street, Chester

Video Archive <https://www.youtube.com/@villageofchesterns>



Present: Geraldine Pauley, Chair
Randall O'Malley, Vice-chair
Laura Mulrooney, Commissioner
Tom Mulrooney, Commissioner
Gloria Nauss, Commissioner

Staff: Heather McCallum, Clerk/Treasurer (C/T)
Maxine Veinot, Recording Secretary

Guests: Councillor Tom Bremner, MODC District 3

1.0 Call to Order

Chair Pauley called the Feb 18, 2026 Regular Monthly Meeting of the Village of Chester Commission to order at 6:01 pm.

Chair Pauley stated the Land Acknowledgement:

As we meet today, we acknowledge that we live in Mi'kma'ki, the traditional and ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq people. We are all treaty people with a responsibility to each other and to this land.

2.0 Public Forum

- Speaker: Barry Redmond, Highway #3, Chester
Mr. Redmond stated he had been a volunteer at the Library and expressed his concerns regarding the Village of Chester offices being moved to the Library and impact to the heritage designation.

Mr. Redmond departed after his comments.

3.0 Approval/Amendment of Agenda

An additional piece of correspondence was received and will be item 6.3.

Motion #26-003: Commissioner Nauss moved; Commissioner L. Mulrooney seconded: That the Agenda of the Chester Village Commission's Feb 18, 2026 Regular Monthly Meeting be approved as amended.

Motion carried unanimously.

4.0 Approval/Amendment of Minutes

4.1 Monthly Commission Meeting: Jan 22, 2026

Motion #26-004: Commissioner T. Mulrooney moved; Vice-chair O'Malley seconded: That the Minutes of the Chester Village Commission's Jan 22, 2026 Monthly Meeting be approved as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

5.0 Business Arising – Nil

6.0 Correspondence

6.1 Municipal Affairs: Fire Modernization Planning Session

A letter and supporting materials were received from Municipal Affairs regarding changes to the fire service in Nova Scotia (*Schedule 6.1*), provided for information. There was a virtual session on Feb 17, 2026 attended by Vice-chair O'Malley and Clerk/Treasurer McCallum. A Q&A document is expected to follow from the Province.

6.2 Invitation: Basic Income Guarantee Conversation

A poster was received from Nova Scotia Health via the Lunenburg County Accessory Advisory Committee for information (*Schedule 6.2*).

6.3 NS Accessibility Advisory Board: Consultation on Draft Accessibility Standard Recommendations

An email was received from the Chair of the NS Accessibility Advisory Board, who is also the Lunenburg County Accessibility Coordinator. The draft standards for Public Transportation and for Information & Communication are available for public feedback. Elected officials are also encouraged to participate (*Schedule 6.3*).

7.0 Reports

7.1 Report from the Chair

Chair Pauley reported on the Beautification & Revitalization program and the ideas to improve the Jib lot, Market Square, and the Bandstand, with the work to be completed over the next three years.

Chair Pauley has met with Darcy Stevens regarding the Lido Pool and swimming lessons scheduling vs. public swims. The plan is to continue with the established lesson schedule to allow for a midday swim as the forecast is for a hot and dry summer.

South Shore Public Libraries has begun their work on a thorough book inventory at the Zoé Vallé Memorial Library. Chair Pauley noted that there is a temporary permit in place to access the front door, but the steps will need to be rebuilt before it can open to the public. Period-specific photos are being sourced. Several community groups are interested in returning to the Library for programming.

She also reported that a separate Library endowment set up in the 1930s, the CHUMS Fund, has been located and will be secured in a separate investment account. Its purpose is to fund the acquisition of children's books, and possibly children's activities.

7.2 Clerk/Treasurer Report, with Q3 Budget Variance Report

C/T McCallum presented the monthly administration and financial overview (*Schedule 7.2*).

7.3 (a) Chester Fire Services Committee (CFSC) & (b) MODC Fire Advisory Committee (FAC)

(a) The CFSC's approved minutes of Jan 14, 2026 were shared for information (*Schedule 7.3(a)*). [www.chesterfirecommittee.ca]

Vice-Chair O'Malley attended the CFSC's AGM on February 12, 2026 [along with Chair Pauley and Councillor L. Mulrooney]. He stated that plans for the new fire station are progressing and they are now in Phase 2 (final design and tender documents), which will allow them to move forward to Phase 3 construction.

(b) Minutes from the Municipality's FAC meeting on Jan 21, 2026 were not yet available at the time of Agenda package circulation. C/T

McCallum reported that they arrived today and will be in the next meeting's package.

7.4 Lunenburg County Accessibility Advisory Committee (LCAAC)

Draft minutes of the Jan 7, 2026 meeting were provided for information (*Schedule 7.4*).

[www.accessiblelunenburgcounty.ca]

7.5 MODC Village Planning Advisory Committee (VPAC)

Vice-chair O'Malley reported that the Committee felt that joining with several committees would not be good for the Village Planning Advisory Committee, as the Village has different issues/concerns from the wider Municipality. This recommendation has been made to Council.

Minutes from the VPAC Meeting of Jan 27, 2026 are not yet available.
[[VPAC Minutes](#)]

8.0 New Business – Nil

9.0 Commissioner Roundtable – Nil

10.0 In-Camera

Motion #26-005: Vice-chair O'Malley moved; Commissioner T. Mulrooney seconded: That the Commission move in camera as per Section 408B(2) of the Municipal Government Act to discuss contract negotiations and legal advice eligible for solicitor-client privilege.
Motion carried unanimously.

The Commission recessed at 7:05 pm.

11.0 Resumption of Public Meeting

The public meeting resumed at 7:19 pm.

There was nothing to report from in camera at this time.

12.0 Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 pm.

Next Meeting(s)

- Monthly: Wednesday, Mar 18, 2026 @ 6:00 pm – Village office & Livestream
- Monthly: Wednesday, Apr 15, 2026 @ 6:00 pm – Village office & Livestream

Commission Chair
Geraldine Pauley

Clerk/Treasurer
Heather McCallum



**Municipal Affairs
Office of the Minister**

PO Box 216, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3J 2M4 • Telephone 902 424-5550 Fax 902 424-0581 • novascotia.ca

February 10, 2026

Mayors, Wardens and Village Chairs
Sent Via Email

Dear Mayors, Wardens and Chairs:

RE: Invitation to Participate in Fire Modernization Planning Session on February 17, 2026

Last year, the Government of Nova Scotia invested significant time, along with firefighters and municipal fire/emergency management personnel, to understand how to effectively modernize fire services and create a safe, sustainable, and responsive system for Nova Scotians.

The results of the Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia's (FSANS) report revealed that the complexity of Nova Scotia's fire safety and services has led to significant long-standing governance, administration, training, certification, capacity, and resource challenges. Fragmentation and lack of role clarity for diverse fire service entities and municipalities have led to cost-ineffective, inconsistent, uncoordinated, and inequitable fire service provision to Nova Scotians particularly those living in rural areas.

With recommendations in hand from the Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia's (FSANS) Report of the Governance Review of Fire and Associated Services (September 2025) and the Value-for-money Audit of the Nova Scotia Firefighters School (August 2025), we are reconnecting with municipal elected officials to understand the implications of recommended next steps for municipalities and to gather your input on an implementation roadmap.

On behalf of the Department of Municipal Affairs and the Department of Emergency Management, we would like to invite all municipal elected officials and their Chief Administrative Officers to a virtual discussion on Tuesday, February 17, 2026, from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Following introductions from Ministers MacDonald (Municipal Affairs) and Masland (Emergency Management) and Greg Jones (President, FSANS) the discussion will be facilitated by the project consultant, Transitional Solutions.

Please register at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VirtualPlanningSession> by Friday, February 13, 2026. Meeting details will be provided following confirmation of your attendance. **[Note: this has been extended to 10am on February 17th.]**

We are grateful for your contributions to previous consultation initiatives led by FSANS. At the core of our efforts to modernize fire services is a commitment to ensuring that Nova Scotians are adequately protected from fire safety risks through access to high-quality fire services no matter where they live. We look forward to discussing how to achieve this goal together when we meet on February 17th.

Your participation is critical to our efforts to modernize the fire service system for the benefit of all Nova Scotians.

Sincerely,



Honourable John A. MacDonald
Minister of Municipal Affairs

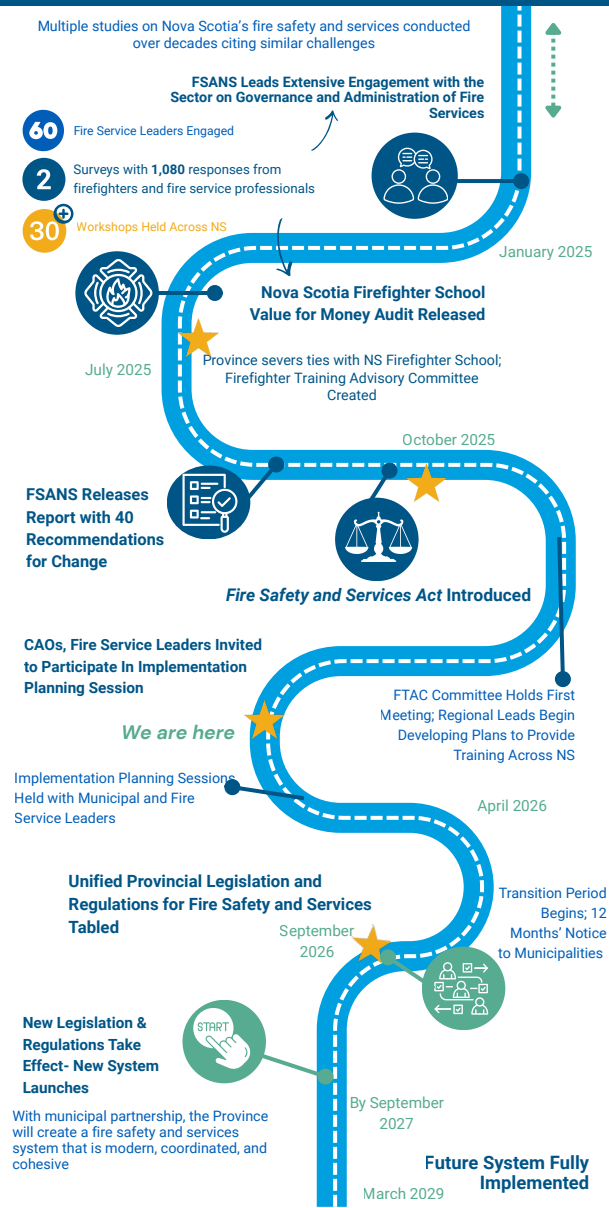
Honourable Kim Masland
Minister of Emergency Management

- c. Municipal Chief Administrative Officers
 Municipal Councilors
 Juanita Spencer, CEO, Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM)
 Victoria Brooks, President, Association of Municipal Administrators (AMANS)
 Greg Jones, President, Fire Services Association of Nova Scotia
 Paul LaFleche, Executive Deputy Minister, Department of Municipal Affairs
 Sandra McKenzie, Deputy Minister, Department of Emergency Management
 Valerie Pottie Bunge, Associate Deputy Minister, Department of Municipal Affairs
 Doug McKenzie, NS Office of the Fire Marshal

FIRE SERVICE MODERNIZATION

Vision and Roadmap

Nova Scotians are adequately protected from fire safety risks through access to high-quality fire services no matter where they live.



QUESTIONS

1. Governance of Fire Service

- What are some of the potential benefits of a potential municipal-led fire service?
 - For residents?
 - For fire entities?
 - For municipalities?

2. Training and Level of Service

- What training or education would be helpful for **municipal administrators** and **municipal elected officials** to support a successful transition to a new service model?

3. Implementation

- What is the most important role of councils in the new fire service scenario?

4. Provincial Role & Supports

- In addition to the supports that the Province will provide including education/training for municipal elected officials, transition and procurement support, mutual aid and service agreement templates, the Fire Records Management System, and a risk-based assessment tool, what other supports would provide the **most immediate value** to municipalities?

FAQ - Fire Service Modernization Planning Sessions

Category	Question	Answer
Governance, Structure & Jobs	Will small departments be forced to close or amalgamate?	No. The goal is to ensure every community has adequate and sustainable fire protection. Regional collaboration is encouraged where it improves safety and efficiency, but decisions must be based on community risk assessments and Council. Municipalities will still be able to use mutual aid and service agreements to deliver fire services to their residents.
	Will I have to re-apply for my position or lose my role?	No. The focus is standardization, safety, and sustainability — not removing firefighters or Fire Chiefs.
	Who is actually in charge under the new model?	Fire service delivery will shift from a fragmented system where there are many organizations governed in different ways to one where roles are much more clear and unified – municipalities will take the lead in delivering services. The Province will set the standards and provide oversight. This will improve fire safety and the fire services system promoting capability, capacity, consistency, and continuity for fire services province-wide.
Liability, Legal Protection & Risk	Am I personally liable if something goes wrong on a call?	This is a concern we heard across the province. The new legislation is intended to include clear indemnification provisions that protect Fire Chiefs and firefighters from personal liability. This removes any uncertainty that currently exists, especially for volunteers—and ensures all are legally protected while doing their jobs.

FAQ - Fire Service Modernization Planning Sessions

Funding, Costs & Sustainability	Who pays for meeting the new standards?	Fire Services will be municipally led with increased provincial oversight. This means that municipal councils will decide on the budgets to fund the delivery of services. Municipalities already have several financial tools at their disposal to support service delivery including through municipal taxation and area rates. The Province is exploring ways to provide short-term financial support to municipalities to support their transition to a new fire service model. Options include grants to help rural municipalities with the transition and for projects that demonstrate regional collaboration.
	We spend a lot of time fundraising for fuel and basic gear. Will this change? Will we still be able to fundraise for items the municipality won't provide?	It is important that fire stations do not have to fundraise for the resources needed to provide council-approved levels of service. FSANS' recommendations indicated the need for sustainable funding models that remove reliance on fundraising for: • Fuel • Utilities • Routine maintenance • Core operational costs. However, stations will be free to continue fundraising for charity and to purchase non-essential fire service equipment, training or additional community benefits provided by those firefighters.

FAQ - Fire Service Modernization Planning Sessions

	Our department responds to many medical calls (MFR). Will we be reimbursed?	We heard this concern very clearly. The FSANS Review recommends a formal cost-recovery process for fire departments providing Medical First Response in support of EHS. This includes: • Equipment • Training • Operational response costs The Department of Health and Wellness and Emergency Health Services will be conducting an evidence-based review of notification models for the medical first responder program in 2026-2027. The review will help decide what works best and whether it helps improve health outcomes for Nova Scotians.
Training, Certification & Time Commitments	Will I have to travel to Waverley for all my training?	No. We recognize that travel and time off work are major barriers for volunteers. The proposed model includes: • Municipal oversight of basic fire fighter training • A new central Provincial Fire Training School for specialized and advanced training • A network of regional training sites • Mobile training units that bring training closer to communities

FAQ - Fire Service Modernization Planning Sessions

		• Expanded online and distance education where appropriate • Regional testing/licensing of operators of Class 3 vehicles
	Will experienced firefighters be forced to re-certify?	There is a difference between qualified and certified. Minimum training standards will be established through legislation and regulation and will apply to all firefighters. Firefighters who are already officially certified are expected to already meet those minimum standards and will not be required to re-certify. Municipalities will set levels of fire service, and the level of service will define minimum training requirements. It will be mandatory to train staff to those standards.
	Does the new framework address mental health?	Yes. Mental health is a key priority. The FSANS Review recommends: • Firefighters have access to municipal health and safety resources to further support and supplement mental health resiliency, resistance, and recovery.
	Will volunteer firefighters receive the same Workers' Compensation Board	That is the goal. The framework recommends that all volunteer firefighters have the same Workers' Compensation coverage, so they are not out-of-pocket if they are injured while doing their job.

FAQ - Fire Service Modernization Planning Sessions

	coverage as career firefighters?	In general, this coverage already exists for employees and volunteers. However, some work-related illnesses are not clearly covered under current federal-provincial agreements for emergency services volunteers. Once the final model is confirmed, steps can be taken to fix any gaps or uncertainty about what is covered.
Dispatch & Communications	How will this affect our dispatch?	The framework recommends moving toward a more consistent, province-wide fire dispatch approach that: • Meets National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1225 standards • Supports Next-Generation 9-1-1 • Improves interoperability • Addresses cellular and mobile data coverage gaps. The Province is examining how best to deliver dispatch services that meet these challenges, and specific changes will be communicated once known.
Final Question	Is this already decided, or do our voices still matter?	Your voices matter. The Province has committed to fixing issues that have been emerging for a long time. Legislation is expected to be tabled by September 30, 2026, and will be informed by what we hear from you in these planning sessions. What you share here will directly influence: • Regulations • Standards

FAQ - Fire Service Modernization Planning Sessions

		• Funding models • Transition timelines • Implementation supports Your experience matters, and the modernization of fire services will only work if it reflects the realities of fire service delivery in Nova Scotia.
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JOIN THE BEYOND THE BAND-AIDS INITIATIVE FOR A

BASIC INCOME GUARANTEE COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2026

(SNOW DATE: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26TH)

6:00 - 8:00

REFRESHMENTS FROM 6:00-6:30

LUNENBURG FIRE HALL

25 MEDWAY STREET

LUNENBURG



Beyond the Band-Aids Initiative invites you to attend a community conversation about Basic Income Guarantee (BIG). This event is a follow-up gathering to the screening of the documentary '[A Human Picture](#)' that showcased the impact of the BIG pilot in Ontario.

This event is open to attendees of the screening and anyone else who is interested in exploring BIG as one policy option to address poverty in our communities.

Have questions
about BIG?

Send them to us in
advance [HERE](#).

This is anonymous
and will help us
plan the evening.

Planning to attend or need assistance with transportation?
Please confirm by emailing Louise.Hopper@nshealth.ca by
Monday, February 16th. This will help us plan refreshments
and provide transportation support.

Funding for this event is provided by the Lunenburg County Community
Health Board.

If you would like to know more about Basic Income Guarantee in Nova
Scotia, please click this link <https://www.big-ns.org/>

Schedule 6.3

From: [Ellen Johnson \(she/her\)](#)
To: [Alex Dumaresq](#); [Ella Gindi](#); [Eric Levy](#); [Erin Lowe \(she/her\)](#); [Jennifer Webber \(she/her\)](#); [Kayla Byrne](#); [Lynn Wagner](#); [Mark Flint](#); [Heather McCallum](#)
Subject: FW: **Consultation on draft accessibility standard recommendations**
Date: February 17, 2026 3:43:50 PM
Attachments: [image208980.png](#)
[image624944.png](#)
[image838806.png](#)
[image949475.png](#)
[image268264.png](#)
[image747786.png](#)

Good Afternoon Everyone,

I'm sharing the invitation to participate in the public consultation for the next accessibility standards under the Accessibility Act.

The Public Transportation and Information and Communications standard recommendations have been proposed by their respective Standard Development Committees and are now being taken to the public for feedback. After this, the next step involves revising the recommendations based on the feedback and then forwarding them to the provincial government to be made into standards.

Both of these standards will have significant implications form municipalities and this is the best time to be involved.

I'm requesting that you share this invitation with people in your organization responsible for transportation (current or future), communications, and, ideally, consider participating yourself. You may also receive an invitation directly.

Thanks for your help getting the word out. You will see my two worlds are colliding with this one

Ellen



Ellen Johnson, MSc(OT), OT Reg(NS)

Regional Accessibility Coordinator

Corporate & Strategic Management
151 King Street, Chester, NS, B0J 1J0

Direct Phone: 902-277-0456
Email: ejohnson@chester.ca
Web: www.chester.ca



🌱 Consider the environment. Do you really need to print this email?

I (we) respectfully acknowledge that I (we) live and work in Mi'kma'ki as a steward of the ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq people. We are all treaty people.

This message contains confidential information and is intended only for the intended recipients in communication with the Municipality of Chester. If you are not an intended recipient you should not disseminate, distribute or copy this e-mail. Please notify the sender immediately by e-mail if you have received this e-mail by mistake and delete this e-mail from your system. E-mail transmission cannot be guaranteed to be secure or error-free as information could be intercepted, corrupted, lost, destroyed, arrive late or incomplete, or contain viruses. The sender therefore does not accept liability for any errors or omissions in the contents of this message, which arise as a result of e-mail transmission. If verification is required please request a hard-copy version.

From: Accessibility Advisory Board <AccessibilityBoard@novascotia.ca>

Sent: February 17, 2026 2:45 PM

Subject: Consultation on draft accessibility standard recommendations

**** EXTERNAL EMAIL ****

Please do not open attachments or click links from an unknown or suspicious origin.

Hello,

Please [click here to view this information in ASL](#).

Consultation

The Nova Scotia Accessibility Advisory Board has drafted recommendations on the following accessibility standards:

- Information and communication
- Public transportation

Accessibility standards, once approved, are laws that help make Nova Scotia accessible.

The Board would like your feedback on their draft recommendations.

Thinkwell Research and Strategy is helping with the consultation.

You can find the draft recommendations and [learn more on the consultation website](#).

Online feedback sessions

You can give feedback at one of our online sessions between February 19 to March 6, 2026. The sessions will each be about 2 hours long. If you want to attend a feedback session, you need to register.

Please register by filling out this form: [Click here to register](#)

After you register, Thinkwell will send you a Zoom link for your session. They will also send you the draft standard recommendations to review. We will include a summary of the recommendations in ASL, English, and French.

There will be one session just for the Deaf and Signing community. We will also have ASL/English interpreters and CART captioning at any other session if requested when you register.

There will be one session in French.

Please share this with anyone who may also want to give feedback.

Other ways to give feedback

If attending a session does not work for you, please let us know. You can give feedback in a different way:

- Phone call
- Video recording or vlog
- Written feedback

If you have questions or need help to register, please contact jaimie@thinkwellresearch.ca.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

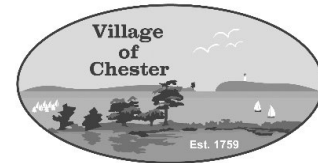
Sincerely,

Ellen Johnson,
Chair, NS Accessibility Advisory Board



Schedule 7.2

Village of Chester Commission Clerk/Treasurer Monthly Report Feb 18, 2026



- **Scotiabank:**

- The January 2026 bank statement has been reconciled. The Village main operations account opened the month with \$468,190 and ended with \$461,361.
- Snapshot: Account balances as of Feb 5th were:

Banking Accounts	
Daily Operations account	\$ 458,251
Investment Accounts	
Operating reserve	\$ 87,769
Lido Pool reserve (excluding GRID funding \$242K)	\$ 203,031
Utilities reserve	\$ 43,088
EMC Building reserve	\$ 28,841

- **Financial**

- 2026/27 Village Budget status: We are still awaiting the projected tax revenue figures from the Municipality. The annual CPI for 2025 has been released: 2.1% in Nova Scotia. Costs are coming in for new responsibilities and projects. Geraldine and I will meet later this month, then a Special Budget meeting will most likely be scheduled.
- A grant application has been submitted to Communities, Culture, Tourism & Heritage for the Recreation Facility Development Grant. This is intended for annual Lido Pool repairs – which this year will involve further work on the exterior sea wall. If successful, this grant covers up to two-thirds of the capital cost of a project to a maximum of \$150,000.
- I am proceeding with setting up new Scotiabank accounts for the Library in preparation for the transition. I'm setting up (a) a main Library chequing account, (b) a Donations savings account (e-transfer deposits will be enabled), (c) an investment account for the ZVML Trust, and (d) an investment account for the CHUMS Fund. No deposits are required to open these accounts, but it gets the paperwork out of the way. I have a meeting scheduled with the bank's advisor the morning of Feb 18th.

Report completed by:
Heather McCallum, Village Clerk/Treasurer



Minutes

Chester Fire Services Committee (CFSC) Monthly Meeting

Monday, Jan 12, 2026 at 5:00 pm

Village Commission Boardroom, 27 Pleasant Street, Chester

Present	Colin MacDonald (via Zoom) Norm Countway, Vice-chair Kirk Collicutt, Treasurer-Secretary Wilson Fitt Nancy Hatch James Robert (via Zoom)
Ex-officio	Cody Stevens, Fire Chief, Chester - Chester Volunteer Fire Department (CVFD)
Staff	Heather McCallum, Administrator (Clerk/Treasurer, Village of Chester) Maxine Veinot, Recording Secretary (Admin Assistant, Village of Chester)
Regrets	Jared MacDonald, Deputy Fire Chief, CVFD
Guest(s)	Randy O'Malley, Chester Village Commissioner

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Vice-chair Countway at 4:57 pm.

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion: Moved by Ms. Hatch; seconded by Mr. Collicutt: That the Chester Fire Services Committee approves the Agenda of the Jan 12, 2026 Monthly Meeting as presented.

Motion carried.

3. Approval of Minutes

3.1 Monthly Meeting Minutes: Dec 3, 2025

Motion: Moved by Mr. Collicutt; seconded by Mr. Fitt: That the Committee approves the Minutes of the Wednesday, Dec 3, 2025 Monthly Meeting as presented.

Motion carried.

4. Business Arising – Nil

5. Chester Volunteer Fire Department

5.1 Activity Report

Chief Stevens reviewed the December report (*Schedule 5.1*). The department responded to thirty-one (31) incidents, with five (5) incidents happening December 24-26, 2025, where the firefighters had to leave their families at Christmas and respond to emergencies.

Chief Stevens spoke about fellow firefighter from Kentville Volunteer Fire Department, Captain Joel Neilly. Captain Neilly was diagnosed with presumptive cancer from firefighting and his life expectancy is only a few months. He is age 43 with young children. This confirms the need for a state-of-the-art station with proper decontamination to protect our firefighters.

5.2 Evaluation Matrix re: New Fire Apparatus Procurement

Chief Stevens shared MODC's proposed evaluation matrix for the pending RFP (*Schedule 5.2*). He feels it is a reasonable matrix, and an evaluation team of firefighters will be responding to the technical side.

Action: The Chester Fire Services Committee asked Clerk/Treasurer McCallum to draft a letter of support to MODC regarding the timeframe of the RFP. A deposit for the successful proponent will be included in the 2026/27 Budget.

6. Reports

6.1 Secretary-Treasurer, incl. 2025/26 Q3 Budget Variance Report

Mr. Collicutt presented his monthly report (*Schedule 6.1*), including the 2025/26 Q3 Budget Variance Report. There are no concerns with year-to-date numbers. He noted that many large expenses are held until Q4 to ensure cashflow, such as reserve deposits.

6.2 New Fire Station Project

Mr. Fitt presented his Status Report #6 (*Schedule 6.2*).

Mr. Fitt stated the 'wheels are turning' on the fire station project. The four Fire Hall tours of recent builds were good for information. The first Grey Cardinal monthly report

is attached for more information, including an updated project schedule and overall project budget.

- **Land Swap Update**

Mr. Robert reported that the swap has taken place and is now in the hands of MODC Planning to be processed, approved and registered.

Vice-chair Countway suggested that the Municipality/Province be asked that costs for land registration be waived for all fire departments when called for in the future.

6.3 Communications Sub-Committee

Mr. Countway reported that the “future site of fire station” sign has been repaired. A huge thank-you to the Mahone Bay, Sambro, Hantsport, and Brooklyn Fire Departments for the tours of their facilities.

Chief Stevens reported that Deputy Chief MacDonald is working on the firefighters’ video shoot releases so that a date can be scheduled. The videos are for social media.

6.4 Fundraising Sub-Committee

Mr. MacDonald had no update at this time.

6.5 MODC Fire Advisory Committee (FAC)

Nov 19, 2025 minutes were distributed for information (*Schedule 6.5*). The FAC’s next meeting is Jan 21, 2026.

7. New Business

7.1 Draft 2026/27 Fire & Emergency Services Budget - Walkthrough

Ms. McCallum walked through the first pass at the budget completed by Chief Stevens, Deputy Chief MacDonald, Mr. Collicutt, and herself last week on Jan 7, 2026. Chief Stevens consulted with CVFD members ahead of last week’s meeting.

Ms. McCallum noted that the property tax revenue is a placeholder of last year’s assessment increase by the 2026 capped assessment rate of 2.6%. CPI increases to expenses also used the same placeholder rate. 2026 assessments and the official CPI rate will be released in late January/early February – the Budget will need to be updated accordingly.

Ms. McCallum was asked to separate the Operating and Capital Budgets into separate documents to make the link of the Capital loan(s) and fire station project clearer. It will also be re-formatted to move the budget notes to the end, etc. No issues with the numbers.

Motion: Moved by Ms. Hatch; seconded by Mr. Fitt: That the 2026-27 Fire & Emergency Services draft budget be approved as presented, with the formatting amendments discussed.

Motion carried.

Action: Ms. McCallum will circulate the re-formatted budget to the Committee (*Schedule 7.1 Rev*).

[Note that the draft to be shown at the AGM also needs to be shared with Municipal Council and the Village Commission by the AGM date of Feb 12, 2026 at 6:00 pm.]

8. In-Camera – Nil

9. Resumption of Public Meeting – Nil

10. Other Business

Mr. Fitt asked those on the fire station tours to forward any feedback to him.

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:22 pm.

Next meeting(s):

- **Regular Monthly:** Feb 11, 2026 at 5:00 pm; Village Commission boardroom
- **Annual General Meeting:** Feb 12, 2026 at 6:00 pm; St. Stephen's Community Centre

Kirk Collicutt
CFSC Secretary

Heather McCallum
CFSC Administrator, VOC Clerk/Treasurer

Minutes of the Meeting of Lunenburg County Accessibility Advisory Committee (LCAAC)

Held online via Teams.

January 7, 2026, from 7-8:30pm

Members Present:

Amy Chrysler, Natasha Strickland, Louise Hopper, Teresa Alexander-Arab. Councillor Gale Fullerton (TOL), Village of Chester Commission Chair Geraldine Pauley, Deputy Mayor Jennifer McDonald (TOB), Councillor Penny Carver (ToMB), Councillor Morgen Reinhardt (MODL), Councillor Abdella Assaff (MOC)

Staff Present:

Dylan Heide, Tissy Bolivar, Sana Karami, Tammie Bezanson, Ellen Johnson

Guests Present:

None.

Regrets:

Linda Mills

1. Meeting Called to Order:

The Meeting was called to order, and the land acknowledgement was read by Vice Chair, Louise Hopper at 7:00 p.m.

2. Acknowledgements and Protocols:

2.1 Louise read reminder of accessibility as a human right.

2.2 Louise also reminded participants to please raise their hand (virtually or physically) and wait to be called on to speak and to also state their name before speaking.

3 Approval of Agenda:

3.1 MOTION TO APPROVE the agenda as circulated with the addition of introductions of new members, **SO MOVED** by Penny Carver, **SECONDED** by Abdella Assaff. **ALL IN FAVOUR. MOTION CARRIED.**

4. Approval of Minutes:

4.1 MOTION TO APPROVE PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES AS CIRCULATED FOR OCTOBER 1, 2025, MOVED BY GALE FULLERTON, SECONDED BY ABDELLA ASSAFF. ALL IN FAVOUR. MOTION CARRIED.

5. Introductions:

A round table of introductions took place.

6. Accessibility Coordinator's Update:

- Ellen noted that she has been on vacation over the holidays and is just getting back into routine and will follow up with anyone who has reached out accordingly.
- Accessibility Advisory Board for the Province provides advice to the Provincial Government concerning standards for the Accessibility Act. The Board will be initiating public consultations for the Information and Communications and Public Transportation standards in February and March. Ellen will share more information with the LCAAC as it becomes available.

7. Matters Arising:

Update from Orientation – Took place in November, and numbers were low overall, but great discussion was had with who was there. The group in the orientation decided for a recommendation that the meetings will be virtual in the wintertime and in person during the spring, summer, fall to ensure safety and still have in person interactions that are helpful as well. Ellen will schedule accordingly.

Penny asked if a link was available for the video that was shown at the orientation event. Ellen advised that she would see what she can find and circulate for those interested. Other committee members noted that the video is very unsettling to watch with raw emotional footage causing lasting impact but extremely important. Ellen will also circulate the presentation that was used at the orientation for those who were unable to attend that would like to review.

8. Draft Budget

Ellen reminded members that one of the responsibilities of the Committee is to give recommendations to the five municipal units regarding annual budgeting for accessibility within their communities. A draft has been shared with the Deputy CAO's. Tonight, Ellen will share this with the Committee for input concerning regional actions and bigger picture review for cost spending. Ellen walked the Committee through the draft budget line items with a comparison to 2025's budget for comparison. Ellen highlighted Committee Training and Facilitation with the thought of an update that is required to the Terms of Reference this year and in the past, this has been a tricky exercise, so the budget is allowing for

support in this if needed. Committee members reminded Ellen of the challenges of inflation. The Expert Consultation/Professional Consultant had a significant jump from 3,000 to 20,000. Ellen explained that last year was planned but this year is acting out the plans agreed upon. One of the regional actions is to create a common symbol system and document the accessibility of some of the spaces within municipalities. Graduate students participated in a pilot review last summer in Bridgewater to get an idea of best practices that would be helpful to share with the public in a broad sense. Part of the 20,000 will be budgeting to hire a group to continue that work and move from the pilot phase to implementation phase. There will be flexibility within that number depending on how many facilities are documented and assessed but this money is set aside for this piece of planning. These funds would also be used to hire a consultant to develop an anti-hate and anti-discrimination policy. This policy would provide an overarching equity lens to all policies as work continues to review the many existing policies with this lens.

Ellen reminded the Committee that where her position is based in Chester, she requires their review and procurement policy as a baseline for planning. She also reminded them this is the very early development stage, and it will go to the Deputy CAO group for review before finalizing details and forming the final budget that would be presented to Councils regionally.

Ellen reminded the Committee that a website is still an action plan to ensure public engagement and education. The Committee wanted to ensure once the work is complete that there isn't a gap between the information and the public knowing how to access it. The committee agreed this is a key piece to the puzzle for making impact in our regional communities.

The Committee also strongly supported Ellen in her line item of Employee Wellness, recognizing this is an equity position and the weight of the responsibility on these roles and importance of maintaining support and wellness while they do this important work.

MOTION TO RECOMMEND THE INCLUSION OF THE INITIATIVES AND RELEVANT BUDGETARY ALLOCATIONS PRESENTED IN THE BUDGET TO BE BROUGHT FORWARD FOR APPROVAL BY THE COUNCILS MOVED BY AMY CHRYSLER, SECONDED BY PENNY CARVER. ALL IN FAVOUR. MOTION CARRIED.

9. Round Table (Popcorn Style):

Due to time constraints the Chair opened the floor for quick comments. Gale noted the Lunenburg Band Stand will be open for Christmas.

10. Date of Next Meeting: February 4, 2026

11. Meeting was adjourned as all items on agenda were completed.