

**TOWN OF STELLARTON
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
November 24, 2025**

MEETING

A Committee of the Whole meeting of Stellarton Town Council was held on Monday, November 24, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. in the large Committee Room, Stellarton Town Hall.

PRESENT

Chair Deputy Mayor G. Pentz, Councillor S. Eis, Councillor M. Fortune and Mayor D. Stroud. Also present CAO A. Grover. Regrets, Councillor S. Campbell.

1. Call to Order Chair G. Pentz called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved with the addition of two items: after #9b two donation requests – one from G. R. Saunders Home and School Association and local author, Camilla Thompson on motion Mayor D. Stroud, seconded by Councillor S. Eis. **Motion carried.**

3. Approval of Previous Minutes – October 27, 2025.

The Minutes of the October 27, 2025 meeting were accepted as presented.

4. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the Minutes.

5. Presentation – Rae Gunn, Highland Regional Manager with Dept of CCTH

Rae Gunn, Highland Regional Manager at the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage, specifically within the Communities, Sports and Recreation division, delivered a presentation to the Committee regarding options, opportunities, and provincial support for recreation services in the Town of Stellarton. R. Gunn was invited to discuss various options and opportunities for the community to consider regarding the future of recreation in the town. She highlighted the significance of leadership in recreation and if a recreation leader is appointed, it will help tackle some of the challenges discussed. She advised that before deciding, it is essential to consider:

- what your recreation priorities are,
- what skills and qualifications are necessary,
- where the role will be positioned within the organization,

- what municipal contribution is feasible; and
- how to establish the role for long-term success.

Council agreed that it would be beneficial to involve R. Gunn in the budget discussions to explore potential implementations. R. Gunn indicated that she could research salaries, job descriptions, and identify communities similar to Stellarton to understand what they have established and what they offer, providing examples for the Council. R. Gunn was thanked for her presentation.

6. Correspondence

a. Letter from Resident Re: Nativity Scene

A letter was received from Eddie Cormier, a life-long resident of Stellarton. He would like to see Mayor and Council honour past traditions and display the nativity scene during the holidays.

b. Memo from Fire Chief Mike O'Sullivan Re: Year End Review of Calls

Fire Chief Mike O'Sullivan's year-end review of calls received by the fire department was reviewed. Total calls for the Town of Stellarton - 95. The report details the different types of calls received.

c. Letter from Warden Eleanor Rushton, Municipality of East Hants Re: Amendments to the GMA through Bill 141

A letter was received from Eleanor Roulston, Warden for the Municipality of East Hants. A. Grover discussed the details from the letter regarding amendments to the MGA through Bill 141, which introduced Section 69B. This section allows Councils to lower the taxes payable on properties that have been rebuilt after a natural disaster. Ms. Rushton feels this should be reviewed and amended. A. Grover stated that municipalities are not equipped to assess properties, which is why we have PVSC – Property Valuation Services Corporation. She said if any member of Council has an opportunity to speak with someone on this, they should make it a point to do so.

7. Nativity Scene Request

A. Grover reported that a petition, accompanied by a letter, was submitted to Council by a group of concerned community members requesting the placement of a nativity scene in town square during the holiday season.

A motion was introduced to open the discussion on the placement of a nativity scene on town property, moved by Mayor D. Stroud and seconded by Councillor M. Fortune. **Motion Carried.**

Mayor D. Stroud emphasized the importance of considering and acknowledging points of interest raised by the community. He said it is essential to ensure that no group is discriminated against during deliberation on such matters. He observed that there may be existing practices in place that align with this request. He said it is important to maintain consistency in our practices and deliberations. He supports the idea of potentially establishing a formal policy to consider all requests uniformly.

Councillor S. Eis emphasized the necessity of having a policy ready to address sensitive issues promptly. She supports the implementation of a policy that we can rely on whenever a highly sensitive request arises, preventing the public from perpetuating a snowball effect of misinformation, discrimination, etc. She felt such situations generate an overwhelming amount of negativity.

There was unanimous agreement that a policy is essential to address these issues.

Staff will compile information on existing sample policies and present it at the next meeting for review.

Councillor S. Eis mentioned the need to follow up with the resident who dropped off the petition and confirm Council's direction on the matter.

8. Acquisition and Disposal of Surplus Property Policy

A. Grover emphasized the need to create a Disposal of Surplus Property Policy. She said the policy would focus on evaluating the properties owned by the town and determining how to dispose of them. She inquired whether there is interest in pursuing this path to identify surplus properties. A. Grover said the policy would provide clear guidelines for disposing of these properties, ensuring a straightforward process. There was a general consensus among the members to direct staff to explore the development of a disposal of surplus property policy.

9. a. Staff Memo – Re: Weir Avenue

A. Grover reported that at the last Committee of the Whole meeting some residents from Weir Avenue and nearby areas presented their concerns to Council regarding the sharp turn on Weir Avenue near Birch Hill Drive. As a result of that meeting, she said Police Chief M. Hobeck, as the traffic authority, has ordered signs to warn driver about the turn and advise them to reduce their speed to a maximum of 15 km/h when approaching it (the signs will be placed in both directions). Police officers will keep an eye on the area to determine if the signs have a positive effect.

b. Donation Request - G R Saunders Home and School Association

A Grover reported that GR Saunders Home and School Association is organizing their annual turkey dinner on December 18th in the school cafeteria and any donation would be appreciated. It was agreed to recommend to Council the approval of a \$200 donation to GR Saunders Home

and School Association on motion Mayor D. Stroud, seconded by Councillor S. Campbell. **Motion Carried.**

c. Donation Request – Camilla Thompson

A Grover reported that this request is from a sole proprietor, a local author who wishes to place 100 copies of her book in Grade 2 students across Pictou County for the holidays. This request was not supported as our grant program is fundamentally for not-for-profit groups.

10. Pictou Antigonish Regional Library Board Re: Request to Municipal Councils

A Grover reported that an email was received from Eric Stackhouse, Chief Librarian of the Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library. The email indicated that during their regular meeting on November 13th, a motion was approved to ask all eight municipal governments in the region to help with the provincial funding issue requesting that all eight municipalities come together to send a joint letter, signed by the mayors and wardens to Premier Houston. A. Grover said that the letter, prepared by the library board members, seeks a meeting with Premier Houston to discuss the funding situation and emphasizes the seriousness of the matter. They request Council send a letter signed by the Mayor to the Premier. Council agreed to support the letter.

11. Council Committee Updates

Councillor S. Eis reported:

- the Pictou Antigonish Regional Library – funding concerns. PARL is warning changes are coming if they do not receive the funding needed from the province – decreased hours of operation, programs, and services. Bridge funding has been inconsistent, creating uncertainty about long-term operations going forward (bridge funding helps to cover rising costs)
- the Riverview Home Corporation - Human Rights Remedy Plan in Nova Scotia - transitioning residents from large institutions to community-based support homes – no confirmation on anything happening – the transition of its residents into smaller community-based homes remains a process with various obstacles.

Mayor D. Stroud reported:

- having a second meeting with the NS Community College – Pictou Campus. He said local Mayors/Warden agreed to meet regularly. He believes the campus is a significant asset that we should strive to connect with.
- attending a housing summit recently along with A. Grover. This effort is part of the Pictou County Support of Housing Association. A. Grover noted that they are still in the early

stages of the association, and have not yet built significant momentum. They are in the process of gathering the essential elements to decide the future direction of PSCHA.

12 Round Table

Mayor D. Stroud reported:

- Blue Lobster is having their grand reopening Friday, November 28th .
- House 47 is having their grand opening on December 15th.

14. Next Meeting Date: December 22, 2025

15. Adjournment on motion by Councillor S. Eis.