

A regular monthly meeting of the Committee of the Whole of Middleton Town Council was held in person, via ZOOM and on YouTube Live on Monday, February 2, 2026.

PRESENT

Chairing the meeting, Mayor Gail Smith; Councillors John Bartlett, Dan Smith, Bernadette Knapp, Sandra Fournier and Jonathan Archibald; Chief Administrative Officer, Ashley Crocker, Director of Finance, Leah Profitt and Recording Secretary, Sara Marceau.

Regrets: Deputy Mayor Gary Marshall

Also in attendance: David Hankinson, Bill Linley (left at 7:40pm) Meg Hodges, Sabrina Penney and one (1) citizen.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Smith called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

260202.01: It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda, as circulated. **Motion carried.**

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Approval of the Previous Meeting Minutes

3.1 Committee of the Whole Meeting – December 1, 2025

No errors or omissions were noted, and the minutes were considered approved.

4. PRESENTATIONS

Middleton Railway Museum

David Hankinson and Bill Linley gave a presentation on the Middleton Railway Museum.

A request was made to Council to help with ongoing annual operating costs. Councillor Bartlett inquired whether other local businesses had been approached for donations or sponsorships.

- David Hankinson responded that they had; however, the surrounding area has a limited pool of businesses, and they did not want to overburden them.

Councillor Smith inquired whether financial statements had been provided.

- CAO Crocker responded that they had not yet been submitted, as work on the grant application process and form is still ongoing.

5. ANYTHING BY CITIZENS

Nothing to report.

6. NEW BUSINESS

6.1 RFD 014-2026 Tidal Transit Budget for 2026-2027

CAO Crocker gave a high-level overview of the Tidal Transit Budget for 2026-2027.

260202.02 It was moved and seconded that Council direct the Mayor to vote in favor of the Tidal Transit Authority 2026-2027 operating and capital budgets when it comes before the Valley Regional Services Board. **Motion was defeated.** Councillors Smith, Archibald, Knapp and Fournier voted against the motion.

There was a lengthy discussion around the Tidal Transit Budget for 2026-27.

Councillor Smith stated that the Town's full budget has not yet been finalized and that Council is not in a position to approve one portion of it without reviewing the budget in its entirety.

Councillor Bartlett asked how the other partners were affected by the Town of Digby not coming on as a partner.

- Meg Hodges responded that the financial impact was small for Middleton.

Councillor Smith said the numbers aren't going down and worried the Town of Middleton might not be able to afford transit services through Tidal Transit Authority.

Councillor Archibald asked how certain the numbers in the budget and plan are.

- Meg Hodges said there's some uncertainty and it will take investment to keep things reliable.

Councillor Knapp asked what happens if the agreement is rejected.

- CAO Crocker said the current vote is about the budget, not the agreement – the Town is already a partner.

Tidal Transit Authority General Manager Meg Hodges committed to keeping costs consistent and stable for the partners for the next five years.

Councillor Archibald asked about provincial and federal funding.

- Meg Hodges said she's working with the province on PCAP funding.

6.2 RFD 009-2026 Memorandum of Agreement – REMO & Kings Transit Authority

CAO Crocker provided a brief overview of the Memorandum of Agreement between REMO and Kings Transit.

260202.03 It was moved and seconded that Council approve the Memorandum of Agreement between Kings Transit Authority and the Annapolis Regional Emergency Management Organization (Annapolis REMO), as recommended by the Annapolis REMO Advisory Committee. **Motion carried.**

6.3 RFD 010-2026 Appointment List Update

CAO Crocker gave a brief overview of the Updated Appointment List.

260202.04 It was moved and seconded that Council on recommendation from the CAO, appoint Daniel Forbes as a member of the Audit Committee. **Motion carried.**

260202.05 It was moved and seconded that Council approve the 2026 Appointment List, as presented. **Motion carried.**

6.4 RFD 011-2026 Joint Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) Plan

CAO Crocker gave a brief overview of the Joint Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) Plan.

260202.06 It was moved and seconded that Council approve the 2026-2029 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Plan. **Motion carried.**

Councillor Smith asked if we are going to wait for recommendations from this committee.

- CAO Crocker responded that the Town can still proceed with any initiative it chooses, subject to budgetary constraints, though the committee may also provide recommendations to Council.

ACTION: CAO to follow up with DPW Verran regarding the status of the accessible parking spaces that were going to be created in Town.

6.5 RFD 012-2026 Joint Accessibility Plan

CAO Crocker provided a brief overview of the Joint Accessibility Plan.

260202.07 It was moved and seconded that Council approve the Annapolis County Joint Accessibility Plan 2026 - 2028 and submit to the NS Accessibility Directorate as the approved plan to guide actions over the next 3 years. **Motion carried.**

6.6 RFD 015-2026 Annapolis Valley Regional Library Budget Request

CAO Crocker provided a high-level overview of the Annapolis Valley Regional Library Budget Request.

260202.08 It was moved and seconded that Council approve a \$1,600 funding increase which is consistent with the traditional municipal share under the current cost-sharing model, subject to provincial confirmation of their share. **Motion carried.**

There was a lengthy discussion around the Annapolis Valley Regional Library Budget.

Councillor Smith said he is not comfortable giving more money until it's known what other municipalities and the province are contributing.

Councillor Knapp asked when the province will be making a decision.

- CAO Crocker noted that the library is intending to send a letter but there has been no response yet.

Councillor Bartlett suggested tightening the plan and said the budget isn't realistic.

Councillor Archibald suggested reaching out to other municipalities to see their intentions.

ACTION: CAO Crocker to contact other municipalities to determine their intentions.

6.7 RFD 016-2026 Records Management and Destruction Policy

Executive Assistant Marceau gave a brief overview of the Records Management and Destruction Policy.

260202.09 It was moved and seconded that Council approve the replacement of the existing Records Management Policy with the Records Management and Destruction Policy. **Motion carried.**

7. INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

7.1 Community Concerns/Complaints as of January 2026

CAO Crocker stated that the Community Concerns/Complaints as of January 2026 has been circulated to all members.

7.2 Town General and Water Utility Financial Report as of end November 2025

Director of Finance Profitt gave a brief overview of the Town General and Water Utility Report as of end November 2025.

8. ANYTHING BY MEMBERS

Councillors expressed appreciation for the Public Works Department's snow clearing efforts.

Councillor Bartlett reported that a citizen asked why the Town does not have a policy allowing ATVs to travel on Town roads to access services like fuel and food. Councillor Bartlett noted that while many municipalities restrict ATVs, they can also serve as an economic driver for local businesses.

9. IN CAMERA

260202.10 It was moved and seconded to move to in-camera at 9:03pm. **Motion carried.**

260202.11 It was moved and seconded to move out of camera at 9:47pm. **Motion carried.**

260202.12 It was moved and seconded that Council direct the Mayor and CAO to execute the draft Inter-Municipal Services Agreement for an Economic Development Officer to be shared with the County of Annapolis and Town of Annapolis Royal. **Motion carried.**

10. ADJOURNMENT

The Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 9:48pm.


MAYOR


RECORDING SECRETARY