



## **NOTICE**

**MEETING:** Council Meeting

**DATE:** Wednesday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026

**TIME:** 5:00pm

**PLACE:** Council Chambers, 8296 Highway 7, Sherbrooke

Please Advise If Unable To Attend



# Municipality of the District of St. Mary's

Council Meeting  
Wednesday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026

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*We acknowledge that we are gathering in Mi'kmaqi the traditional unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people.*

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Additions to the Agenda
4. Approval of the Agenda
5. Approval of Minutes of Council Meeting held Wednesday February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026
6. Business Arising from Minutes
7. Correspondence
  - a. Correspondence – Sherbrooke Village Budget Cuts
    - Please see agenda/package.

Adjournment



# Municipality of the District of St. Mary's

Regular Council Meeting  
Wednesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

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*We acknowledge that we are gathering in Mi'kma'ki the traditional unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people.*

## **1. Meeting, Date & Time:**

The Regular Council meeting of the St. Mary's Municipal Council was called to order on Wednesday February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026, at 5:00pm in the Council Chambers Sherbrooke, N.S.

## **2. Attending:**

Deputy Warden Beulah Malloy  
Councillor Dana O'Connell  
Councillor Scott Beaver  
Councillor Emma Tibbo

## **Absent with Regrets:**

Warden James Fuller

## **Also Attending:**

Lesley McFarlane, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)  
Marian Fraser, Director of Finance/Treasurer (DOF)  
Mallory Tibbo, Director of Community Development and Recreation.  
Janelle Fleet, Interim Municipal Clerk

## **3. Additions to the Agenda:**

- There were no additions to the agenda.

## **4. Approval of Agenda:**

*On motion of Councillor O'Connell and seconded by Councillor Tibbo, Council approved the agenda as presented.*

***Motion approved.***

## **5. Approval of Previous Minutes:**

*Deputy Warden Malloy called for errors, omissions or amendments to the prior minutes as presented. Hearing no errors, omissions or amendments, Council approved the minutes of the Council Meeting held January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026.*

***Motion approved.***

## **6. Business Arising from the Minutes:**

- a. No business arises from previous minutes.

## **7. Recommendations from Committees of Council:**

Committee of the Whole – January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026

*On motion of Councillor Beaver seconded by Councillor O'Connell, Council repeal the Sale of Real Property Policy.*

**Motion Approved.**

*On motion of Councillor O'Connell seconded by Councillor Tibbo, Council approve the Disposal of Real Property Policy as presented at the COTW on Wednesday January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026.*

**Motion approved.**

*On motion of Councillor Tibbo seconded by Councillor O'Connell, Council provide funding support to Sherbrooke Village and the Historic Sherbrooke Village Development Society in support of the 2026 "Christmas at Sherbrooke Village" event.*

**Motion Approved.**

*On motion of Councillor Tibbo seconded by Councillor Beaver, that the Warden will send the letters provided by Sean Cameron, Mayor of Town of Antigonish in support of advocating to the Provincial and Federal government for an alternative entrance route to St. Martha's Hospital in Antigonish.*

**Motion Approved.**

Committee of the Whole – February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026

*On motion of Councillor O'Connell seconded by Councillor Tibbo, that the Warden draft a letter in support of the East River Volunteer Fire Department roof repair project.*

**Motion approved.**

*On motion of Councillor Beaver seconded by Councillor O'Connell, Council agree to approve the 2026/2027 Application for Residential Low Income Property Tax Exemption with the annual household income range threshold and the tax exemption credit amount as presented on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026, and all other eligibility requirements to remain the same as outlined in the application.*

**Motion Approved.**

*On motion of Councillor O'Connell seconded by Councillor Tibbo, Council agreed to leverage the existing partnership with Clean Foundation Nova Scotia to deliver on the municipality's Climate Change Action Plan and withdraw from the Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation (LLCA -24-0485) Climate Ready Plans and Processes program.*

**Motion approved.**

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Anti-Hate and Accessibility Committee - January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026

*On the motion of Councillor Beaver seconded by Councillor Tibbo, Council approve the updated Municipal Accessibility Plan as presented.*

**Motion Approved.**

## **8. Outside Committee Reports**

- a. Smart Go – January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026.
  - Please see the agenda/package for the outside committee report.
- b. Eastern Region Solid Waste Management – January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2026.
  - Please see the agenda/package for the outside committee report.
- c. Eastern Counties Regional Library – February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026.
  - Please see the agenda/package for the outside committee report.

## **9. Other Matters of Business:**

- There were no other matters of business.

**10. CAO Report:**

- Please see the Agenda/Package for the report.

**Adjournment**

*On motion of Deputy Warden Malloy, there being no further matters of business, the Council adjourned at 5:17pm.*

***Motion approved.***

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Recorded By  
Janelle Fleet, Interim Municipal Clerk

Approved By  
Warden Fuller

**From:** Lethbridge, York <York.Lethbridge@novascotia.ca>

**Sent:** February 26, 2026 9:44 AM

**To:** Lesley McFarlane <cao@saint-marys.ca>

**Cc:** Rennie Beaver <flattailbeaver@gmail.com>; Dana O'Connell <dana.oconnell@saint-marys.ca>

**Subject:** Cuts to Sherbrooke Village in the Provincial Budget 2026-27

Dear Lesley,

Sherbrooke Restoration Commission has received news by email on Tuesday regarding the 2026-27 Provincial Budget. We are shocked by the decision of the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage (CCTH) to cut Sherbrooke Village's operating grant by 20%.

Reportedly, \$38 million has been cut from the CCTH budget and this will affect many organizations and businesses in our Province. This substantial cut includes permanent closure of 12 of the 28 Nova Scotia Museum (NSM) family sites.

There are no plans to close Sherbrooke Village. However, we have been asked to adjust our budget for the next fiscal year with a 20% reduction in our operating grant. This will be a devastating blow to our operations that will have ramifications for tourism and economic development in our district.

The Commission and Sherbrooke Village management will be working to mitigate the impact to employees. We are currently coordinating advocacy efforts with peers and community to ask that decisionmakers reconsider. The Commission has already sent the attached letter to MLA Greg Morrow, the Premier, and the Minister, the Hon. Dave Ritcey, among others. Please share this with members of Council.

We encourage anyone to write to their local MLA, and the Minister of Communities, Culture, Tourism, and Heritage expressing their concerns about these measures. We hope that a strong response from communities across the province recognizing the economic and cultural value of museums may sway the final decision.

This situation is still unfolding. I will be happy to share additional information with you as it becomes available.

Sincerely,

York Lethbridge

Executive Director

Sherbrooke Village



A PART of THE NOVA SCOTIA MUSEUM

25 February 2026

Hon. Tim Houston	MLA Pictou East and Premier of Nova Scotia
Hon. Greg Morrow	MLA Guysborough-Tracadie and Minister of Agriculture
Hon. Dave Ritcey	MLA Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River and Minister of Communities, Culture, Tourism, & Heritage
Hon. Dave Lohr	MLA Kings North and Minister of Finance and Treasury Board

### **RE: Urgent Request to Reconsider Funding Cuts to the Nova Scotia Museum**

Dear Ministers,

We are writing as concerned local citizens and as volunteer members of Sherbrooke Restoration Commission, the provincially appointed board that governs Sherbrooke Village—Nova Scotia’s largest living history museum. The Commission is deeply concerned with the decision to cut funding to the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage (CCTH) and the Nova Scotia Museum (NSM).

Sherbrooke Village is facing a 20% cut to its operating grant under the Provincial Budget 2026-27. As stewards of one of the province’s most significant heritage assets, we find this deeply troubling. We govern the museum in the best interest of the community.

Since opening in 1972, Sherbrooke Village has become a tourism anchor in Guysborough County, along the Eastern Shore, and throughout Northeastern Nova Scotia. It is the largest employer in the District of St. Mary’s. 74% of the museum’s budget is allocated to human resources. A 20% cut will immediately impact 1 in 5 employees.

#### **Impact of Cuts on Services and Local Economy**

**Decreased Tourism:** Tourism is the economic engine for our area. Sherbrooke Village is the tourism anchor in our district. Reducing museum funding will restrict the museum’s ability to maintain quality heritage experiences that draw visitors to the Eastern Shore – this means reduced traffic to local restaurants, accommodations, and other service providers. For every dollar invested in museums, Canadians receive nearly four dollars in economic and social benefit (Canadian Museums Association).

**Loss of Employment:** Located in an economically marginalized region, Sherbrooke Village provides stable full-time and seasonal employment in the tourism and heritage sectors, while generating substantial extra benefits for local businesses. Seasonal employment at Sherbrooke Village unlocks federal Employment Insurance programs that contribute to year-round economic stability in our region, and we aim to ensure employees have enough work hours to qualify. Further reducing hours is not possible and eliminating positions will have ripple effects that extend far beyond our gates.

**Limiting Community Access to Programming:** Without adequate support and staffing, the museum must pull back to maintain programming that is mission critical. This puts important community events like Old Fashioned Christmas at Sherbrooke Village at risk. Nova Scotians will have diminished access to cultural and educational programming.

**Cultural Heritage at Risk:** Sherbrooke Village has estimated \$7.6 million in deferred maintenance on 67 Provincially owned heritage structures within our site. Nearly \$400,000 is spent per year from our operating budget to maintain historic buildings entrusted to the Province by Nova Scotians. Cuts severely impact our ability to keep pace with needed repairs on vulnerable heritage assets.

**Health and Wellness:** Museums are social engines. They support education and lifelong learning, foster community belonging and wellbeing, preserve and promote our shared heritage, and serve as essential community hubs—especially in rural regions like the District of St. Mary's. In an era marked by global uncertainty and growing threats to our sovereignty, this is precisely the time for government to invest in and safeguard Nova Scotia's distinct history, identity, and cultural institutions.

We are being asked to do more for our communities—to foster resilience, support tourism, build cultural identity—while simultaneously being stripped of the resources that make that work possible. A 20% cut is not an efficiency measure; it is the short-sighted dismantling of the Nova Scotia Museum system and a weakening of the many economic, educational, and social benefits that museums—especially Sherbrooke Village—provide to the people of Nova Scotia.

In 2025, tourism generated \$3.7 billion in revenue and supported over 55,000 jobs in Nova Scotia. The sector's economic impact now surpasses that of fisheries and agriculture combined. The NSM system saw an overall 32% increase in visitation in 2025 and helped drive this success. The return on investment in museums and tourism cannot be discounted.

We urge you to reconsider the cuts to NSM and to recognize the long-term economic and social harm these decisions will cause. We welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the impacts of these decisions in greater detail and to work collaboratively toward sustainable solutions.

Sincerely,

Rennie Beaver, Commission Chair, Glenelg  
John Watson, Commission Vice-Chair, Glenelg  
Meghann Jack, Commission Secretary, East River St. Mary's  
Leigh Ellen Walsh, Commissioner, Sherbrooke and Ottawa  
Dana O'Connell, Commissioner, Sherbrooke  
Dr. Don Westcott, Commissioner, Antigonish