



## **NOTICE**

- MEETING:** Committee of the Whole
- DATE:** Wednesday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026
- TIME:** 5:00pm, Immediately After Council Meeting
- PLACE:** Council Chambers, 8296 Highway 7, Sherbrooke

Please Advise If Unable To Attend



# Municipality of the District of St. Mary's

Committee of the Whole (COTW) 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 COTW held Wednesday February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026
6. Business Arising from Minutes
7. Correspondence
  - a. Correspondence dated February 24, 2026, from NSFM Communications re: Bill 186 – Support for Fire Protection Services Act
  - b. Correspondence dated February 24, 2026, from NSFM re: NS Provincial Budget 2026-27
8. Other Matters of Business
  - a. Staff Report – Health Care Appreciation
  - b. Staff Report - 2026 2027 General Government Grants
  - c. Staff Report – Declaring Municipal Land Surplus
  - d. Staff Report – Fire Protection Services Act – Bill 186
  - e. MODG Shared Service Agreement Renewal – Verbal Report
  - f. Staff Report - Federation of Canadian Municipalities and Nova Scotia Federations of Municipalities Conferences
  - g. Setting Date for AGM
  - h. Staff Report – RFP Award for Design of Multi-Use Trail – Old Road Hill
9. In-Camera: Contract Negotiations

Adjournment



# Municipality of the District of St. Mary's

Committee of The Whole (COTW) 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:**

Deputy Warden Malloy called the COTW Meeting of the St. Mary's Municipal Council to order on Wednesday February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026, at 5:23pm 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:**

Wardan James Fuller

## **Also Attending:**

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

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

There were no additions to the agenda.

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

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

***Motion approved.***

## **5. Approval of 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 COTW Meeting held February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026.*

***Motion approved.***

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

The CAO informed Council that Sherbrooke Village was invited to apply for grants to organizations and that the deadline was February 17<sup>th</sup> at 4pm.

## **7. Correspondence:**

- a. Letter from Robin MacDougall regarding Childcare Facility

*On the motion of Councillor Tibbo and seconded by Councillor Beaver, Council requested staff to provide recommendations to Council.*

**Recommendation adopted.**

- b. Letter from Christopher McCreery, MVO, Secretary of the Order of Nova Scotia regarding Call for Nominations to the Order of Nova Scotia.
  - Deputy Warden Malloy asked that Council members take note of this information and share it with residents as needed.

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

- a. Staff Report – Volunteer & First Responder & Healthcare Appreciation Event
  - Please see the agenda/package for the staff report.

*On recommendation of Councillor Tibbo seconded by Councillor Beaver, Council agreed to combine the Volunteer Appreciation Event, First Responder Event and the Healthcare Appreciation Event into one Community Heroes Appreciation Event.*

**Recommendation adopted.**

*Mallory Tibbo left the meeting at 5:32pm*

## **9. In-Camera: Contract Negotiations and Personnel Matters**

*On motion of Councillor Tibbo seconded by O'Connell, Council agree to move In-Camera for Contract Negotiations and Personnel Matters at 5:33pm.*

**Motion approved.**

*On motion of Councillor Tibbo seconded by Councillor Beaver, Council agree to reconvene to regular session at 6:29pm.*

**Motion approved.**

## **Adjournment**

*On motion of Deputy Warden Malloy there being no further matters of business, Council adjourned at 6:30pm.*

**Motion approved.**

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Recorded By  
Janelle Fleet, Interim Municipal Clerk

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Approved By  
Warden James Fuller

**From:** NSFM Communications <[communications@nsfm.ca](mailto:communications@nsfm.ca)>

**Sent:** February 24, 2026 3:28 PM

**Subject:** Membership Update: Bill 186 - Support for Fire Protection Services Act

Dear Members,

Minister Kim Masland recently introduced the *Support for Fire Protection Services Act* (Bill 186) on Monday, February 23, 2026: [Nova Scotia Legislature - Bill 186 Support for Fire Protection Services Act](#).

Under Bill 186, the Minister of Emergency Management will now have oversight for municipal fire services and set provincewide standards for fire services, firefighter training and certification, personal protective equipment, transition support for fire services that want to transition to a municipal model, and resources for fire protection service planning, delivery and reporting.

Bill 186 will also:

- Enable the creation of an Office of the Fire Commissioner;
- Require all regulated fire protection service training programs to be accredited; and,
- Require all municipalities to conduct a fire protection service review (at times and in the manner required by regulations)

A summary document outlining the key details of Bill 186 has been attached for your reference. The NSFM will continue to monitor and report the progress of Bill 186 throughout the Spring 2026 legislative session.

The NSFM applauds our membership for participating in difficult conversations about fire prevention services and voicing your opinions with the Province last week. Our membership offered insightful feedback for the Province on a variety of aspects related to fire prevention.

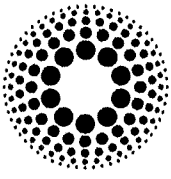
Thanks in large part to your engagement, the Province has a greater appreciation that there is a considerable amount of work to be done over the next three years, and the success of fire prevention hinges on positive collaboration with each and every municipality.

As always, we will continue to provide support to our members and advocate for opportunities to engage with the Province on fire prevention to ensure that this service is reliable, sustainable, and effective for all Nova Scotians.

**NOVA SCOTIA FEDERATION OF MUNICIPALITIES**

t +902.423.8331

[info@nsfm.ca](mailto:info@nsfm.ca)



## Summary of Bill 186 - Support for Fire Protection Services Act

### Definition of “Fire Department”

- “Fire department” means an organization that provides fire protection services and:
  - Is operated by a municipality
  - Is registered by a municipality pursuant to s. 294 of the *Municipal Government Act*
  - Is designated as a fire department by the *Fire Safety Act* or the regulations under that Act

### Definition of “Firefighter”

- “Firefighter” means a person employed in, or appointed to, a fire department and assigned to undertake regulated fire protection services, and includes paid, paid-on-call and volunteer personnel and a fire chief

### Municipal Requirements Under the Act

- A municipality and a fire protection service provider **shall**, at times and in the manner required by regulations, conduct a fire protection service review to determine its fire protection service level

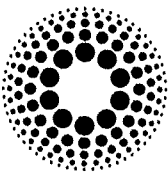
### Minister of Emergency Management

The Minister of Emergency Management **shall**:

- Provide oversight of the administration and delivery of fire protection services
- Provide oversight of a municipally led fire protection service model, if one is in place, for fire protection service providers
- Support the delivery of firefighter training and certification
- Encourage regional co-operation, coordination, and resource sharing in fire protection service delivery, both within and outside the Province
- Support the establishment and operation of the Office of the Fire Commissioner
- The Minister shall designate a Fire Commissioner and one or more deputy fire commissioners to perform the duties and functions, and exercise the powers and authorities associated with the Act

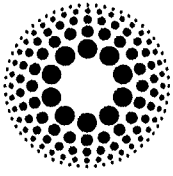
The Minister of Emergency Management **may**:

- Delegate any power or responsibility of the Minister under this Act to a person or a class of persons
- Appoint, in accordance with the Civil Service Act, such persons as are necessary for the administration and enforcement of this Act, the regulations and the standards



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designate one or more deputy fire commissioners to act in the place of the Fire Commissioner in the Fire Commissioner's absence or incapacity or where the office of the Fire Commissioner is vacant</li> <li>• Enter into agreements with the Government of Canada, the government of a province of Canada or a municipality respecting fire protection services and the development of fire protection service plans</li> <li>• Authorize the Fire Commissioner, through the Office of the Fire Commissioner, to operate co-operatively with another body to share services or resources with the Government of Canada, the government of a province of Canada or a municipality, or to enter into agreements to provide services or resources for a fee</li> <li>• Enter into agreements with the Government of Canada and the Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia for the administration and payment of compensation benefits to persons engaged in fire protection services</li> <li>• Acquire, by purchase or lease, real and personal property within or outside of the Province for a purpose related to fire protection services</li> </ul>
<p>The Minister of Emergency Management <b>may</b> make regulations:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prescribing services as fire protection services</li> <li>• Prescribing regulated fire protection services</li> <li>• Prescribing, adopting or modifying a standard</li> <li>• Respecting the powers, functions and duties of the Fire Commission, deputy fire commissioners and provincial inspectors</li> <li>• Respecting the accreditation of regulated fire protection service training programs, including the application process, renewal and terms and conditions for such accreditation</li> <li>• Respecting the recognition of an accreditation of a fire protection service training program by an accreditation body</li> <li>• Respecting the Fire Commissioner's approval of regulated fire protection service training courses</li> <li>• Establishing an advisory board and its membership</li> <li>• Respecting a fire protection service review</li> <li>• prescribing anything that, by this Act, is to be prescribed or is to be determined or regulated by the regulations</li> <li>• Defining any word or expression used but not defined in this Act</li> <li>• Further defining any word or expression defined in this Act</li> <li>• Respecting any matter or thing the Minister considers necessary or advisable to carry out effectively the intent and purpose of this Act</li> </ul>

<b>Fire Commissioner</b>	
<p>The Fire Commissioner <b>shall</b>:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervise and be responsible for all matters relating to the work, conduct and administration of the Office of the Fire Commissioner</li> </ul>

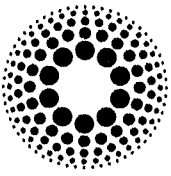


	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise such other powers and perform such duties as are assigned to the Fire Commissioner</li> <li>• Submit to the Minister in each year a detailed report on the activities of the Office of the Fire Commissioner</li> <li>• Supervise the Fire Marshal designated under the <i>Fire Safety Act</i> and the Office of the Fire Marshal</li> </ul>
<p>The Fire Commissioner <b>may:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote, encourage and co-operate with any body or person interested in developing and promoting the principles and practices of fire protection services</li> <li>• Advise persons or organizations interested in developing or promoting the principles and practices of fire protection services, emergency services and related communication systems, and the delivery of those services and systems</li> <li>• Require such reports as the Fire Commissioner considers necessary from             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A municipality or a group of municipalities</li> <li>○ A person authorized or required under this Act to inspect, investigate, or examine fire protection services</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Make recommendations to the Minister respecting proposed standards or regulations or any other fire protection service matter</li> <li>• Develop guidelines respecting fire protection services for fire protection service providers or the public</li> <li>• Promote regional, provincial and interprovincial collaboration</li> <li>• Oversee, develop, approve or deliver regulated fire protection service training courses or programs</li> <li>• Establish or recognize regions of the Province or groups of municipalities for the joint delivery of regulated fire protection services</li> </ul>

### Accredited Fire Protection Service Training Programs

- No person shall operate or allow the operation of a regulated fire protection service training program unless the program is an accredited fire protection service training program
- The Fire Commissioner **shall** refuse to issue, recognize or renew an accreditation, or may revoke or suspend an accreditation, or the recognition of an accreditation, if the Fire Commissioner has reason to believe that the accredited fire protection service training program no longer meets the criteria prescribed by the regulations or has failed to comply with this Act, the regulations or a standard, or for other just cause
  - Where the Fire Commissioner issues a refusal, the Fire Commissioner **shall** provide written reasons for such refusal, suspension or revocation to the applicant or person operating the accredited fire protection service training program
- This section of the Act (s.10) comes into force on such a day as the Governor in Council orders and declares by proclamation

### Penalties



- A person who fails to comply with this Act or the regulations is guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction
  - In the case of an individual, to a fine not exceeding \$10,000 or to imprisonment of not more than 6 months, or both
  - In the case of a corporation, to a fine not exceeding \$100,000

From: NSFM Communications <[communications@nsfm.ca](mailto:communications@nsfm.ca)>  
Sent: February 24, 2026 11:30 AM  
Subject: NS Provincial Budget 2026–27

Dear Members,

The Department of Municipal Affairs has provided the attached letter to a number of municipalities outlining provincial program changes associated with Budget 2026–27.

The letter indicates that the following programs will conclude in 2026–27:

- Flood Risk Infrastructure Investment Program (FRIIP)
- Provincial Capital Assistance Program (PCAP)
- Municipal Innovation Program (MIP)
- Growth & Renewal for Infrastructure Development (GRID)

We recognize the significance of these changes. NSFM is working closely with the Province to share municipal concerns and will continue to keep members informed as discussions progress.

NSFM staff are preparing a briefing for distribution later today that will provide additional details and budget-related information.

If you have immediate questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

NOVA SCOTIA FEDERATION OF MUNICIPALITIES

t +902.423.8331

[info@nsfm.ca](mailto:info@nsfm.ca)

February 24, 2025

To Mayors, Wardens, Village Chairs:

Yesterday, February 23, the Government of Nova Scotia released Budget 2026-27 - Defending Nova Scotia (<https://novascotia.ca/budget>).

Over the past five years, Government has made significant investments in programs and services to improve healthcare, strengthen our communities and support those who need it most.

In the face of continuing global uncertainty and slower revenue growth, we need to manage expenses carefully. Government is undertaking a number of measures including reducing the size of the civil service by 5%, reducing the size of the broader public service by 3% and reducing Government operating costs. We have also made the difficult decision to reduce discretionary grants.

For the Department of Municipal Affairs, the following programs will end:

- Flood Risk Infrastructure Investment Program (FRIIP)
- Provincial Capital Assistance Program (PCAP)
- Municipal Innovation Program (MIP)
- Growth & Renewal for Infrastructure Development (GRID)

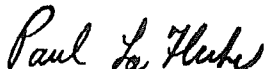
Since 2021, this Government has committed nearly \$500 million to municipalities to support critical projects such as drinking water, wastewater, disaster mitigation, accessibility, and transit. Today, the Department continues to support more than 250 active projects in communities across the province, bringing real value and ongoing benefits to municipalities.

I appreciate this may be concerning and I want you to know we continue to be focused on working with municipalities to drive growth.

Many of the projects that would have been eligible under these provincial grant programs will also be eligible for consideration under other programs.

As well, these program changes do not affect funding agreements in place for previous fiscal years. Should you have questions, I encourage you to contact Hardy Stuckless, Executive Director, at [hardy.stuckless@novascotia.ca](mailto:hardy.stuckless@novascotia.ca) for further information.

Sincerely,



Paul LaFleche  
Deputy Minister

c: Chief Administrative Officers  
Village Clerk Treasurers  
Juanita Spencer, NSFM  
Jeff Sunderland, AMANS

## Healthcare Worker Appreciation

Department of Community Development & Recreation

### SUMMARY

The Municipality received \$14,000 from the Office of Health Care Professionals Recruitment Community Fund to provide monthly healthy snacks for staff at St. Mary's Memorial Hospital, High-Crest Nursing Home, and Guysborough County Home Support Agency. A request for proposals was issued, and three submissions were received. After evaluating cost, menu quality, dietary accommodations, capacity, and logistics/delivery, staff recommend awarding the catering contract to the St. Mary's District Lion's Club for monthly snacks at a maximum cost of \$9,072, with remaining funds allocated to the appreciation event.

### BACKGROUND

The Municipality received \$14,000 in funding from the Office of Health Care Professionals Recruitment Community Fund to provide monthly healthy snacks to staff of the St. Mary's Memorial Hospital, High-Crest Nursing Home and Guysborough County Home Support Agency and to host an appreciation event. Staff issued a request for proposals to local qualified organizations for these services.

On February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Committee of the Whole adopted a recommendation to combine the Volunteer Appreciation Event, First Responder Event and the Healthcare Appreciation Event into one Community Hero Appreciation Event. This recommendation will be considered by Council on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

### CONSIDERATIONS

Three catering proposals were received. Staff evaluated each based on cost, menu quality, dietary accommodations, capacity, and logistics/delivery. It is recommended to approve the selection of the St. Mary's District Lion's Club to provide catering services for monthly snacks, at a maximum cost of \$9,072, and to allocate any remaining funds toward the 2026–27 Community Hero Appreciation Event.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

*Recommend that Municipal Council approve the selection of the St. Mary's District Lion's Club to provide catering services for the provision of monthly snacks, at a maximum cost of \$9,072 for the term of March 2026 to February 2027, with funding to be provided from the Office of Health Care Professionals Recruitment Fund received by the Municipality.*

## 2026-2027 General Government Grants

### SUMMARY/BACKGROUND

Annually, as part of the Municipal Operating Budget deliberations, Council reviews applications submitted (due February 17<sup>th</sup>) for Grants to Organizations in accordance with the *General Government Grants Policy*.

The policy provides direction on three types of grants which Council can provide to eligible recipients.

1. District Grants
2. Grants to Organizations (GTO)
3. School Scholarships

All three grant categories are funded through the Municipal Operating Budget. In 2025 -2026 the total budget for General Government Grants was \$45,000 (District Grant \$22,000, GTO \$20,000, and Scholarships \$3,000).

As per the policy the total amount granted over all three categories cannot exceed 1.5% of the Municipal Operating Budget. Based on last year's operating budget the total grants from all three categories cannot exceed \$61,500.

### DISTRICT GRANTS

Each Municipal Councillor will have an equal amount of funds per district to be allocated at their discretion in accordance with the policy throughout the fiscal year. In 2025-2026 each district was allotted \$4,400 (5 districts), totaling \$22,000.

Below are options for the 2026-2027 district grant funding allotments.

<b>Total District Grant Funding Options</b>	<b>Per District - 5</b>
\$30,000	\$6,000 per district
\$27,000	\$5,400 per district
\$25,000	\$5,000 per district
\$23,500	\$4,700 per district
\$22,000	\$4,400 per district
\$20,000	\$3,800 per district
\$18,000	\$3,600 per district

Municipal District Grants must comply with section 6.1 of the policy as outlined below:

6.1 Municipal District Grants

6.1.1 A demonstrated need must be shown to exist and shall be the deciding factor for approval.

6.1.2 Grants are meant to be of a specific nature and shall not be construed as being annual operating funds.

6.1.3 Funds are not to be used for any personal gain or to benefit for any commercial or private enterprise.

6.1.4 Community Centers and Religious Organizations are not eligible unless for a specific event or purpose benefiting residents of the Municipality.

6.1.5 Municipal District Grants are awarded throughout the fiscal year at the discretion of the district’s municipal councillor while complying with this policy.

6.1.6 District grant eligibility components; Not for Profit Organizations/Community Groups must be within the Municipality or serve/benefit residents within the Municipality, examples include but are not limited to; Students (St. Mary’s Education Centre/Academy), sport groups, Provincial/National recognition, community groups, youth groups.

**GRANTS TO ORGANIZATIONS**

The following organizations have submitted applications for grants to organizations. Applications must comply with the municipal *General Government Grant Policy*.

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Amount Requested</b>	<b>Reason for Grant Request</b>
Sherbrooke Village	\$2,000	Funding is requested to support Sherbrooke Village’s Christmas Opening Ceremonies.
East River St Mary’s Vol Fire Dept	\$1,000	Funding is requested to fund lighting improvements, insulation upgrades and roof repairs to the Fire Department building.
St. Mary’s District Lions Club	\$3,000	Replace aging wood tables, need to purchase 25-30 plastic tables at a cost of \$6,000. Club is also in the process of replacing their 22-year-old asphalt shingled roof with galvanized steel.
St. Mary’s Trail Association	\$10,000	Completing sections of the trail as outlined in the application. Area includes “sons of Martha” monument, east to Denver, East Branch St. Mary’s River (Gunn’s Hole) Approximately 5kms.
St. Mary’s Arts Connection Council	\$1,500	Event #1 - 7 <sup>th</sup> Annual Fright Night event, keeping it accessible, free and inviting for all. Event #2 – Sherbrooke Pride; is a volunteer lead, multi day event promoting inclusion, diversity & belonging. Event features live entertainment, family friendly programming and a designated safe space area. Events would ensure an accessible event, and support event infrastructure and safety needs including accessibility measures, first aid, supplies, volunteer coordination materials & support, signage and waste management.
Goshen Community & Recreation Centre	\$2,500	Requesting funding to start a food pantry. The organization has been approached by residents asking if they could have a food bank in the centre. The organization are turning one of the rooms on site into a food pantry which would require some renovations such as removing a sink, adding shelving and installing a new lock. The funds would be used to purchase a new refrigerator, shelving units, new lock and food to start.
<b>Total Requested</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	

Grants to Organizations must comply with section 6.2 of the policy as outlined below:

#### 6.2 Grants to Organizations

6.2.1 A demonstrated need must be shown to exist and shall be the deciding factor for approval. Need shall be defined as a situation where applicant does not have sufficient resources to carry out a particular activity, task or service to the community.

6.2.2 Grants are meant to be of a specific nature and shall not be construed as being a regular or an annual occurrence.

6.2.3 Any one group or project cannot exceed funding of more than 50% of the total funds allocated in the Grants to Organizations category.

6.2.4 Funds are not to be used for any personal gain or commercial or private enterprise.

6.2.5 Grants to Organizations focus on capital projects. Program costs are eligible as long as they are not ordinary operating costs of an organization.

6.2.6 The Grants to Organizations category are awarded by motion of Council annually at the Annual General Meeting of Council.

6.2.7 Organizations must be active with registry of joint stocks - or – provide evidence of incorporation under the Societies Act of Nova Scotia. Applicants must identify how long the applicant organization has existed, or if co-sponsored similar proof from the co-sponsoring organization is required.

6.2.8 Organization must be located within the Municipality or serve/benefit residents of the Municipality.

6.2.9 There is a minimum total project of \$1,000 for the applicant with the potential to receive up to 50% funding from the Municipality.

### **CONSIDERATIONS FOR GENERAL GOVERNMENT GRANTS**

Based on the current *General Government Grant Policy* all applications are eligible to receive a general government grant. It is at council's discretion the monetary amount they choose to award.

### **SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS**

As per the *General Government Grant Policy* each year the Municipality provides a grant to the St Mary's Academy for scholarships to students who are residents of the Municipality graduating grade 12 and planning to further their post-secondary education. The annual grant amount is \$3,000; this amount has remained the same over the past number of years.

### **STAFF DIRECTION - TOTAL AMOUNT GRANTED FOR 2024/2025**

At this point in the budget deliberations for 2026-2027 Municipal staff only require direction to take the information from this COTW onto the AGM, where a formal motion will be made.

## Declaration of Municipal Land as Surplus

### SUMMARY

An approach is proposed to encourage the development of a permanent pharmacy within the municipality by offering municipal property as an incentive, using a competitive bidding process. Proceeding with this strategy requires a Council declaration that the property is no longer required for municipal purposes.

### BACKGROUND

In May 2025, the municipality purchased the former House of Jade property at 8164 Highway 7, Sherbrooke, Property Identification (PID) 37501871, Assessment Account Number (AAN) 04147405, as a component of the housing strategy.

The Shoppers Drug Mart location at 14 Main Street, Sherbrooke, has been closed since July 2025. To ensure consistent access to essential care, prescription pickup was initially made available at the municipal office while the modular facility was put in place in the municipal parking lot adjacent to 14 Main Street. The modular facility provides prescriptions and a few key medical supplies, but does not provide the same footprint as the 14 Main location. Having a local pharmacy is a key health and safety requirement for the municipality.

The municipal real property at 8164 Highway 7 may be suitable for a permanent pharmacy location.

The Municipal Government Act (MGA), Section 57, enables the municipality to encourage the establishment, development and expansion of new and existing businesses in and around the municipality. However, the municipality cannot grant tax concessions or other forms of direct financial assistance to businesses or industry.

Section 50(5)(b) of the MGA, grants the municipality the authority to sell property at market value when the property is no longer required for the purposes of the municipality. MGA Section 51(1) authorizes the municipality to sell property at a price less than market value for any purpose that the Council considers beneficial to the municipality, based on a resolution passed by at least a two thirds majority of the Council present and voting. To sell property at more than \$10,000 less than market value, Council must first hold a public hearing respecting the sale, and notice of the public hearing must be given at least 14 days before the date of the public hearing.

The municipality's Disposal of Real Property policy permits Council, by motion, to designate as surplus any real property which:

- i. Is determined to be no longer required for the use or purposes of the municipality, or for use by the public or inhabitants of the municipality;
- ii. Is no longer in the best interest of the municipality to retain ownership; or
- iii. May expose the municipality to liability or risk by retaining the real property.

As per the Disposal of Real Property policy, municipally-owned real property deemed surplus by motion of Council is to be disposed of in a fair and impartial manner, which considers the best economic return to the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's, balanced with economic and community development opportunities.

## CONSIDERATIONS

To promote the re-establishment of a permanent pharmacy location, Council may wish to conduct a transparent procurement process, inviting developers to construct a pharmacy within the municipality, and offering to sell the property at 8164 Highway 7 to the successful proponent as an incentive. The successful submission would be selected based on the proposal that is most beneficial to the municipality, including both economic and community development considerations.

To proceed with this strategy, Council would first need to declare that the 8164 Highway 7 property is no longer required for the purposes of the municipality, enabling it to be sold. This would enable a transparent procurement process to be initiated.

The property at 8164 Highway 7 was purchased with the intention of creating housing, however the emergent need for a permanent pharmacy location must also be considered. The proposed approach would enable interested developers to propose options, which could include construction of a pharmacy at the 8164 Highway 7 location, or another location. The developers would be invited to propose a location and approach for construction of a pharmacy, as well as a proposed use for the 8164 Highway 7 location, which could include housing. Pending Council declaring the property surplus, a competitive procurement process is anticipated to be initiated this spring.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommend Council declare the property at 8164 Highway 7, PID 37501871, AAN 04147405, to be no longer required for the purposes of the municipality.

## Fire Protection Services Act – Bill 186

### SUMMARY

The municipality is required under Section 293 of the Municipal Government Act to ensure fire services are maintained and provided. On Monday, February 23, 2026, Bill 186, the Support for Fire Protection Services Act, was introduced in the Legislature. This Bill will be accompanied by Regulations, which together will establish foundational changes to Fire Services governance, including provincewide standards as well as firefighter training and certification requirements.

This legislation represents the most significant reform to municipal fire services in decades, and will have a substantial impact on municipal fire service policy and service delivery within the municipality. Providing informed recommendations to Council regarding the municipality's implementation of these changes will be a key activity in 2026/27. This work will initiate a significant multi-year change management initiative impacting the municipality's eight existing Volunteer Fire Departments.

The provision of dry hydrants is one component of the municipality's Fire Services Administration Policy. Costs to design and install dry hydrants have become excessive, while drought conditions have rendered some existing dry hydrants unusable. Given that implementation of the Support for Fire Protection Services Act will necessitate comprehensive revisions to the municipality's Fire Services Administration Policy, it is recommended that further investment in dry hydrants be paused and considered as part of the broader policy and governance review.

### BACKGROUND

The Fire Services Administration Policy outlines the process for fire departments to request new dry hydrants. Subject to criteria outlined in the policy, available budget and approval by Council, those with highest need are installed. Ongoing maintenance is the responsibility of the fire departments. Each year, any unspent funding budgeted for dry hydrants is returned to the capital reserve. The amount of funding allocated annually to dry hydrants is at Council's discretion.

The 2025/26 budget includes \$12,500 for design and installation of each of two outstanding dry hydrant requests, for Sea Shore and Liscomb Volunteer Fire Department, for a total of \$25,000. The Sea Shore Volunteer Fire Department recently advised that the location selected for the dry hydrant is no longer suitable for the landowner. The location in Liscomb is still available.

The most recent dry hydrant designs were obtained by the municipality over five years ago. A quote of \$10,350 plus HST for design and construction oversight for the Liscomb dry hydrant was provided by Strait Engineering in January 2026. This cost is higher than had been obtained in the past, and would utilize the majority of the funds budgeted for both design and construction combined.

## CONSIDERATIONS

Due to the high quoted cost of design, further investigation was undertaken prior to requesting Council approval to proceed. Consultation with the Municipality of the District of Guysborough identified that the latest estimate to install a dry hydrant was \$54,000. Including the design cost, the total cost per dry hydrant would be \$65,000, without including staff time to arrange design and oversee installation. This is in comparison to a budget of \$12,500 for design and installation, based on the most recent dry hydrant costs.

In addition to rising costs, recent drought conditions have made some dry hydrants ineffective due to lowering water levels. Requests have been made for each of the municipality's Fire Departments to report on the status of their existing dry hydrants; a limited number of Fire Departments have responded to repeated requests for information.

In lieu of installing cost-prohibitive dry hydrants, MODG has moved to a new approach of providing water access in the form of appropriate permits (working-within-road right-of-way permits) and creating driveways close to water sources so that fire departments can easily reach a source of water with onboard suction hoses. This approach may also be suitable for St. Mary's.

On Monday, February 23, 2026, Bill 186, the Support for Fire Protection Services Act, was introduced in the legislature. This Bill will be accompanied by Regulations which will outline a number of new requirements for municipalities with respect to Fire Services. Implementation of the Support for Fire Protection Services Act will necessitate comprehensive revisions to the municipality's Fire Services Administration Policy.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommend that due to excessive costs of installing dry hydrants combined with ineffective functionality, investment in dry hydrants be paused, and considered as part of the broader policy and governance review associated with implementing the Support for Fire Protection Services Act.

## Federations of Canadian Municipalities and Nova Scotia Federations of Municipalities Conferences

### SUMMARY

Council of the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's is being asked to consider attendance at the following upcoming municipal conferences:

- The Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) **Spring Conference** in Yarmouth from April 29 to May 1, 2026
- The NSFM **Fall Conference** (typically held in Halifax, Nova Scotia in November 2026)
- The national Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) conference in Edmonton from June 4 to June 7, 2026.

Should Council wish to send representatives to the NSFM Spring Conference, it is proposed that two (2) members of Council attend, subject to Council's decision. Council must also determine attendance for the NSFM Fall Conference and whether it wishes to send representatives to the FCM conference in Edmonton.

### BACKGROUND

The Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) Spring Conference is an annual event that brings together municipal leaders from across Nova Scotia to discuss key issues, share best practices, and engage in policy discussions relevant to local governance. It provides valuable networking opportunities and direct access to provincial decision-makers.

NSFM also hosts a Fall Conference, typically held in Halifax, which offers additional opportunities for relationship-building, strategic planning, and continued advocacy work. Attendance at both conferences strengthens the Municipality's voice within provincial municipal discussions.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Annual Conference (June 4–7, 2026) in Edmonton, Alberta is a national gathering of municipal officials from across Canada, offering educational sessions, advocacy meetings, and networking opportunities that support professional development and exposure to innovative municipal practices.

The Municipality of the District of St. Mary's Mileage/Expense Policy outlines provisions regarding eligible travel and related expenses. The policy permits attendance at the spring NSFM workshop by the Warden or designate and one additional councillor, plus the CAO, providing an adequate budget and by motion of Council.

The NSFM fall conference may be attended by all Council members plus the CAO, providing adequate annual operating budget. The FCM annual meeting may be attended by the Warden or designate plus



one or two additional councillors plus the CAO annually, providing adequate budget and by motion of council. Each council member is encouraged to attend one FCM during their elected term.

## CONSIDERATIONS

**Representation of St. Mary's:** Attendance at the NSFM Spring and Fall Conferences ensures the Municipality is represented in provincial discussions. Sending two members to the Spring Conference allows for appropriate participation. Council may also determine representation for the Fall Conference. Attendance at FCM ensures national-level engagement.

**Budget Implications:** Costs will include registration, travel, accommodations, and meals. The NSFM Spring Conference in Yarmouth and the NSFM Fall Conference in Halifax represent lower-cost options due to reduced travel requirements. The FCM Conference in Edmonton will require a higher budget allocation because of air travel and related expenses.

**Strategic Value:** NSFM Conferences focus on provincial priorities and municipal legislation impacting Nova Scotia communities. The FCM Conference provides a national perspective and exposure to broader municipal trends and federal advocacy.

**Council Availability:** Members must consider scheduling and availability when deciding whether to attend each conference.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *Recommend that the Warden, Deputy Warden and CAO be approved to attend the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities Spring Conference in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia from April 29 to May 1, 2026.*
2. *Recommend that all five (5) members of Council plus the CAO be approved to attend the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities Fall Conference in November 2026, with attendance to be confirmed pending announcement of conference details.*
3. *Recommend Council confirm attendance for the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Conference in Edmonton, Alberta from June 4 to June 7, 2026.*

## Old Road Hill Multi-Use Trail Design Award

### Department of Community Development & Recreation

#### SUMMARY

On September 9, 2024, Council accepted the Active St. Mary's – An Active Transportation Plan to guide long-term planning and prioritization of active transportation initiatives. The Plan was informed by extensive public engagement conducted between September and December 2023, which identified safety, accessibility, connectivity, and improved amenities as key community priorities. One of the Plan's recommended projects is a separated multi-use pathway along Old Road Hill in Sherbrooke to provide a safe connection between St. Mary's Education Centre/Academy, Stonewall Park, the RecPlex, and Highway 7. The 2025/26 Capital Budget includes funding to advance this initiative, and the Municipality has secured \$30,000 through the Province's Connect2 Program (75% funding). Following a Request for Proposals issued in December 2025, seven submissions were received. Staff recommend Strait Engineering Limited based on their competitive pricing, relevant municipal experience, local knowledge, and demonstrated capacity to deliver the required design, technical specifications, cost estimates, permitting support, and construction-ready drawings within an achievable timeline.

#### BACKGROUND

On September 9, 2024, Council accepted the Active St. Mary's - An Active Transportation Plan for the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's for long-term planning and prioritization. The plan can be found [here](#).

Between September and December 2023, the project team conducted extensive public engagement to gather input from St. Mary's residents and stakeholders. Activities included a project website (175 visits, 90 unique users), stakeholder interviews (10 participants), council updates, Take Home Activity Kits (16 returned), four Walk and Roll Tours (4 participants), an online mapping tool (199 users, 64 comments), and a youth workshop at St. Mary's Education Centre/Academy (32 participants). These varied methods ensured feedback was collected from a broad range of community members to inform the project.

The engagement phase generated a wide range of thematic and location-based feedback from the community. Key priorities identified included accessibility, safety, amenities, and education/programming. Participants emphasized the need for wider, well-maintained routes, traffic calming, improved signage and lighting, bicycle parking, wayfinding, and programs to support safe active transportation. The St. Mary's River was highlighted as a key community asset, with suggestions for enhanced access, equipment rentals, programming, and promotion. Participants also noted barriers such as traffic, distance between destinations, lack of connectivity, limited resources, physical limitations, and seasonal challenges, all of which will inform planning decisions.

The Plan proposes a separated multi-use pathway along Old Road Hill in Sherbrooke to provide a safe route for students and connect key community destinations, including St. Mary's Education Centre/Academy, Stonewall Park, and the RecPlex. The approved 2025/26 capital budget includes \$40,000 to conduct a feasibility study for the trail.

The Municipality issued a Request for Proposals on December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025, with a deadline to submit proposals by January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

The following deliverables were required for each submission:

1. **Site Investigation & Data Collection:** Conduct a legal and topographical survey of the project limits, including right-of-way boundaries, existing features, utilities, structures, and elevations.
2. **Preliminary Conceptual Design:** Develop an innovative asphalt pathway design with pedestrian crossings, signage, rest areas, landscaping, and visual representations, accompanied by a narrative explaining design rationale and user experience.
3. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Engage Council, community members, and relevant agencies through workshops or presentations, documenting feedback and its influence on the design.
4. **Engineering & Technical Specifications:** Prepare detailed specifications covering grading, drainage, lighting, accessibility, safety, slope stabilization, flood mitigation, and environmental requirements, including design drawings and cross-sections.
5. **Integration with Infrastructure & Adjacent Properties:** Ensure seamless connection to existing and future roadways, sidewalks, and utilities, coordinating with authorities and stakeholders.
6. **Materials & Sustainability:** Recommend durable and sustainable materials and incorporate sustainable design practices for long-term performance.
7. **Cost Estimation & Phasing:** Provide a detailed construction cost estimate and propose phased construction aligned with grant funding.
8. **Permitting & Compliance:** Identify required easements and permits, and ensure compliance with private, municipal, provincial, and federal regulations.
9. **Construction Ready Drawings:** Issued for Construction (IFC) drawings and specifications are required and shall be included as part of the project deliverables.
10. **Final Design Package:** Submit a complete design package in digital (PDF, AutoCAD-compatible) and three hard copies, including conceptual designs, engineering specifications, cost estimates, and supporting documentation for permits and compliance.

Seven proposals were received.

## CONSIDERATIONS

**Safety & Accessibility:** the Old Road Hill Multi-Use Trail would provide a separated route for pedestrians and cyclists. A vegetative buffer would improve safety and manage stormwater.

**Connectivity:** the Old Road Hill Multi-Use Trail would link key destinations including St. Mary's Education Centre/Academy, Stonewall Park, and the St. Mary's RecPlex with Highway 7.

**Regulatory Requirements:** the Provincial Department of Public Works has written a letter of support for this project and stated The Nova Scotia Department of Public Works is committed to working with the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's to improve access to Active Transportation within the community of Sherbrooke and that their Department staff will continue to work with the Municipality to review the proposed site, determine its viability and what permits and approvals will be required.

# Staff Report



**Cost & Funding:** the Municipality has received \$30,000 from the Provincial Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism & Heritage's Connect2 Program for this project. The program funds 75% of the total project cost, with the Municipality responsible for contributing the remaining 25%.

**Strait Engineering Limited (SEL)** is recommended for the Old Road Hill Multi-Use Trail Design based on their competitive pricing and strong value for project deliverables. As a local firm with experience completing similar projects for nearby municipalities, they have a solid understanding of the regional context, the technical capacity to deliver the work, and a clear, achievable timeline aligned with project goals. SEL has also included an optional component to provide a detailed electrical design for the project at an estimated cost of \$8,000. Staff will follow up with SEL to obtain a finalized quote and will return to Council with a recommendation regarding whether to proceed with this additional work.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

*Recommend that Council award the Old Road Hill Multi-Use Trail Design contract to Strait Engineering Limited in the amount of \$25,145.00 (plus applicable taxes), with \$6,286.25 plus applicable taxes to be funded through the approved 2026 Capital Budget and \$18,858.75 plus applicable taxes from the Connect2 funding received from the Province of Nova Scotia.*