

**Fire Committee Meeting
February 24, 2026
Town Council Chambers**

Present

Councillor D. Roberts, Chair
Councillor J. Pelly
B. (William) Chisholm, Fire Chief, AVFD
R. Kell, AVFD
R. MacPherson, AVFD
B. Landry, AVFD
S. Cameron, Mayor

Also Present

M. Fougere, Municipal Clerk
K. MacInnis, Director of Community Development

Regrets:

D. MacDonald, AVFD

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. and welcomed the Committee members.

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion: To approve the agenda as presented.

Moved by: Bill Chisholm

Seconded by: Councillor Juanita Pelly

Motion carried.

3. Acceptance of Minutes

A correction was noted on page 3 under New Business to replace “BA’s” with “Bottles” in reference to equipment under the Emergency Providers Fund.

The Fire Committee minutes of February 11, 2025, were accepted as amended.

4. Business Arising from the Minutes

Some discussion took place on items that were brought up at the last meeting held on February 11, 2025.

Civic Addressing By-law:

B. Chisholm raised a question arising from discussion at the previous meeting.

Fire Hydrants:

Mayor Cameron raised questions regarding fire hydrants. B. Landry provided comments. Discussion included Town-owned and private hydrants.

B. Chisholm noted ongoing concerns related to private hydrants.

Hydrant Reporting:

Mayor Cameron sought clarification regarding reporting requirements under the Fire Hydrant By-law. K. MacInnis advised that staff could follow up and coordinate with Darlene Halfpenny, Engineering Administrative Assistant regarding reports required under the bylaw.

The Mayor further noted that for District 2, where hydrants are located in County areas, reports are not received from the County. Ms. MacInnis will follow up with Ms. Halfpenny.

Training Centre:

R. MacPherson spoke regarding the Training Centre. Chair, Councillor D. Roberts, noted that the item will be deferred to the end of the meeting.

5. New Business

5.1 Capital Purchase Request: Hydrant Assist Shut Off

Bill Landry spoke to this item, noting it is a four-way hydrant valve intended to improve fire suppression operations by allowing additional pumper trucks to connect without interruption or water loss.

K. MacInnis advised that operational savings within the 2025–2026 Fire Department budget are available, as funds originally intended for the purchase of wildland overalls were not utilized. As the hydrant assist shut-off exceeds \$5,000, she noted that the funding would need to be reallocated from the Operating Budget to the Capital Budget.

Motion:

That the Fire Committee recommend to Town Council that operational savings within the Fire Department's 2025–2026 Operating Budget be reallocated to the Capital Budget to approve and fund the purchase of a hydrant assist shut-off.

Moved by: Councillor Pelly

Seconded by: Mayor Cameron

Motion carried.

5.2 2026-2027 Budget Review

B. Landry presented the draft 2026–2027 Fire Department budget and reviewed previous budget allocations including previous approvals related to breathing apparatus (BA) equipment and air bottles. Clarification was provided that changes to equipment standards and lifespan requirements necessitate additional purchases.

Discussion took place regarding proposed capital and operating items, including additional BA units and air bottles, a battery-operated fan, and heat pumps for the truck bays. Members identified the BA units, air bottles, and battery-operated fan as priority items should full funding not be available. Heat pumps were identified as a lower priority item that could be deferred.

Mr. Landry advised that staffing changes have occurred due to retirements and noted that recruitment efforts are ongoing, with one new member currently onboarding. Councillor D. Roberts inquired about recruitment and public awareness initiatives.

Discussion followed regarding outreach opportunities during Fire Prevention Week and collaboration with regional fire associations.

R. MacPherson reviewed lifecycle standards for personal protective equipment, noting established replacement schedules for bunker gear, gloves, boots, and helmets. Mr. Landry further advised that Ladder Truck #3 is scheduled for inspection in October 2026 and will not require inspection during the upcoming fiscal year.

Discussion also took place regarding radios and pagers, with members noting efforts by AVFD personnel to rebuild and maintain pagers where possible to help reduce replacement costs.

5.3 Capital Requests Prioritization

K. MacInnis advised that staff requested direction from the Committee to prioritize capital requests should full funding not be available.

R. Kell and B. Landry identified breathing apparatus (BA) units, air bottles, and a battery-operated fan as high-priority items and advised that heat pumps for the truck bays could be deferred and ranked as a lower priority.

Mr. Landry further noted operational considerations related to new building construction and the need for additional air capacity due to the absence of standpipe systems in newer buildings.

Chair Councillor D. Roberts noted that the overall budget amount would remain unchanged but confirmed that the prioritization of capital items could be adjusted. K. MacInnis advised that the revised capital priorities would be forwarded to the Town's Corporate Services Department for further consideration.

Mr. Landry inquired whether the Fire Department could receive the full amount allocated within the existing budget line. Ms. MacInnis advised that the matter would be reviewed further and noted that staff would also explore potential provincial funding opportunities for the next fiscal year.

Motion: The Fire Committee recommend Town Council review the Fire Department's 2026–2027 Operating Budget as presented as part of Municipal Budget planning; and that Council review the Fire Department's requested Capital Budget items for consideration as part of the 2026–2027 budget process.

Moved by: Councillor Roberts

Seconded by: R. Kell

Motion carried.

5.4 Adopt Hydrant Communications

K. MacInnis advised that the Town has initiated communications regarding hydrant clearing and maintenance.

Clarification was provided that where hydrants are not maintained by residents, responsibility rests with the Town's Public Works Department. Ms. MacInnis sought direction from the Committee regarding whether additional public communication should be issued.

Members noted the importance of clear messaging to ensure hydrants are cleared safely using shovels rather than plows. Discussion also included whether hydrant clearing should be undertaken by Town staff. The Mayor suggested this could be incorporated into duties performed by temporary Public Works staff.

Ms. MacInnis will review this matter and report back to the Chair, Councillor Roberts.

5.5 Training Centre

B. Chisholm advised that he has been in communication with Mr. Blaise MacDonald, EMO regarding fire service training needs and provincial efforts to restructure services to improve fire protection across Nova Scotia.

Discussion included dispatch services and anticipated changes at the provincial level. Members noted that a committee is in place to review a regional training centre model, on which Mr. MacPherson serves as a representative.

It was further noted that provincial departments are examining municipal fire service models, with significant changes anticipated. Discussion referenced the role of Fire Services Association of Nova Scotia (FSANS) and collaboration among regional fire departments and chiefs.

Next Meeting will be Tuesday May 26 at 6:00 pm

4. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:49 PM