

Municipality of North Cowichan Committee of the Whole MINUTES

November 12, 2025, 5:00 p.m.

Municipal Hall - Council Chambers & Electronically

Members Present Mayor Rob Douglas
Councillor Mike Caljouw
Councillor Bruce Findlay
Councillor Becky Hogg
Councillor Chris Istace
Councillor Christopher Justice
Councillor Tek Manhas

Staff Present Ted Swabey, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)
George Farkas, General Manager, Planning, Development and Community Services
Amanda Young, Director, Planning and Building
Andrea Hainrich, Deputy Corporate Officer
Barb Floden, Manager, Communications and Public Engagement
Barry Davidson, Manager, Bylaw and Business Licensing Services
Chris Osborne, Manager, Planning
Christina Hovey, Project Planner
Clay Reitsma, Director, Engineering
David Conway, Director, Subdivision and Environmental Services
John Horn, Director, Social Planning and Protective Services
Manuela Herzig, Director, Information Technology and Business Solutions
Marla Laycock, Director, People and Culture
Michelle Miller, Manager, Asset Management
Ron French, Fire Chief
Shaun Mason, Director, Parks and Recreation
Shawn Cator, Director, Operations
Teri Vetter, Director, Financial Services
Tricia Mayea, Corporate Officer

1. CALL TO ORDER

There being a quorum present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the agenda be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

3.1 Minutes from the July 15, 2025 and October 7, 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting for adoption

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the minutes of the meeting held July 15, 2025 and October 7, 2025 be adopted, as circulated. CARRIED

4. PUBLIC INPUT ON AGENDA ITEMS

Council received public input from 5 members of the public regarding agenda items 7.1 and 7.2.

5. PRESENTATIONS AND DELEGATIONS

5.1 Delegations

5.1.1 Royal Canadian Legion Chemainus Duncan Branch #191

David Nielsen, David Scandrett and David Goddard of the Royal Canadian Legion Chemainus Duncan Branch presented to the Committee regarding the amalgamation of the two branches in January 2026.

5.1.2 Jim Dias, Request to Remedy the Large Project Fee

Jim Dias presented to the Committee on behalf of LeeAnne and Ken Nickell regarding the Large Project Fee to be imposed on a proposed OCP Amendment.

6. UNFINISHED AND POSTPONED BUSINESS

6.1 Analysis of the Large Project Surcharge for OCP Amendments

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council takes no further action regarding the proposed amendments to the Large Project Surcharge, thereby retaining the existing fee structure under "Fees and Charges Bylaw No. 3784."

(Opposed: Caljouw, Findlay, Manhas)

CARRIED

6.2 Bill 44 Compliance: OCP Amendment Bylaw 4040 for first and second readings

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole direct staff to amend draft Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 4040, 2025, to incorporate references to the latest BC stats population Housing projections and note the challenges in projecting such changes over the long-term. CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole direct staff to amend draft Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 4040, 2025, to remove section 25 of the draft bylaw, and refer to Agricultural Advisory Committee. CARRIED

7. STAFF REPORTS

7.1 2026 Grant-in-Aid

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council defer item (15) Community Land Trust application to the next meeting. CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council approve grant-in-aid amounts for 2026 as follows:

- (1) B.C. Forest Discovery Centre - BC Forest Museum \$25,000
- (2) Chemainus & District Chamber of Commerce \$30,000
- (3) Chemainus Valley Historical Society \$8,500
- (4) Cowichan Historical Society \$5,500
- (5) Duncan Cowichan Chamber of Commerce \$34,000
- (6) Cowichan Neighbourhood House Association \$38,600
- (7) Chemainus BIA. - Flower Baskets \$24,000
- (8) Chemainus Theatre Festival Society \$20,000
- (9) Chemainus Cemetery (St. Michael's and All Angels Church) \$1,000 to offset water and garbage fees CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council approve a grant-in-aid for 2026 for Chemainus Communities in Bloom \$11,500 (Opposed: Findlay)
CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council approve a grant-in-aid for 2026 for BC Conservation Foundation \$4,000 (Opposed: Findlay, Manhas)
CARRIED

Councillor Manhas recused himself from the meeting, declaring a conflict of interest in relation to Item (13) Clements Centre Society because his wife works for the Clements Centre Society, and left the meeting at 6:46 p.m.

The Committee discussed the grants-in-aid request for Item (13) Clements Center Society and tabled the item until after all the other grants-in-aid applications are considered.

Councillor Manhas returned to the meeting at 6:49 pm.

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council approve a grant-in-aid for 2026 for Cowichan Agricultural Society and Farmers' Institute \$7,000, to be taken from the Agricultural Reserve Fund. CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council approve a grant-in-aid for 2026 for Cowichan Family Caregivers Support Society \$2,500 CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council approve a grant-in-aid for 2026 for Cowichan Valley Youth Services \$7,500. CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council approve a grant-in-aid for 2026 for Foster Kritters Feral Cat Rescue Society \$1,500. CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council approve a grant-in-aid for 2026 for Cowichan - Bring Back Bluebirds \$2,000. (Opposed: Findlay)
CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council approve a grant-in-aid for 2026 for Nourish Cowichan Society \$5,000. CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council approve a grant-in-aid for 2026 Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society \$700. CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council approve a grant-in-aid for 2026 for Cowichan Historical Society \$3,000. CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council approve a grant-in-aid for 2026 for Chemainus Rotary Club \$700. (Opposed: Manhas)
CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council approve a grant-in-aid for 2026 for Cowichan Valley Arts Council \$1,000 CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council approve a grant-in-aid for 2026 for Maple Bay Community Association \$2,200. CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council approve a grant-in-aid for 2026 for Somenos Community Association \$10,000
(Opposed: Findlay, Hogg, Istace, Manhas)
DEFEATED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council approve a grant-in-aid for 2026 for Somenos Community Association \$5,000 (Opposed: Douglas, Caljouw)
CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council approve a grant-in-aid for 2026 for Vimy Community Club (Hall) \$3,000. CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council approve a grant-in-aid for 2026 for Cowichan Rugby Club \$5,000 CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council approve a grant-in-aid for 2026 for Community Circles Restorative Justice Society \$3,000.
(Opposed: Douglas, Caljouw, Findlay, Manhas)
DEFEATED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council approve a grant-in-aid for 2026 for Take-a-Hike Foundation \$1,500. (Opposed: Findlay, Manhas)
CARRIED

Councillor Manhas recused himself from the meeting, declaring a conflict of interest in relation to Item (13) Clements Centre Society because his wife works for the Clements Centre Society, and left the meeting at 7:26 p.m.

The Committee resumed consideration of the grant-in-aid request from Clements Center Society.

Councillor Manhas returned to the meeting at 7:27 pm.

The meeting recessed at 7:28 pm and reconvened at 7:34 pm.

7.2 2026 Budget Update

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That the Committee direct staff to prepare a report regarding reallocating the contribution to the Climate Action Energy Plan reserve fund for 2026 to fund wildfire preparedness initiatives, particularly in outfitting the fire department with needed resources for wildland fires and funding the development of a community wildfire preparedness strategy. (Opposed: Findlay, Manhas)
CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend to Council to reduce Council travel by 50% in the 2026 budget only. (Opposed: Findlay)
CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend to Council to Increase business license fees from \$100 to \$150 for the 2026 budget. CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend to Council to direct staff to research increasing building inspection fees relative to other jurisdictions. CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend to Council to direct staff to introduce a \$2.00 paper fee for utility bills starting in 2026. CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend to Council to direct staff to increase rental rates for municipally owned properties annually, where applicable. CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend to Council to direct staff to bring back a report detailing the costs and expected revenue generated from the hiring of a Digital Media Field Technician for \$95,000 and \$200,000 for software costs and implementation at the RCMP Detachment. CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend to Council to direct staff to include \$50,000 in the 2026 budget to conduct a procurement review. (Opposed; Justice) CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend to Council to direct staff to include \$130,000 in the 2026 budget for a FireSmart Coordinator. (Opposed: Calijouw, Hogg, Findlay, Manhas) DEFEATED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the following resolution be reconsidered:
THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend to Council to direct staff to include \$130,000 in the 2026 budget for a FireSmart Coordinator. (Opposed: Findlay, Manhas) CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council direct staff to prepare a report to include budgeting for the position for a FireSmart Coordinator and for a Community Wildfire Plan from the Climate Action and Energy Program. (Opposed: Findlay) CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council direct staff to increase the capital allocation for the Fire Department from \$120,000 to \$180,000 in the 2026 budget. CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee extend the meeting until 10:30 p.m. CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council direct staff to include \$100,000 in the 2026 budget for a live fire training building. CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council direct staff to increase the Fire Equipment reserve by \$325,000 in the 2026 budget. (Opposed: Findlay, Manhas)

CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council direct staff to include \$25,000 in the 2026 budget to conduct a business license review.

CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council direct staff to reallocate \$200,000 from the Richard's Trail parking lot capital project into a dedicated reserve preparing for turf replacement at Sherman Road soccer field in the 2026 budget.

CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council direct staff to include \$110,000 in the 2026 budget for a full-time carpenter.

(Opposed: Hogg)

CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council direct staff to include \$450,000 in the 2026 budget for the Maple Bay Rowing Club roof replacement, to be paid from the Growing Communities Fund.

(Opposed: Findlay, Manhas)

CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council direct staff to include \$25,000 in the 2026 budget for a new Public Works Yard washdown area.

CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council direct staff to include \$40,000 in the 2026 budget for paving at Crofton Boat launch.

CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council direct staff to include \$2,000,000 in the 2026 budget for the Maple Bay Wharf replacement, using funds from the wharf replacement reserve, and the rest from short-term borrowing.

CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council direct staff to include \$42,000 in the 2026 budget for first nation, veteran and pride crosswalks within North Cowichan.

(Opposed: Findlay, Manhas)

CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council direct staff to include \$100,000 in the 2026 capital budget for the Chemainus Salt Shed.

(Opposed: Findlay, Manhas)

CARRIED

7.3 BMLAP Implementation – Project Update

The Committee reviewed and discussed the BMLAP Implementation – Project Update report, and asked questions of staff.

8. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

None.

9. QUESTION PERIOD

Council received 1 question from the public regarding agenda items.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:27 p.m.

Certified by Corporate Officer

Signed by Mayor