

Municipality of North Cowichan Committee of the Whole MINUTES

January 13, 2026, 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)
Bill Corsan, General Manager, Corporate Services and Community Relations
George Farkas, General Manager, Planning, Development and Community Services
Andrea Hainrich, Deputy Corporate Officer
Barb Floden, Manager, Communications and Public Engagement
Clay Reitsma, Director, Engineering
David Conway, Director, Subdivision and Environmental Services
David Preikshot, Senior Environmental Specialist
Marla Laycock, Director, People and Culture
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 5:01 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was amended to add "Crofton Mill Closure Response", to be discussed immediately after item 3. Adoption of Minutes.

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the agenda be adopted as amended.

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

3.1 Minutes from the November 12, 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting for adoption

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the minutes of the meeting held November 12, 2025 be adopted, as circulated.

CARRIED

4. NEW BUSINESS

4.1 Crofton Mill Closure Response

Mayor Douglas provided Council with a verbal update regarding the Crofton Mill Closure response and advised that he is going to establish a North Cowichan Crofton Mill Closure Working Group [Standing Committee] to provide advice and recommendations to Mayor and Council regarding the permanent closure of the Crofton Mill, the temporary closure of the Chemainus Sawmill, and other disruptions in the local Forest Industry.

5. PUBLIC INPUT ON AGENDA ITEMS

Council received public input from 1 member of the public regarding agenda item #6.2.

6. PRESENTATIONS AND DELEGATIONS

6.1 Presenters

6.1.1 2025 Audit Planning Report

Daniel Healey and Cameron Rice-Gural from KPMG presented the planned scope and timing for the audit of the consolidated financial statements.

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee recommend that Council approve the Audit Plan presented by KPMG for the consolidated financial statements of the District of North Cowichan and the Joint Utilities Board for the year ended December 31, 2025.

CARRIED

6.2 Delegations

6.2.1 Annual North Cowichan Service Agreement report from Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society

Paul Fletcher, Executive Director, and Paul Gowland, President, on behalf of Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society provided a presentation to Council on the Society's 2025 North Cowichan Service Agreement achievements and outlined what is ahead for this work in 2026.

7. STAFF REPORTS

7.1 Comparative Tax Analysis

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee of the Whole receive the report dated January 13, 2026, from the Director, Financial Services for information.

CARRIED

7.2 2026 Budget Progress Report

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Committee of the Whole directs staff to proceed with the 2026 budget presentation at the February Committee of the Whole, with a tax revenue increase needed of 10.62%.

(Opposed: Caljouw, Findlay, Manhas)

CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Committee of the Whole recommend that council approve an additional transfer of 2% of taxation in 2026 to a Tax Stabilization Reserve.

(Opposed: Douglas, Caljouw, Findlay, Hogg, Justice, Manhas)

DEFEATED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Committee of the Whole rescind Part 2 of the resolution passed on August 12, 2025, regarding the 2026 Budget Update and Timeline, which states:

“THAT upon completion of the report and pending further direction from Council, that Council direct staff to organize town hall meetings in Chemainus, Crofton, and the South End to gather public input and ensure community perspectives are meaningfully considered in the development of the 2026 budget.”

CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Committee of the Whole direct staff to continue with the public engagement activities in support of the 2026 budget and organize a public information session followed by a Special Council Meeting on the 2026 budget in Council Chambers, at a date to be determined in February 2026.

CARRIED

8. QUESTION PERIOD

Council received 2 questions from the public regarding agenda items.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Certified by Corporate Officer

Signed by Mayor