



BACC BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Chamber Meeting – March 14, 2025

Meeting Held at Town of Bridgewater Chambers

Start Time: 8:01 AM

Attending: Rae Bonneville, Jennifer Naugler, Debra Porter, Cheryl Fougere, Donna Hatt, Shaan Kamboj, Genevieve McRorie, Jayme Rhyno, Shawn Patterson, Kimberley Amos, Edgar Burns, Joey Richard, Rita Caissie

Regrets: Joel Westin, Jada Ann Davis, Siena Cusick, Dave Waters

Guests: – n/a

Approval of February Minutes Rita motioned; Cheryl seconded

President's Report

- Five new members since the last meeting:
 - LMMW Group Ltd (energy efficiency company)
 - Stacked (Alex Rafuse, mobile app and website developer)
 - Avenir Energy (Brent Reed, propane focused)
 - S. Miller Vision (Stephanie Miller Vincent, consulting business)
 - Boulangerie La Vendeenne (Blockhouse Bakery)
- Membership at 292, aiming for 300 before the AGM.
- February 28th: Lunch with mayors David and Elspeth to discuss cell coverage and housing plans.
- Public meeting with the mayor and John Howard Society canceled to avoid confusion with an upcoming council meeting.

Stonemont Visit

- March 4th: Visited Stonemont, a new retirement assisted living facility.
- Welcome party planned for April 23rd with tours, live music, and door prizes (60-person cap).
- Stonemont will allow the Chamber to use their theater room (seats 60-65 people) for speaker series at no charge, including catering for morning sessions.

Invest Nova Scotia

- Grant from Invest Nova Scotia is hosting an investor boot camp and pitch competition on March 28th and 29th in Bridgewater.
- Opportunity for startups and businesses seeking funding to learn how to pitch to investors.
- Partnership with Seed, Volta, and Foresight.

Executive Director

- Six resumes received for the executive director job: interviews to be conducted soon.
- Aiming to have someone in place by the end of March.
- We will help promote the hiking summit event in June, but not actively involved.

Executive Director Report – Jennifer

- Phone call with Yarmouth Chamber of Commerce about annual sponsorship.
- Pre-CRA tax workshop on the 20th had 16 attendees.
- Apprenticeship open house on the 4th had 12 businesses and support services.
 - Students, families, career changers, and newcomers attended.
 - Rhinos, Michelin, Employment Solutions, and the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency were present.
 - Gina Walsh gave a talk on the apprenticeship program.
- Attending Community Connections event at the Bridgewater Mall, hosted by Launchpad for Women Entrepreneurs and the YMCA.

Tariffs Update

- Canadian Chamber team is tracking US tariff developments and responses.
- Canadian Chamber leadership was in Washington to advocate against the tariffs.
- Atlantic Chamber of Commerce recommended an agenda for Premiers to enhance national competitiveness.
- Nova Scotia government launched an online resource for businesses dealing with US tariffs (NovaScotia.ca/tariffs).
- Nova Scotia Loyal campaign promotes buying local.

- Government procurement policy provides Nova Scotia businesses a 10% advantage when bidding on public sector procurement.

Financial Report – February 2025

- Revenue: \$12,712.86
 - Membership dues: \$7,304.40
 - Group insurance rates: \$1,512.86
 - Sponsorship revenues: \$3,000
 - Event revenues: \$860
- Expenses: \$6,875.54
- Net income: \$5,837.32
- Total assets: \$54,037.13
- Total liabilities: \$12,152.92
- Liabilities and equity: \$54,037.13

Sponsorship Money

- Approximately 3/4 of the sponsorship money is in.
- A full report will be prepared for Shaan's transition to treasurer.

Tax Help from CRA

- The tax help event from the CRA is considered a success and will be kept on the calendar annually.
- Sixteen people attended the early morning session.

Lobster Crawl Economic Outlook

- The event was sold out with 78 tickets.
- O'Regan's Toyota provided the space.
 - The speaker was from the Atlantic Economic Council.

Catering Feedback

- There were comments that the food finished quickly, and some people didn't get to eat.
- The caterer adjusted the food quantity this year due to leftover food from the previous year, resulting in a lower catering cost.
- The caterer provided suggestions for menu adjustments based on observations during the event.
- A suggestion was made to potentially have member volunteers to pass trays at events in exchange for a free ticket.

Speaker Feedback

- The speaker customized the presentation for Bridgewater.
- The speaker sent the speech in advance.
- The statistics presented were from 2022.
- The Atlantic Economic Council does secondary research.

Panel vs. Single Speaker

- There was a discussion about whether a panel or a single speaker is more engaging.
- Panels allow for questions from the floor.
- A single speaker may hold the audience's attention better.
- A suggestion was made to consider a panel of local business leaders for the next event.

Event Equipment Needs

- There is a need for a better screen, a clicker for presentations, and headset mics.
- Michelin will lend wireless mics for the mayor's breakfast.

Policy Expert Speakers

- There was a comment that policy experts may not always be the most engaging speakers.
- Highliner CEO was interested in speaking.

LQBC Event and AI Workshops

- An LQBC event on February 25th had 50 attendees interested in AI workshops.
- AI workshops with Mindset Capital (John Swain) and Michael Devenney are being initiated.
- The workshops aim to help businesses improve through AI.
- Funding is being sought to reduce the cost of the training for companies.

Apprenticeship Program and International Women's Day Event

- The apprenticeship program will continue annually.
- The International Women's Day event was successful and positive, with 243 attendees.
- There were mostly women in attendance.
- The food was outstanding.
- A suggestion was made to include a line on the invite encouraging men to attend.
- The purple lighting at the event was well-received.
- The photographer and MC, Jason and Sean, are Michelin employees and volunteer.
- Michelin is appreciated for doing things for the town for free.

Rae's Speech

- Rae spoke at the event after a cancellation.
- Last year, Rae was supposed to speak but was sick.
- Rae mentioned the "M word" during her speech.

Grief Group

- A group of older women with goodie bags and yellow sunglasses were taking a group picture.
- They connected through a grief group in the area.
- It was nice that Michelin's event was open to the community.

March Break Activities

- One event was run each day for March break.
- The pirate ship event had 600 attendees instead of the expected 200.

- 1500 bags of popcorn were made.
- Natasha runs the social club.

CME Meeting

- The CME meeting was on March 7th.
- Leslie from Michelin offered headsets for the mayor's breakfast.
- Deborah and Joey are involved with the downtown business group.

King Street

- There are two businesses closing on King Street.
- The Mulligan is closing in August.
- Michelle, who owns the FERC building, is considering turning it into an event space.
- FERC's closing might negatively impact Jax.
- Two new grocery stores have opened on King Street. They specialize in Indian imports.

Supporting Local Businesses

- It's important to support local businesses, especially during uncertain times.
- A simple way to support them is to visit their stores and make a purchase.

Upcoming Events

- March 22: YMCA event at the mall.
- Masquerade ball at Wiles Lake, organized by details and Empower Her Photography.
 - There is a hope to get more ticket sales.
- If the event doesn't go ahead, a donation will be made to Harbor House and Second Story Women's Center on behalf of the Chamber.
- "Make Your Move at Work" breakfast is postponed to April due to scheduling issues.
- April 10: Mayor's breakfast at the Legion.
 - Free for members, \$15 for non-members.
 - Coffee and tea will be provided.
 - Two high stools will be brought for the mayors to sit on.
- April 15: Conversational Intelligence event with Douglas Call from Leader Vision at Atlantic.
 - \$40 for members, \$50 for non-members.
 - It will be held at the ~~Michelin Social Club~~ Stonemont
- April 23: Welcome party at Stonemont.
 - RSVP required.
 - Lanyards will be provided.
- May 1: Speed networking event with Daleen Allen at BNI at Michelin Social Club.

Lanyards

- Lanyards with the Bridgewater Chamber logo are a good idea for branding.
- Sydney gets lanyards through another company.

Edgar's Update

- February and early March have been very busy.

Municipality Budget & Collaboration

- The municipality has doubled meeting frequency to increase public input on the budget (operating and capital).
- Meetings are held Tuesday mornings and Thursday evenings.
- Increased collaboration between the municipality and the town is being explored for larger projects.
- Aiming to overcome arbitrary municipal lines to unlock potential through joint efforts.
- A budget item for transit is present, with more information to come.

Solar Garden & Food Hub

- The solar garden application is under review for approval.
- The application process was initiated by the previous council.
- Food hub engagement has been conducted, and a report is expected.
- Initial feedback suggests more interest from consumers than producers.

Housing Strategy & Land Use Planning

- The municipality is exploring developing a housing strategy in-house, potentially involving grad students.
- Aims for a more localized approach that caters to smaller communities.
- Land use planning draft is available on the municipal website for public review.
- Part of efforts for transparency.

Cluster Developments & Engage MODL

- Regulations for cluster developments are being reviewed to level the playing field with subdivision applications.
- Second reading postponed due to unintended negative impacts on two large projects.
- The Engage MODL website is a hub for municipal communications and updates.
- Users can sign up for updates on specific topics.

Town of Bridgewater Budget & Strategic Plan

- Town council has been focusing on narrowing down the capital budget.
- Operational budget discussions to begin at the next meeting.
- The town's strategic plan, guiding council priorities for the next four years, has been posted online.

Federal Funding & Events

- The town received \$3.3 million in federal funding through the accelerator fund.
- In partnership with CMHC, aiming for 100 homes over the next three years and 365 homes over the next 10 years.
- The 55+ Games will be held from September 21st to 24th.
- Volunteers are being sought for the event.

Municipal Representation & Energized Bridgewater

- Mayor Pam Mood is the president of the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities and attended the National League of Cities in Washington.
- Energized Bridgewater was awarded the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)

community's award.

- The program helps reduce home heating costs and ensure affordable housing.

Development & Retail Analysis

- Significant interest from businesses wanting to locate in Bridgewater.
- A challenge is finding vacancies that meet their requirements.
- Leads for Exit 12A continue to come in, with a conceptual development plan to be presented to council in April.
- A retail market and accommodation analysis is coming to council, revealing that the trade area captures only 31% of its potential spend.

Downtown Vitalization & MIT REAP South Shore

- A Downtown Business Association is being formed to revitalize the downtown area.
- MIT REAP South Shore is facilitating a collider series in response to tariffs.
- A roundtable consultation will be held with businesses to discuss pivot options and supply chain challenges.
- The Consul General to Boston and New England will attend.

Upcoming Events & Initiatives

- The Farmer's Market is hosting its next winter edition on March 22nd.
- A 5k crawl is being organized to support breakfast programs at schools.
- Registration is \$10, with 100% of the funds going to the breakfast programs.

Downtown Open House Event

- Downtown businesses will host an open house on May 31st, following up on a previous meeting with the Downtown Halifax Business Association.
- The goal is to create an engaging opportunity within the community, similar to "Christmas on King," but expanded to include both sides of the LaHave River.
- More details about the event will be released later.

55 Plus Games Sponsorship

- Seeking sponsorships for the 55 plus games, targeting \$20,000 to leverage the \$189,000 project.
- The sponsorship package is not intended to target local businesses already contributing to other organizations.
- Instead, they are approaching organizations and companies at the provincial level.
- Aiming to make the 55 plus games more inclusive and diverse, focusing on health, connection, and activity.

Upcoming Election

- There will be a new prime minister today and possibly an election day.
- There may be a forum inviting all candidates to speak.

Thank You Party

- An executive meeting was held on Wednesday where Shawn, Jayme, and Rae decided to have a thank you party.
- The party is planned for April 3rd at King Street Beer, open to all members from 4-6 PM.
- It will be a casual drop-in event with catering.
- The next meeting is April 11th at the MODL at 8:30 AM.

Michelin Comments

- Michelin is dealing with potential tariffs that could significantly impact their business.
- "So it's about a million. It's a billion dollars annually impact if he puts on just the 25."
- They are closely monitoring the situation and working with a lobbyist in Washington.
- The major expansion project at Hemlock will have its first tire off next week.

Next Meeting Date: April 11, 2025, Location: MODL Chambers

Meeting End Time: 10:00 AM