

Meeting Date: June 27, 2026

Meeting Minutes

Prepared by: Amy Harding, Secretary

Please submit proposed corrections or omissions to amy@hardingworks.org within two weeks of minutes publication date.

In Attendance

Executive Committee

Anna LeBlanc, President
Bonnie Rankin, Vice-President
Ed George, Treasurer
Amy Harding, Secretary

Board of Directors

Jenn Langille
Andrew LeBlanc
Nancy MacDonald
Cameron MacDonald
Linda Schweitzer (*online*)

General Membership

Sheila Brand
Anne Chaldecott
Cathy Gibson
Moiria Harding
Kay Langille
Paul Law
Myrna LeBlanc
Aaron (Butch) MacDonald
MaryAnne MacDonald
Sheila Rankin
Cathy Smith
Steve Smith
Brenda Spence-McLeod

Call to Order, Approvals

President Anna LeBlanc calls meeting to order

Calls for motion to approve May 2026 Minutes

- **Motion:** Cathy Gibson **Seconded:** Brenda Spence-McLeod
Vote: all in favour, motion carried

PICA Thank Yous!

In addition to discussing 'island business,' PICA meetings are an opportunity to recognize and thank volunteers who have made particularly noteworthy contributions to the community in the preceding month.



June 2026: PICA Would Like to Thank...

- **Butch, Maryanne, & Ike MacDonald,** for hooking the church up with power!
- On behalf of PIHS, **everyone who showed up for their annual work party!**
- **Edmund, Cameron, Ed, and Al** for the new East End outhouse!

- **Myrna & Andrew Leblanc, Casey O'Shea, and Mike & Sheila Tobin** for painting the interior of the Community Centre in preparation for Anna's wedding!

OVERVIEW: MOTIONS PASSED

- **Starlink interim internet:** Motion carried (moved by Butch, seconded by Cameron) to pursue Starlink for peak summer months as a bridge solution while MOPC Wi-Fi towers remain incomplete.
- **Accessibility ramp:** Motion carried (moved by Nancy, seconded by Ed) to proceed with the ~\$12,000 ramp build using available free cash reserves.
- **Ramp as fundraising focus:** Motion carried (moved by Brenda, seconded by Anne) to make the ramp the central fundraising target for all summer events including the craft auction.
- **Potluck charity donation:** Motion carried (moved by Sheila Brand, seconded by Brenda) to donate potluck proceeds to the **Pictou West Food Bank**.

Agenda Item: MOPC WiFi Status Update

- Approximately **4 of the planned "super towers"** are operational; the remainder are delayed, with an estimate of more becoming active within the next 8 weeks.
- Key holdup is **provincial and federal government approvals** for towers on government-owned land — municipal towers are proceeding normally.
- **West end of the island** has no functional service; **east end** is relatively functional with improved speeds reported.
- Fraser's Mountain tower — critical for the community center area — is among those awaiting approval.
- Anna committed to maintaining close contact with MOPC through the summer; community members encouraged to call and apply pressure.

Interim Internet: Starlink Plan

- Current on-site internet for meeting is running off Anna's personal hotspot; a library-provided satellite hotspot is also present but was showing only **0.5 Mbps**, though window placement previously yielded **30–50 Mbps**.
- Library hotspot supports a maximum of **~4 simultaneous users** before degrading.
- **Starlink pricing:** \$75/month service + \$10/month equipment rental = **\$85/month total**; equipment can also be purchased through Best Buy (available ~July 2nd for ~\$500) with a rebate option.
- **Jeff Hamilton** (who will be leaving the island for a period of time) has an existing Starlink setup that could potentially be transferred; Anna to contact Jeff about using his equipment and identifying who pays his bill to arrange reimbursement for 2 months.

- Amy noted she personally has a Starlink unit on order and can serve as **secondary backup** if Jeff's arrangement falls through.
- Concern noted about **3-week delivery lag** if ordering new equipment — reinforcing urgency of acting now.

Agenda Item: Accessibility Ramp

- Provincial accessibility grant application was **unsuccessful**; current quote from Rob is approximately **\$12,000**.
- Available **free cash on hand**: **~\$15,000–\$16,000**; GICs of ~\$28,000 exist but maturity date unknown (Anne to confirm).
- Additional funding sources identified:
 - **\$1,500 from MLPC** for community upgrades
 - AGM/auction fundraising proceeds
 - Email solicitation for those who cannot attend events in person
- Rob confirmed he can prioritize the build; estimated **~1 week to complete**, targeting within **3 weeks** (ideally in July before August busy season).
- Legal/civic note: the community center is used as an **election polling location** and is required to be accessible.
- Grant reapplication remains an option for future cycles alongside proceeding now.

Agenda Item: Summer Students

- **Jackson** returns for a second year as the **CAP (Community Access Program) student**, supervised by Jen; scope expanded with more structured oversight.
 - Schedule (35 hours/week, flexible) to be shared publicly once set; Jackson to act as a communication hub for PICA emails and information dissemination.
- **Ezra Mulcahy** hired as **groundskeeper**; has tractor license, beginner's license, mowing and painting experience.
 - Supervised by Cameron (first time in this role); community members with project requests should direct them to Anna or Cameron.
 - Push mower available at the east end for that area's lawn — preferable to riding the tractor across the island.
 - Possible involvement in ramp build if time permits during that week.
- **Petra Rankin** was the other strong groundskeeper applicant; Amy and others noted interest in potentially hiring her for private work.

- Start dates: approximately **July 6th** (post-holiday orientation planned).

Church Committee Report

- **Lights purchased:** Two stage lights and two stands ordered for under \$750, funded by a **\$750 donation from Kay White**; arriving Tuesday.
- **Jam session scheduled: July 18th at 3:00 PM** (Saturday afternoon) — open to musicians and community members; Sheila Brand may participate.
- Church now connected to **solar power from the community center**, successfully tested at the last concert; thanks to Aaron Mac and family.
- **Upcoming August concert** features **Catherine McCullen, Lisa MacIsaac, and Sarah MacDougall**; Susan working with Caitlin on posters and tickets.
 - Catherine McCullen is Jean McCullen's daughter (wrote "Snowbird" and many Anne Murray songs); Lisa MacIsaac is Ashley MacIsaac's sister (formerly of Mad Violet).
- **Raffle tickets** for solar hookup cost recovery: \$5 each or 3 for \$10; e-transfer accepted with name noted for ticket stub.
- **Donated solar chandelier** (from Brenda's household): church doesn't need it; suggestion to hang it above the stage in the **dance hall** — accepted.

Heritage Society Report

- **Work party** held despite rain; strong turnout, significant indoor cleanup completed; outdoor work to continue through summer.
- **Cemetery stone restoration:** Approximately **half of stones cleaned**; results described as dramatic — stones from last year are "glaringly white."
- Ongoing effort to **push trees back to fence line** in cooperation with church and cemetery committee; heavy equipment may be needed for removal (one-trip tractor job).
- **Cemetery sign:** Request to hold off reinstalling until fence is pushed back and tractor work is complete to avoid obstruction.
- Cemetery legs/flag installation: contractor confident no guide wires needed; installation expected within the next week.

Harbour Authority Report

- **Boom update:** Significantly over budget — original unit was oversized and ungovernable; replacement unit is motorized with a rain cover, described as a major upgrade but cost **~\$10,000 more** than planned.

- Shipping from Quebec expected **July 3rd** after prolonged delays involving credit checks, payment disputes, and Quebec holiday.
- Harbor Authority AGM: **Monday at 10:00 AM.**
- **Parking lot:** Approximately **50% of parking fees unpaid**; no tags issued this year as owners are known — follow-up emails to be sent.
 - Concern: boom overage has strained reserves; parking revenue important to replenish funds.
 - Identified issues: vehicles taking up 1.5 spaces, spots near recycling building unusable due to soft ground (needs gravel).
 - Proposal: add **4–5 spots** on the other side of the recycling building; consider **pressure-treated fence posts** or chalk lines to delineate spots.
- **Action:** Parking lot optimization to be a **formal agenda item at the August meeting** with proposals invited.

Fire Department Report

Fire Levy

- A community meeting was held but resulted in controversy: the session was intended as an **information meeting followed by a vote**, but some community members felt they needed a remote voting option (denied by MOPC — in-person only).
- **MOPC** did not provide clear criteria for voter eligibility; has not yet responded with updated information or a new date.
- Fire department asked to produce **short-term (0–1 year) and long-term (1–5 year) goals**; progress delayed due to fire chief's illness (pneumonia).
- **Risk assessment** is a separate ongoing provincial process for all districts; results not yet available but noted as not a prerequisite for the levy decision.
- Key argument for the levy (Ed): community collectively pays ~\$20,000, which comes back plus ~\$47,000 top-up from government — "a no brainer."
- **Decision deadline: February 28**; however, strong consensus that vote should happen by **end of August** to maximize island population participation.
- **Proposed process:**
 1. July PICA meeting: information/discussion forum only, no vote
 2. Anna to contact Darla to confirm availability and process requirements to hold a special ratepayers meeting.

- PICA policy reminder: items cannot be voted on if raised at the same meeting without prior agenda notice — but items on the agenda in advance can be voted on.

Recycling & Garbage Update

- **Garbage service:** Kristen sold her business to **MG Waste** on Friday; transition expected to be smooth; possibly a larger container coming.
 - Suggestion to **lock** a larger container to prevent illegal dumping.
 - New: **aerosol containers** (non-hazardous) may be placed at the recycling building.
- **Nova Scotia recycling rule changes** (December): rules are complex; many cottagers from out of province are unfamiliar.
 - Resources available: **Pictou County Solid Waste "Waste Wizard"** app — type in item to find correct disposal.
 - Batteries must go to the **municipal depot** — cannot be handled locally.

Community Centre Maintenance Notes

- **Linoleum flooring** installed in the community center; needs to be **glued down** to prevent bubbling/wrinkling with temperature changes — caulking/appropriate adhesive to be sourced.
- **Wobbly dividers** to be replaced; new divider being built and left at the school.
- **Old window panes** from renovation: part of the deal with Rob; location unclear — to be confirmed with Rob; if unwanted, Anna/Amy will send community email.
- **East end flooring** materials stored at community center; groundskeeper or Edmund to be consulted about completing that job.

Community Action Item for August

- **Parking lot proposals:** Community members to observe parking lot over summer and are encouraged to bring suggestions for process improvement to **August PICA meeting**

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: Sheila Rankin

Seconded: Kay Langille

Vote: all in favour, motion carried