
Meeting Minutes

Board of Directors

February 26, 2025

Time: 8:30 am

Location: PVSC Dartmouth Office, Boardroom A

Attendees:

In person: Joe Feeney, Bobby McNeil, Owen Sagness

Virtual (Teams): Laurie Murley, Glenn Horne, Tara Maguire, Cathie O'Toole (departed the meeting at 9:35 am)

Regrets: Doug Boyd, Anita Bezeau, Darren Bruckschwaiger, Juanita Spencer

Staff Attendees: Scott Farmer, Russ Adams, Carolyn McKenzie, Tracy Williams

1. Review of Agenda

The draft agenda was reviewed.

Moved by Owen Sagness, seconded by Tara Maguire the agenda be accepted. Motion carried.

2. Review of Minutes

The draft minutes of December 12, 2024 were reviewed.

Moved by Bobby McNeil, seconded by Tara Maguire the minutes of December 12, 2024 be accepted. Motion carried.

3. Committee Updates

Audit, Risk and Finance Committee (ARF)

A summary of the January 15, 2025 ARF Committee meeting was provided to the Board in advance. On behalf of the AFR Chair, Doug Boyd, The Board Chair presented highlights from the summary as follows:

- The auditors from Doane Grant Thornton attended the January 15th meeting and provided the financial audit strategy for fiscal 2024-25, ending March 31, 2025. The Chair also noted the auditors' fees are very reasonable.
- The projection for drawdown from the Special Operating Reserve (SOR) at fiscal year-end.
- The Investment Manager attended the January 15th meeting and gave a great update on performance in terms of market sector returns/mandate.
- Inflationary items/concerns will be considered during strategic/budget planning.

Moved by Owen Sagness, seconded by Cathie O'Toole the Audit, Risk and Finance Committee update be accepted. Motion carried.

4. Recruitment

Recruitment efforts for the PVSC Board have resulted in receiving solid response to fill the two municipal elected councillor position vacancies. Interviews will be held with four potential candidates and once selected an electronic PVSC Board vote will be held and appointment recommendations sent to the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) and Association of Municipal Administrators Nova Scotia (AMANS) for consideration/ approval.

5. CEO Report

The following items were highlighted from the CEO report:

- The 2025 Assessment Roll was finalized in December and delivered to Municipal Units December 16th.
- Property Assessment Notices were mailed in January.
- The overall residential value increase was 11% and commercial values increased approximately 3% over last year.
- Inquiry period started Jan. 13th-Feb 13th, it went well, and things moved along nicely. Service levels were managed daily, and levels were met in terms of number of calls answered, wait times, abandonment rate, etc., due to good planning and inquiry management training. De-escalation training (by Telus) was also provided for all staff, which staff gave a 92% satisfaction rating.
- 8200 appeals were received (a batch still require validation), down 35% (mostly residential).
- The province introduced Regulations January 10th for 2023 wildfire properties – assessment notices were mailed accordingly the week of January 20th.
- Municipal unit presentations were held – 15 were completed and well received. Four more are confirmed for upcoming presentation.
- At the June 2025 Board Retreat staff will provide a progress update on the Nova Scotia Assessment Appeal Tribunal (NSAAT) since last summer's update.

6. Strategy Update

A status update was provided on the 2024-25 business plan (back looking), and on the strategy management process (forward looking).

- The Business Plan consists of twenty activities with a clear owner for each, some require additional time, but overall progress has been good – 12 activities were 75% complete as of January 31st. There will be some carryover into next year (e.g. Data Analytics, People & Culture, etc.), and as well vendor contracts need to be imbedded in operations.
- The Strategy Management Process is on a forward-looking basis. The approach can be refined so that the strategic approach is simple and achievable – having a balanced scorecard.
- A facilitator, Marker Fraser, 440park Strategy Management, has been retained to work with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) on the strategy process (noted this is a refinement of the strategy not a new strategy). A strategy map has been developed and then a balanced scorecard, action plan and initiatives. Seven, two and half hour (rapid) sessions will be held with the SLT to create a set of draft tools. There is also a role for the Board. All steps/sessions will be completed by March 7th. An interim update will be provided at the April Board meeting, and time will be allotted for discussion at the June Retreat.

7. Cybersecurity Update

Staff provided a presentation on cybersecurity in terms of the importance of cybersecurity in the digital age, threats, incidents and business impacts from a Canadian landscape, a review and update on cybersecurity at PVSC since 2019 to present, including risk recommendations/status and priorities and budget considerations going forward.

Two key activities will inform additional cybersecurity program investments:

1. Vulnerability and penetration testing. This was completed in December 2024.
2. An External review of PVSC's cybersecurity program to assess program maturity, identify any gaps and provide recommendations for mitigation.

After completion of these initiatives staff will come back with findings and discuss any next steps. A Statement of Work was released February 5, 2025 and the scope and timeline were reviewed, which includes tabletop exercises with the Executive and Board.

8. In Camera

Moved by Owen Sagness, seconded by Bobby McNeil to move to a closed/in-camera session with the CEO and Board members. Motion carried.

Meeting Adjourned