PICTOU ISLAND COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Meeting Date: September 26, 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 (online)

Board of Directors
Andrew LeBlanc
Cameron MacDonald (online)
Nancy MacDonald

General Membership
Anne Chaldecott
Gloria Frasier
Cathy Gibson
Joyce Halsaz
Skip Hamilton
Paul Law
Andrew LeBlanc
Myrna LeBlanc
Sarah MacDonald
Dana Morin
Sheila Rankin
Brenda Spence-McLeod
Mike Tobin
Sheila Tobin

Call to Order, Approvals

President Anna LeBlanc calls meeting to order
Calls for motion to approve August 2026 Minutes

- Motion: Brenda Spence-McLeod Seconded: Andrew LeBlanc
  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.



September 2026: PICA Would Like to Thank…

- **Kirby,** for navigating all of the recent ferry run rescheduling and excellent communication about that, as well as a thank you to the **ferry crew** for all that they do to keep things running smoothly!

- **The tent rescue team** – everyone who showed up at the Community Centre so quickly on Labour Day weekend to keep the event tent from blowing away! Also **Myrna, Andrew, Mike, & Sheila** for folding the rescued tent up so that it's ready for winter storage!
- **Everyone who came out to the PIHS 'work day that wasn't a work day'** and worked on the pioneer cemetery headstone cleaning!
- **The volunteers who helped with the Annual BBQ** – from the BBQ crew, to everyone who pitched in and helped out with shucking corn, moving picnic tables, and all that goes into making that event a success!

OVERVIEW

The September meeting covered a broad range of community governance topics, resulting in several formal votes and commitments. A motion to establish a **summer student supervision and oversight process** via a dedicated task force was passed unanimously. A motion directing the **Heritage Society and Church & Cemetery Committee** to hold an independent discussion about a potential merger was also passed. The **Mi'kmaq map relocation to the Heritage Building** was approved, with a condition to notify the Band leadership. Additional discussions addressed Wi-Fi and ratepayers meeting updates, fire department training, harbor parking enforcement, garbage management, and winter meeting structure.

Decisions Made

- **Summer student supervision motion passed** — a task force (max five members) will be established to develop a formal summer student supervision and oversight process in advance of any future student placement; the Board's role is advisory and the task force will do the operational work.
    - Anna and Casey volunteered for the task force; call for additional volunteers to be included in meeting minutes.
    - Once guidelines are drafted, they must be reviewed by the individuals who apply for our summer student grants (Amy Harding and potentially Melanie Pauls) to ensure compliance with provincial funding rules.
- **Heritage Society / Church & Cemetery Committee merger discussion** — motion passed that the two organizations will meet independently and report back; PICA cannot unilaterally merge them due to their separate legal status.
- **Mi'kmaq map relocation approved** — A motion to move the map from its current location to the Heritage Building as the centerpiece of a new exhibit on Mi'kmaq presence on the island passed with no opposition.
    - Condition: A note of thanks to be sent to Pictou Landing First Nation (PLFN) band leadership explaining the relocation and inviting them to contribute photographs or artifacts to the exhibit.
- **Winter meetings upgraded to formal general meetings** — February and April check-ins will now be official PICA meetings where votes can be held; agenda items will be circulated in advance.

- **Starlink subscription to continue through October** — to allow for remote participation in the October PICA meeting. The service will be suspended after the October meeting.

Agenda Item: Establishing Framework for Summer Student Supervision

- That a taskforce be formed to develop and establish a framework for summer student supervision, with the following components
    - **Annual appointment** — A supervisor will be appointed each summer rather than allowing the position to roll over automatically year to year.
    - **Written expectations** — both supervisor and student receive documented roles, responsibilities, communication protocols, feedback expectations, and confidentiality guidelines.
    - **Privacy** — individual student performance and private employment matters are not discussed at public community meetings.
    - **Clear escalation path** — students and supervisors know who to contact when concerns arise (including the existing option for C@P student to contact Melanie Pauls, Community Technology Manager at Nova Scotia).
    - **Mid-summer check-in** — someone other than the direct supervisor checks in with each student to surface concerns before they escalate.
    - **End-of-season feedback** — both students and supervisors provide confidential feedback to inform future planning and supervisory appointments.

Motion: Paula Law Seconded: Anna LeBlanc
Vote: all in favor, motion carried

- **Additional context from discussion:**
    - Melanie Pauls confirmed that Nova Scotia applies for the funding while the PICA board appoints the local supervisor who handles day-to-day supervision.
    - A suggestion was raised to use drone aerial photography to give groundskeeping students a visual overview of mowing zones (ride-on, push, and whippersnapper areas).
    - Heat protocols were flagged as a gap: C@P site work is supposed to stop above a certain temperature threshold, which was not enforced this past summer; an indoor thermometer was proposed as a simple remedy.
    - Casey volunteered to take on greater involvement with the C@P student next summer, drawing on his own experience in the role.
    - The task force is explicitly a time-limited body — once the structure is in place, responsibility shifts to that year's supervisors; the task force dissolves.

- Other island organizations (e.g. The Heritage Society and Harbor Authority) may submit project requests to be worked into the students' hours under an "other duties as assigned" category.

Agenda Item: Community Infrastructure & Operations

Wi-Fi / MOPC

- No significant Wi-Fi improvements are expected for the remainder of the current year; next anticipated progress is **May** at the earliest.

Ratepayers Meeting

- Originally scheduled for the **Friday of Labor Day weekend**, cancelled due to weather; rescheduled to **Friday, October 9th at 11:00 AM**.
- A **Zoom option** will be available for remote participants.
- Darla plans to bring **Evan Hale** (Director of Emergency Operations) and several councillors, who will also receive an island tour — many have never visited and lack context for issues affecting Pictou Island.
- Suggestion raised to organize questions topically (numbered list format) rather than opening the floor to unstructured Q&A, to prevent the meeting from getting derailed as it did previously when terminology confusion (levy vs. tax) dominated discussion.
- A **community survey** will be sent out to compile questions focused on the **fire levy** ahead of the meeting, with a deadline of end of month; Amy will coordinate with Anna and Bonnie to compile and send results to Darla and Evan Hale in advance.
- Key unresolved question: **who is eligible to vote** at the ratepayers meeting — Anna has been seeking clarification from Darla since June without a definitive answer.

Fire Department

- A **$29,000 grant** was received to purchase new fire suits; a representative came to the island to fit members.
- Erin attended a meeting with Evan Hale to review the island's **risk assessment**; reported leaving with more questions than answers.
- **First responder training** is tentatively scheduled for the weekends of **October 17–18 and October 23–24**; open to community members (not just fire department), though pre-registration is likely required given cost.
- **Wildland fire training** is restricted to existing fire department members: but new members are welcome to join PIFD!
- Anna will follow up with Stretch to confirm registration requirements and exact dates for first responder training, to be included in the meeting minutes.

- Update received September 21 from Stretch via Anna: “First responder training is currently at capacity, but there is work happening behind the scenes both to make training more accessible to those that would like to take it next year, and to make maintaining the certification easier as well.”

Heritage Society Report

- The Heritage Society **AGM** is scheduled for **4:30 PM** September 18 (open to members only); the community is invited for sandwiches, sweets, and a **website walkthrough at 5:15 PM**.
    - Amy will send a reminder email to the community about the 5:15 PM public portion.
- The Heritage Building is locked; access is arranged via a posted sign with a contact number; the summer student had a combination for access.
- Joyce (on behalf of the Heritage Society) expressed interest in having advance notice of the upcoming councillor tour so the building can be prepared and open.
- The original Mi'kmaq name for Pictou Island was found in PLFN archives: "Agugamich" — meaning "place of abundance of herring."
- Visitors to the island are reportedly more likely to visit the heritage buildings than the community center, making the buildings a key point of community visibility.

Harbour Authority Report

- Parking fees: over **60 vehicles** have paid; a small number of holdouts remain.
- Parking revenue is the **primary source of funds** for routine wharf maintenance; no other operating income outside of grants for large projects.
- Congestion has been an issue, particularly when islanders leave cars at the wharf for the season rather than returning them to their properties.
- Community is encouraged to **have someone drive them down** to the ferry and retrieve their car, rather than leaving vehicles at the wharf long-term.
- Parking strategy and enforcement will be a formal agenda item at the April ramp-up meeting.

Agenda Item: PICA 40th Anniversary Planning

- Preliminary discussions have begun; ideas discussed include a **scavenger hunt** (modeled on the one held during the 200th anniversary of the island’s initial land grant) and a reunion-style gathering of past PICA members.

- A callback to a past tradition — **ice cream socials** — was noted as something to bring back for the event.
- Next step: determine event dates; Anna will follow up with those who expressed interest over the winter.
- **Note:** anyone who is interested in getting involved but has not yet done so is encouraged to reach out to Anna.
    - The 40th birthday committee, like the summer student task force, is intended as a one-time body that dissolves after the event.

Discussion: Garbage & Waste Management

- Ongoing problem with **improperly sorted garbage** being loaded onto the ferry — unsorted recyclables and refundables mixed with general waste, and unsecured/dripping bags.
- Kirby may have incurred **extra costs** due to improperly sorted garbage from the junk run; Anna will confirm the amount and whether MOPC reimbursed him; if not, PICA will discuss addressing this issue.
    - Update received September 22 from Butch via Anna: Confirmed that this summer, we received a *warning* that improperly sorted junk run materials will incur additional cost – but that should it happen again, these costs will be applied.
- New signage is already in place but has limited effect.
- **Garbage handling and messaging** will be a dedicated agenda item at the **October meeting** — the goal is to develop a structured communication and education plan rather than squeezing it into a brief discussion.
    - Suggestions raised: mandatory double-bagging, no wet waste in bags, spring reminders via email list, and calling out non-compliance directly when observed.

Discussion: Ferry Contract Update

- Kirby is pursuing **five-year funding** rather than annual extensions; the contract renewal is in progress.
- No schedule changes will be made until the contract is signed; a community survey on schedule preferences has been held off pending contract finalization.
- Once the five-year contract is in place, schedule adjustments can be explored.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: Brenda Spence-McLeod Seconded: Sheila Tobin
Vote: all in favour, motion carried