

Baddeck Area Business & Tourism Association – Annual General Meeting Minutes
Thursday April 9th, 2026

Welcome

Cathy Tower called the Annual General Meeting to order at 3:15 pm at the Inverary Resort with 20 people in attendance.

Cathy moved the 2026 agenda and AGM Minutes for 2025 be approved and John Berk seconded the motion. Motion carried.

President's Report

Cathy Tower presented the Report which is attached below. Cathy moved the President's Report for 2024 be approved and Matt MacAulay seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Website update

Ian Van Schaick provided an overview of the improvements he has made as well as the improvements arranged by web designers. These improvements include taking control over the listings and adding a much requested retail and services section of the website. He has also set up Google Analytics for the site as to gain greater knowledge of our visitation and popularly visited links and pages. We look forward to improving this with Google Ad purchases as well as supplementing it with greater social media activity.

Treasurer's Report

Matt MacAulay presented the treasurer's report. There was discussion about outstanding payables as well as receivables on the balance sheet, identifying that we have made improvements in both areas year over year, with a clear plan forward to collect payables in a timely fashion as well as increase revenue to address our own payables. We discussed the new marketing opportunities and the potential revenue from those advertising streams, as well as our new membership benefits package that clearly defines the benefits members of BABTA receive, that we hope will secure us at least 68 paid members. The 2026 budget was presented with a projected increase in marketing revenue, increase in marketing costs as well as increase in administrative costs with a bookkeeper to maintain our records. The board hopes to put substantial funds towards our payables in 2026. Matt moved the Treasurer's Report for 2025 be approved and Bev Bryson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

VIC Discussion

With the news of the provincial visitor centres losing funding almost entirely and our own Port Hastings VIC being closed, the board felt a discussion around our own VIC was worth having. There was animated discussion and was clear that the membership still values the in person experience provided at the VIC. Opportunities such as a printed "Things to do" sheet, reorganizing of the space to promote membership as well as an open house prior to the season will keep the VIC top of mind as a community hub and important tool in providing the Baddeck experience.

2026 Board Nominations

A call for nominations was put out to the membership and no new nominations were received. There was interest from 6 current board members to remain for another year. We received no nominations from the floor. Matt MacAulay, nomination committee chair, moved that the 6 existing board members would remain for another year (Matt MacAulay, John Berk, Ian Van Schaick, Bev Bryson, Americo Pino and Christy MacRae-Ziss). Misty MacDonald seconded the motion. All present were in favour of these nominations. Motion carried.

Awards Presentation

For the fourth annual BABTA Business Awards to recognize outstanding businesses and people in our community. Presented by Cathy Tower, 2025 winners are as follows:

Rising Star New Business Award – Glenbourne Orchard (Polozi Family)
Community Spirit Awards – Nadine Palmizi and Holly and Errol MacInnis
Customer Service Award – Hilda Murphy-Phillips
Long Service Award – Amoeba Tours (35 Years) - John and Bev Bryson

Adjournment

There being no further business, Cathy moved the BABTA AGM for 2025 be adjourned at 4:25 pm. Post meeting reception was held with snacks and cocktails.

Minutes Submitted By: Matthew MacAulay

President's Report

This year, the Board remained committed to putting the right people and initiatives in place to support our business community in the ways that matter most. Our focus has been on building meaningful connections, providing relevant resources, and actively listening to the evolving needs of our members.

Here are a number of key initiatives and accomplishments from this past year:

1. VIC Team; Upcoming Season

We had a successful spring, summer, and fall season at the VIC, thanks to our fantastic team—some of whom will be returning this year. We're optimistic and excited for another busy season ahead. Possibly much busier season due to the closures of other prominent VIC's.

With the closure of several Visitor Information Centres across the province, the Baddeck VIC most likely will experience increase demand as a primary touchpoint for travellers seeking local knowledge, trip planning assistance, and experiential recommendations. This shift creates both pressure and opportunity – positioning Baddeck as a critical hub for visitor engagement in Cape Breton Island.

This presents a new year focus on marketing opportunities for members through our signage at the VIC – both digital and inside, along with website promotions.

2. Digital Sign at the VIC

We're thrilled to share that after many months of planning and processing; our new digital sign was successfully installed in front of the VIC and was and is up and running. This high-visibility location offers our membership a premium advertising opportunity in a prime space.

Marketing information has been distributed, and members can engage in fantastic advertising opportunities.

3. BABTA website

The board has taken control of the website (rather than feeding from Tourism NS) therefore enabling it to be a better marketing tool for members and the Baddeck and surrounding area. Thanks to Ian on his countless hours.

4. Quarterly Newsletters

We are pleased to report our quarterly newsletters have been reintroduced to improve member communication. Thanks, Matt, for your initiative.

5. Community Events; Engagement

BABTA proudly participated in several community celebrations this year, including:

☑ Canada Day Parade

☑ Parade of Lights

☑ Christmas in the Village

☑ 2nd Annual Baddeck Winter Festival

Each event showcased the incredible spirit of our community, and it's been a privilege to contribute to these special moments. Special thanks to the many amazing volunteers.

6. Accessibility Improvements at the VIC

We've applied to the 2025–26 Community Accessibility Program to support an "Increasing

Accessibility” project at the VIC. Due to volume of applications we were unsuccessful in being awarded the grant but have re-applied for the 2026-27 same grant. The grant application was submitted in February, and we are currently awaiting confirmation. This project would represent an important step forward in ensuring access and inclusion for all.

7. Divert NS Litter Intervention Project

We applied June 2025 and received the grant approval this project which addresses litter concerns in our community and contributes to a cleaner and more welcoming environment for both residents and visitors. No littering and Carry in – carry out for clean community signage will be placed throughout the village.

Thank you to Eileen and Colleen for their contributions for this successful project.

6. We have actively engaged in community discussions at all three levels of government.

The Board feels we’ve laid a strong foundation this past year—one that positions us for long-term success. In the year ahead, we will continue to refine our goals and enhance our impact within the community.

If there are any questions, I’d be happy to answer them at this time.

I move to accept this report into the record. May I have a seconder?

All those in favour, please raise your hand or say “aye.”

All those opposed, raise your hand or say “nay.”

Motion carried.

Thank you all very much. We’re energized and optimistic for the upcoming season.