



Stratford City Council Regular Council Open Session MINUTES

Meeting #: 4767th
Date: Monday, March 24, 2025
Time: 7:00 P.M.
Location: Council Chamber, City Hall

Council Present: Mayor Ritsma - Chair Presiding, Councillor Beatty, Councillor Biehn, Councillor Briscoe, Councillor Burbach, Councillor Hunter, Councillor McCabe, Councillor Nijjar, Councillor Sebben, Councillor Wordofa

Regrets: Councillor Henderson

Staff Present: Joan Thomson - Chief Administrative Officer, Tatiana Dafoe - City Clerk, Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services, Tim Wolfe - Director of Community Services, Taylor Crinklaw - Director of Infrastructure Services, Karmen Krueger - Director of Corporate Services, Adam Betteridge - Director of Building and Planning Services, Neil Anderson - Director of Emergency Services/Fire Chief, Audrey Pascual - Deputy Clerk, Alexander Burnett – Intermediate Planner

Also Present: Members of the Public and Media

1. Call to Order:

Mayor Ritsma, Chair presiding, called the Council meeting to order.

Councillor Henderson provided regrets for this meeting.

Land Acknowledgment

Moment of Silent Reflection

Singing of O Canada

Respectful Conduct Statement

2. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof:

The *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* requires any member of Council declaring a pecuniary interest and the general nature thereof, where the interest of a member of Council has not been disclosed by reason of the member's absence from the meeting, to disclose the interest at the first open meeting attended by the member of Council and to otherwise comply with the *Act*

Name, Item and General Nature of Pecuniary Interest

No declarations of pecuniary interest were made by a member at the March 24, 2025, Regular Council meeting.

3. Adoption of the Minutes:

R2025-109

Motion by Councillor Nijjar

Seconded by Councillor Burbach

THAT the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of Council of The Corporation of the City of Stratford dated February 24, 2025, be adopted as printed.

Carried

4. Adoption of the Addenda to the Agenda:

R2025-110

Motion by Councillor McCabe

Seconded by Councillor Biehn

THAT the Addenda to the Regular Agenda of Council and Standing Committees dated March 24, 2025, be added to the Agenda as printed.

Carried

5. Report of the Committee of the Whole In-Camera Session:

5.1 At the March 24, 2025, Session, under the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended, matters concerning the following items were considered:

4.1 Confidential Report of the Director of Community Services - Collective Bargaining Update – IBEW 636 (Water Division) and ATU Local 741

(Transit Division) (CM-25-05) - Labour relations or employee negotiations (section 239.(2)(d));

5.1 Confidential Report of the Mayor with respect to the Interim CAO Position (CM-25-06) - Personal matters about an identifiable individual(s) including municipal employees or local board employees (section 239.(2)(b)); and Labour relations or employee negotiations (section 239.(2)(d)).

At the In-camera Session, direction was given to the City's Bargaining Committee for Item 4.1. For Item 5.1, the report was received and direction was given to the City Clerk to place this matter on an addenda provided to Council before the meeting.

5.2 ADDED - Appointment on an Interim Chief Administrative Officer for The Corporation of the City of Stratford

5.1 Confidential Report of the Mayor with respect to the Interim CAO Position (CM-25-06) - Personal matters about an identifiable individual(s) including municipal employees or local board employees (section 239.(2)(b)); and Labour relations or employee negotiations (section 239.(2)(d)).

R2025-111

Motion by Councillor Hunter

Seconded by Councillor Nijjar

THAT Adam Betteridge be appointed as Interim Chief Administrative Officer for The Corporation of the City of Stratford.

Carried

6. Hearings of Deputations and Presentations:

6.1 Adjournment to a Public Meeting under the Planning Act:

R2025-112

Motion by Councillor Biehn

Seconded by Councillor Burbach

THAT "Public Comment Z01-25 963 O'Loane Avenue - Costin" be received for information.

Carried

R2025-113

Motion by Councillor McCabe

Seconded by Councillor Burbach

THAT the Council meeting adjourn to a public meeting under the Planning Act to hear from members of the public on Zone Change Application Z01-25, for 963 O'Loane Avenue and to reconvene at the conclusion of the public meeting.

Carried

The Regular Council meeting adjourned to a Public Meeting at 7:07 p.m. and reconvened at 8:08 p.m.

6.2 ADDED - Request for Delegation Regarding Item 7.2 "Chief Administrative Officer Recruitment - Selection Committee" (COU25-25)

R2025-114

Motion by Councillor Burbach

Seconded by Councillor McCabe

THAT Loreena McKennitt be heard.

Carried

Loreena McKennitt spoke to the recruitment for a Chief Administrative Officer. Passages were read from David Siegel's book, "The Leadership Qualities of a Chief Administrative Officer". Loreena McKennitt requested the City secure outside professional assistance to assist with recruitment for this position.

7. Orders of the Day:

7.1 Resolution - 2025 Tax Rates and Tax Policy Matters (COU25-022)

Peter Frise, Vice President Policy and Consulting Services, from Municipal Tax Equity Consultants Inc., referring to a PowerPoint presentation, provided an overview of the Property Tax and Tax Policy Study. Members of Council, staff and Peter Frise discussed the study, options available to the City, and Mr. Frise's professional recommendations.

R2025-115

Motion by Councillor Hunter

Seconded by Councillor Sebben

THAT the report titled, "2025 Tax Rates and Tax Policy Matters" (COU25-022), be received for information;

THAT no change be made to the City's tax policies;

AND THAT a by-law to set tax ratios, tax rates and tax reductions for prescribed subclasses for the year 2025 and govern and regulate the finances of The Corporation of the City of Stratford be adopted.

A member noted that in the future there could be a large change should a tax policy be amended but that they did not want to see property taxes increase further.

Mayor Ritsma called the question on the motion.

Carried

The Regular Council meeting recessed at 9:01 p.m. and reconvened at 9:09 p.m.

7.2 Resolution - Chief Administrative Officer Recruitment - Selection Committee (COU25-025)

Councillor Sebben moved a motion that Councillor Biehn, Councillor Nijjar and Councillor Wordofa be appointed to the Chief Administrative Officer Selection Committee. There was no seconder for the motion.

R2025-116

Motion by Councillor Beatty

Seconded by Councillor McCabe

THAT Councillor Nijjar be appointed to the Chief Administrative Officer Selection Committee.

Carried

R2025-117

Motion by Councillor Hunter

Seconded by Councillor Briscoe

THAT Councillor Burbach be appointed to the Chief Administrative Officer Selection Committee.

Carried

R2025-118

Motion by Councillor Nijjar

Seconded by Councillor Briscoe

THAT Councillor Beatty be added to the Chief Administrative Officer Selection Committee.

Carried

It was questioned whether a staff member would be guiding the Selection Committee. Mayor Ritsma advised the current Chief Administrative Officer would be assisting. It was questioned and confirmed that the City has an external HR Consultant.

7.3 Resolution - Tax Deferral or Cancellation Programs for Fixed Income Households (COU25-024)

Motion by Councillor Hunter

Seconded by Councillor Nijjar

THAT the report titled, "Tax Deferral or Cancellation Programs for Fixed Income Households" (COU25-024), be received;

THAT staff investigate a deferral program to provide deferral of tax increases for the purposes of relieving financial hardship for persons struggling to pay their taxes, seniors, persons on ODSP and those with other challenges;

AND THAT Staff be directed to update the City's website regarding all programs available to residents, including details on how to access them.

A member clarified that the intent of the motion is to consider Option 4, as noted in the report, with additional parameters.

Members spoke in support of proceeding with Option 2, as noted in the report, which would provide tax deferrals for the purposes of relieving financial hardship under section 319(1) for seniors and persons with disabilities.

Councillor Hunter amended the motion to direct staff to investigate a tax deferral program for seniors and persons with disabilities.

It was questioned and confirmed that the intent was to request staff to investigate a program for consideration by Council.

Mayor Ritsma called the question on the motion as revised below:

R2025-119

Motion by Councillor Hunter

Seconded by Councillor Nijjar

THAT the report titled, "Tax Deferral or Cancellation Programs for Fixed Income Households" (COU25-024), be received;

THAT staff investigate a deferral program to provide tax deferrals for the purposes of relieving financial hardship for seniors and persons with disabilities;

AND THAT Staff be directed to update the City's website regarding all programs available to residents, including details on how to access them.

Carried

7.4 Resolution - Treasurer's 2024 Statement of Council Remuneration and Expenses (COU25-030)

R2025-120

Motion by Councillor Briscoe

Seconded by Councillor Wordofa

THAT the report titled, "Treasurer's 2024 Statement of Council Remuneration and Expenses" (COU25-030), be received for information.

Carried

7.5 Resolution - Consideration of Renewal and Expansion of Purchase of Service Agreement with Stratford Economic Enterprise Development Corporation (SEEDCo.) (COU25-033)

R2025-122

Motion by Councillor Beatty

Seconded by Councillor McCabe

THAT the request to renew the Purchase of Service Agreement with the Stratford Economic Enterprise Development Corporation, to include the additional services, for a five year term to December 31, 2030, be approved;

THAT the renewal take effect at time of signing of this agreement;

AND THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to execute the renewal agreement on behalf of The Corporation of the City of Stratford.

Members of Council and staff discussed the services to be provided under the agreement.

Mayor Ritsma called the question on the motion.

Carried

7.6 Resolution - Lease Agreement Extension for Stratford Economic Enterprise Development Corporation – 82 Erie Street (COU25-034)

R2025-123

Motion by Councillor Hunter

Seconded by Councillor Nijjar

THAT The Corporation of the City of Stratford extend the Lease Agreement with Stratford Economic Enterprise Development Corporation for the lease of a portion of space at 82 Erie Street (City Hall Annex) for a further five years commencing on January 1, 2026, and expiring on December 31, 2030;

AND THAT the Mayor and City Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to sign the Lease Agreement.

Carried

7.7 Resolution - Airport Farmland Lease Award (COU25-031)

R2025-124

Motion by Councillor Wordofa

Seconded by Councillor Nijjar

THAT the RFEOI for a three (3) year term from Peter Koot and Rachael Berta for the lease of 160 acres of farmland adjacent to the Stratford Municipal Airport, described as Part of Lots 39, 40, 41, Concession 5 and Parts of Lots 38, 39, 40 and 41 Concession 6, from March 1, 2025, to December 31, 2027, be accepted;

AND THAT the Mayor and City Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to sign the Farmland Lease Agreement.

Carried

7.8 Resolution - Zero Emission Vehicle Infrastructure Program Contribution Agreement (COU25-026)

Motion by Councillor Wordofa

Seconded by Councillor Burbach

THAT Council authorize the entering into of the Contribution Agreement between The Corporation of the City of Stratford and Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) for the Zero Emission Vehicle Infrastructure Program (ZEVIP);

THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to sign the Contribution Agreement;

AND THAT the Parking Reserve Fund be used to fund the City's portion of the project costs.

It was questioned whether the Province provided information for the denial of the application. The Deputy Clerk advised comments were not provided.

A member spoke against the motion citing the number of sessions per charging port.

A member spoke in favour of the motion citing the need for fast charging stations in the City.

Mayor Ritsma called the question on the motion.

Defeated

7.9 Resolution - T-2024-13 Albert Street Reconstruction Phase 2 Tender Award (COU25-023)

R2025-125

Motion by Councillor Beatty

Seconded by Councillor Nijjar

THAT the tender (T-2024-13) for the Albert Street Reconstruction Phase 2 Project be awarded to Van Bree Drainage and Bulldozing Limited o/a Van Bree Infrastructure, at a total tender price of \$4,179,650.25 including HST;

AND THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to sign the necessary Contract Agreement for construction contract T-2024-13.

Carried

7.10 Resolution - Lions Pool Liner Replacement – RFP Award (COU25-029)

R2025-126

Motion by Councillor Sebben

Seconded by Councillor Burbach

THAT Council accept the proposal for RFP-2025-10 for the supply and installation of a new lap pool liner system for the Lions Pool, from Ontario Pool Coatings Inc. at a total cost of \$141,887.32, including HST;

THAT Facilities Capital Reserve Fund R-R11-FACI be used to provide the funding required;

AND THAT if additional work is required, subject to approval by the Director of Community Services, an additional contingency be authorized to fund any potential issues that are not within the approved RFP scope of work from Facilities Capital Reserve Fund R-R11-FACI and in accordance with Policy F.1.15 Capital Budget Authorization for Expenditures.

Carried

7.11 Resolution - Kinsmen Club of Stratford, Ontario Pork Congress

The Kinsmen Club of Stratford has requested designation of the 2025 Ontario Pork Congress trade show to be held June 18-19, 2025, at the Stratford Rotary Complex, as a municipally significant event for the purpose of obtaining a liquor license.

Comments received from departments and agencies include:

- Corporate Services, Police Services, Building Services and Huron Perth Public Health have not expressed concerns with this application.
- no issues or concerns from the Facilities Division and the renter will be required to comply with the Municipal Alcohol policy and AGCO regulations.
- Fire Prevention provided the following comments:
 - Event requires an LLBO Special Occasion Permit/Inspection.
 - Confirmation of previously approved site plan required. Any changes to the site plan will require engineered/architectural drawings including occupancy limits to be submitted to fire prevention for review/approval.

- Fire route to be maintained at all times.

R2025-127

Motion by Councillor Wordofa

Seconded by Councillor Hunter

THAT City Council hereby designates the Ontario Pork Congress trade show to be held June 18-19, 2025, at the Stratford Rotary Complex as having municipal significance for the purpose of obtaining liquor licenses from the AGCO, subject to the necessary permits being obtained, compliance with the City's Municipal Alcohol Risk Policy and the required certificates of insurance being provided.

Carried

7.12 Proclamation - World Autism Day

The World Autism Day theme for 2025 is Celebrate the Spectrum.

R2025-128

Motion by Councillor Briscoe

Seconded by Councillor Wordofa

THAT Stratford City Council hereby proclaims April 2, 2025, as "World Autism Day" in the City of Stratford and authorizes the flying of the Autism Flag on April 2, 2025, to "Celebrate the Spectrum" to show support for the autism community and to raise awareness.

Carried

7.13 Proclamation - Human Values Day

R2025-129

Motion by Councillor Nijjar

Seconded by Councillor Hunter

THAT Stratford City Council hereby proclaims April 24, 2025, as "Human Values Day" in the City of Stratford in support of the fundamental Human Values of truth, right conduct, peace, love and non-violence.

Carried

7.14 Proclamation - Dairy Week

R2025-130

Motion by Councillor Beatty

Seconded by Councillor Wordofa

THAT Stratford City Council hereby proclaims April 1-4, 2025, as "Dairy Week" in the City of Stratford in celebration of the Dairy sector in Perth County and the City of Stratford, and authorizes the flying of a Dairy Producer flag at City Hall on April 3 and 4, 2025.

Carried

8. Business for Which Previous Notice Has Been Given:

None scheduled.

9. Reports of the Standing Committees:

There were no Standing Committee reports to be considered at the March 24, 2025 meeting.

10. Notice of Intent:

10.1 Notice of Public Meeting under the Planning Act

Stratford City Council will hold a Public Meeting on Monday, April 14, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. to hear from interested persons with respect to the following planning applications:

- Official Plan Amendment application OPA1-25 and Zone Change application Z09-24 for 315 and 317 Huron Street Plan 46 Part Lot 7 and 8 in the City of Stratford; and
- Draft Plan of Subdivision Application 31T24-003, Official Plan Amendment application OPA02-24 and Zoning By-law Amendment Application Z08-24 for 672 Mornington Street Part of Lot 1, Concession 2 (geographic Township of Ellice), now in the City of Stratford.

Additional information was available in the Notices attached to the agenda.

11. Reading of the By-laws:

The following By-laws required First and Second Readings and Third and Final Readings and were collectively upon unanimous vote of Council present:

R2025-131

Motion by Councillor Hunter

Seconded by Councillor Nijjar

THAT By-laws 28-2025 to 35-2025 be taken collectively.

Carried unanimously

R2025-132

Motion by Councillor McCabe

Seconded by Councillor Briscoe

THAT By-laws 28-2025 to 35-2025 be read a First and Second Time.

Carried two-thirds support

R2025-133

Motion by Councillor Beatty

Seconded by Councillor Biehn

THAT By-laws 28-2025 to 35-2025 be read a Third Time and Finally Passed.

Carried

11.1 Tax Rates 2025 - By-law 28-2025

To set tax ratios, tax rates and tax reductions for prescribed subclasses for the year 2025 and govern and regulate the finances of The Corporation of the City of Stratford.

11.2 Award Tender for Albert Street Reconstruction Phase 2 - By-law 29-2025

To authorize the acceptance of a tender, execution of the contract and the undertaking of work by Van Bree Drainage and Bulldozing Limited o/a Van Bree Infrastructure for the Albert Street Reconstruction Phase 2 Project (T-2024-13).

11.3 Conveyance to the City of Lot 4 Crane West Business Park - By-law 30-2025

To accept the transfer (conveyance) from 1000190996 Ontario Inc. to The Corporation of the City of Stratford of Lot 4, Plan 44R-5904, Crane West Business Park.

11.4 Award Proposal for Lions Pool Liner - By-law 31-2025

To authorize the acceptance of a proposal and the undertaking of work by Ontario Pool Coatings Inc. for the supply and installation of a new lap pool liner system for the Lions Pool (RFP-2025-10).

11.5 Lease of Farmland Adjacent to the Municipal Airport - Peter Koot and Rachael Berta - By-law 32-2025

To authorize the execution of a Lease Agreement with Peter Koot and Rachael Berta for farmland adjacent to the Stratford Municipal Airport for a three year term to December 31, 2027.

11.6 Amending Agreement to the Purchase of Service Agreement - SEEDCo. - By-law 33-2025

To authorize the entering into and execution of an Amending Agreement to the Purchase of Service Agreement with Stratford Economic Enterprise Development Corporation o/a investStratford to deliver economic development programs and services for the City of Stratford.

11.7 Lease Agreement Renewal - SEEDCo. - By-law 34-2025

To authorize the entering into and execution of a renewal of the Lease Agreement with the Stratford Economic Enterprise Development Corporation o/a investStratford for the lease of certain space at the City Hall Annex Building, 82 Erie Street, for a further five-year term from January 1, 2026, to December 31, 2030.

11.8 Authorize Signing of Contribution Agreement with Natural Resources Canada - Removed

To authorize the entering into and execution of a Contribution Agreement, and any other necessary documentation, between His Majesty the King in Right of Canada as represented by the Minister of Natural Resources and The Corporation of the City of Stratford to carry out the City of Stratford Electric Vehicle Charging Station Expansion Project.

11.9 ADDED - Appointment of Interim Chief Administrative Officer - By-law 35-2025

To appoint an Interim Chief Administrative Officer for The Corporation of the City of Stratford.

12. Consent Agenda: CA-2024-025 to CA-2024-040

12.1 CA-2025-036

R2025-134

Motion by Councillor Hunter

Seconded by Councillor McCabe

THAT CA-2025-036, being a resolution from the Municipality of Markstay-Warren regarding a request that the Province redistribute a portion of the Land Transfer Tax and the Federal government allocate part of the GST on new home sales to municipalities, be endorsed.

Carried

13. New Business:

13.1 Zero Emission

It was questioned whether the City could put in two chargers using the grant money. The Deputy Clerk advised that the \$200,000 in grants that the City was being provided covers \$50,000 for each eligible level 3 charging station to be installed. Should the number of stations to be installed decrease then the amount for the grant would also decrease.

13.2 Flying of the American Flag at City Facilities

Members discussed the flying of the American Flag at City Facilities.

13.3 OFSAA Championship Winners - St. Michaels Girls Catholic Secondary School

The St. Michaels Girls Catholic Secondary School was recognized for winning the OFSAA School championship.

13.4 National Championships Silver Winner - University of Waterloo Women's Hockey Team

The University of Waterloo Women's Hockey Team was recognized for winning silver at the National Championships.

13.5 Hybrid Buses

It was noted the City has received two new hybrid transit buses.

14. Adjournment to Standing Committees:

The next Regular Council meeting is April 14, 2025, in the Council Chamber, City Hall.

R2025-135

Motion by Councillor Burbach

Seconded by Councillor Beatty

THAT the Council meeting adjourn to convene into Standing Committees as follows:

- **Infrastructure, Transportation and Safety Committee [7:05 or thereafter following the Regular Council meeting]; and**
- **Social Services Committee [7:10 or thereafter following the Regular Council meeting];**

and to Committee of the Whole if necessary, and to reconvene into Council.

Carried

15. Council Reconvene:

15.1 Declarations of Pecuniary Interest made at Standing Committees

The Municipal Conflict of Interest Act requires any member of Council declaring a pecuniary interest and the general nature thereof, where the interest of a member of Council has not been disclosed by reason of the member's absence from the meeting, to disclose the interest at the first open meeting attended by the member of Council and otherwise comply with the Act.

Declarations of Pecuniary Interest made at Standing Committee meetings held on March 24, 2025 with respect to the following Items and re-stated at the reconvene portion of the Council meeting:

Name, Item and General Nature of Pecuniary Interest

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest made by a member at the March 24, 2025 Council Reconvene meeting.

15.2 Committee Reports

15.2.1 Infrastructure, Transportation and Safety Committee

R2025-136

Motion by Councillor Burbach

Seconded by Councillor Nijjar

THAT Item 5.1 of the Infrastructure, Transportation and Safety Committee meeting dated March 24, 2025, be adopted as follows:

5.1 Avon Street and Avondale Avenue Reconstruction - Open House and Recommendations (ITS25-004)

THAT Council receive the description of the proposed design for the Avon Street and Avondale Avenue Reconstruction Project;

THAT Council accept the design as presented at the Public Open House and on Engage Stratford;

AND THAT Council authorize Staff to proceed with construction tendering.

Carried

15.3 Reading of the By-laws (reconvene):

The following By-law required First and Second Readings and Third and Final Readings:

By-law 11.9 Confirmatory By-law - By-law 36-2025

To confirm the proceedings of Council of The Corporation of the City of Stratford at its meeting held on March 24, 2025.

R2025-137

Motion by Councillor Biehn

Seconded by Councillor Nijjar

THAT By-law 36-2025 be read a First and Second Time.

Carried two-thirds support

R2025-138

Motion by Councillor Sebben

Seconded by Councillor Beatty

THAT By-law 36-2025 be read a Third Time and Finally Passed.

Carried

15.4 Adjournment of Council Meeting

Mayor Ritsma recognized retiring Chief Administrative Officer, Joan Thomson, for 40 years of work with the City of Stratford. The Chief Administrative Officer, Joan Thomson, noted it has been 40 amazing years and that as a team a lot has been accomplished. Ms. Thomson encouraged people to consider working at the municipal level.

R2025-139

Motion by Councillor Hunter

Seconded by Councillor Nijjar

THAT the March 24, 2025, Regular Council meeting adjourn and convene into a closed session to consider the following matter:

4.1 Confidential Report of the Chief Administrative Officer with respect to a personnel matter (CM-25-07) - Personal matters about an identifiable individual(s) including municipal employees or local board employees (section 239.(2)(b)); and Labour relations or employee negotiations (section 239.(2)(d)).

Carried

Meeting Start Time: 7:00 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 9:44 P.M.

Reconvene Meeting Start Time: 9:55 P.M.

Reconvene Meeting End Time: 10:00 P.M.

"Martin Ritsma"

Mayor - Martin Ritsma

"Tatiana Dafoe"

Clerk - Tatiana Dafoe