



Stratford City Council Regular Council Open Session MINUTES

Meeting #: 4778th
Date: Monday, August 11, 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 Nijjar, Councillor Sebben, Councillor Wordofa

Regrets: Councillor Henderson and Councillor McCabe

Staff Present: Adam Betteridge - Interim Chief Administrative Officer, Tatiana Dafoe - City Clerk, Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services and Interim Director of Human Resources, Tim Wolfe - Director of Community Services, Karmen Krueger - Director of Corporate Services, Neil Anderson - Director of Emergency Services/Fire Chief, Audrey Pascual - Deputy Clerk, Nancy Roulston - Manager of Engineering, Corry Gunn - Manager of Day Care, Shannon Archer - Business Integration Manager

Also Present: Members of the Public

1. Call to Order:

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

Councillor Henderson and Councillor McCabe 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

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest made by a Member at the August 11, 2025 Regular Council meeting.

3. Adoption of the Minutes:

R2025-342

Motion by Councillor Nijjar

Seconded by Councillor Briscoe

THAT the Minutes of the Special Meeting of Council of The Corporation of the City of Stratford dated July 21, 2025, and the Regular Meeting of Council of The Corporation of the City of Stratford dated July 28, 2025, be adopted as printed.

Carried

4. Adoption of the Addendum to the Agenda:

R2025-343

Motion by Councillor Burbach

Seconded by Councillor Hunter

THAT the Addendum to the Regular Agenda of Council and Standing Committees dated August 11, 2025, be added to the Agenda as printed.

Carried

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

5.1 At the August 11, 2025, Session, under the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended, a matter concerning the following item was considered:

4.1 Confidential Report of the City Clerk with respect to an application for the Festival Hydro Services Inc. Board of Directors (CM-25-17) - Personal

matters about an identifiable individual(s) including municipal employees or local board employees (section 239.(2)(b)).

At the In-camera session, personal information was considered, and no direction was given regarding Item 4.1.

6. Hearings of Deputations and Presentations:

6.1 Request for Delegation regarding item 7.2 "Licensing Appeal Committee Appointment" (COU25-103)

R2025-344

Motion by Councillor Burbach

Seconded by Councillor Wordofa

THAT Barb Shaughnessy be heard.

Carried

Barb Shaughnessy presented to Council regarding the Licensing Appeal Committee Appointment. Highlights of the presentation included:

- an overview of the composition of similar appeal committees in other municipalities including Niagara Falls, Niagara Region, Whitby, Caledon, Essex, and Barrie;
- the committees in the municipalities noted being composed of members of the public;
- an overview of the qualifications required for the appeal committees in other municipalities;
- there being concerns with an appeal committee comprised of Council members only due to the lack of technical knowledge regarding the matters coming before the committee;
- there being concerns with potential conflicts of interest;
- the businesses bringing their appeals to the committee hiring lawyers and planners to represent them and deserve to be heard by a committee who has the expertise to make decisions on these matters;

- it being proposed that the Committee of Adjustment, which is an independent committee appointed by Council, hear the appeals as they are already familiar with planning matters;
- it being proposed that the Committee of Adjustment hear the appeal until a formal Licensing Appeal Committee is formed; and
- it being questioned who will be providing the training to the Licensing Appeal Committee and whether the training will be open to the public.

7. Orders of the Day:

7.1 Resolution - Fees and Charges For 2026 (COU25-102)

R2025-345

Motion by Councillor Hunter

Seconded by Councillor Beatty

THAT the 2026 Fees and Charges By-law to set the fees and charges for services performed by the City in 2026 be approved as presented in Report COU25-102 with an effective date of January 1, 2026;

THAT the Fees and Charges By-law 99-2024, as amended, be repealed upon the new Fees and Charges By-law coming into force and effect;

AND THAT direction be given to the City Clerk to list the 2026 Fees and Charges By-law on a future agenda for consideration by Council.

Members of Council and staff held a discussion regarding the following:

- it being questioned how long the summer ice rates were at \$210 before the rate was increased;
- the Director of Community Services noting that the proposed rate is intended for the recovery of the extra energy consumption costs for the summer ice;
- the Director of Community Services noting that the ice rates were increased slightly last year and that an annual review of rates at other municipal facilities is completed; and

- there being concerns with the increase in the Agriplex rental rates which could be detrimental to local groups.

Motion by Councillor Sebben

Seconded by Councillor Wordofa

THAT the motion be amended to refer the proposed increase to the Stratford Agriplex - Indoor (All 4 courts for sport tournament use) fee to staff for further review.

Members of Council and staff held a discussion regarding the amendment as follows:

- the Director of Community Services noting that the increase is partly due to the increase in sports tourism for the City and to provide a rate that is sustainable but also competitive;
- local groups already receiving a special discounted rate for their rentals; and
- the fee increase being proposed following a review of rates from other municipalities and the proposed increased fee being well under average cost.

The Mayor called the question on the motion.

Defeated

Members of Council and staff held further discussion regarding the bag tag fees. The Director of Corporate Services noted the increase is based on the recommendations from the waste fee study completed in 2021.

The Mayor called the question on the motion.

Carried

7.2 Resolution - Licensing Appeal Committee Appointment (COU25-103)

Members of Council and staff held a discussion regarding the following:

- having the Committee of Adjustment hear the licensing appeal;
- the City Clerk noting that the Committee of Adjustment was formed for a very specific purpose;

- it being recommended that the terms of reference for the Licensing Appeal Committee be revised to account for the criteria noted by the delegation and Committee of Adjustment members being eligible to apply to be part of the Appeal Committee;
- the Interim Chief Administrative Officer noting that the licensing appeals are currently infrequent but may change in the future;
- it being noted that the Committee of Adjustment in other municipalities are comprised of Council members and it is possible for Stratford Council members to sit on the City's Committee of Adjustment;
- there being no provision in the Municipal Act that prescribes who can sit on a licensing appeal committee;
- the terms of reference for the Licensing Appeal Committee being revised following the hearing of the appeal;
- a member noting they are not in support of the composition of the committee and would prefer to have trained members of the public hear the appeals; and
- the City Clerk noting that the appointments to the Licensing Appeal Committee will only be applicable for the current term of Council and the next Council can decide on the composition and appointment when it comes for their consideration.

R2025-346

Motion by Councillor Beatty

Seconded by Councillor Burbach

THAT Councillor Burbach, Councillor Nijjar, and Mayor Ritsma be appointed to act as the Licensing Appeal Committee under the Bed & Breakfast Licensing By-law 180-2004 and the Accommodation Licensing By-law 130-2022;

AND THAT a by-law be adopted to establish the Licensing Appeal Committee and appoint members.

Carried

R2025-347

Motion by Councillor Sebben

Seconded by Councillor Biehn

THAT the review of the composition of the Licensing Appeal Committee be referred to staff to present options to the new term of Council.

Carried

7.3 Resolution - Contracted Human Resources Support Services Update (COU25-099)

R2025-348

Motion by Councillor Hunter

Seconded by Councillor Nijjar

THAT the report titled, "Contracted Human Resources Support Services Update" (COU25-099), be received for information;

THAT in accordance with the City's Procurement Policy, Council authorize the continuation of transitional support services with Ward & Uptigrove Human Resources Solutions for a term concluding December 31, 2025;

AND THAT the expenditures for this service continue to be recorded under HR consulting costs within the departmental budget.

Carried

7.4 Resolution - Shift in Staffing Complement at Anne Hathaway Day Care (COU25-097)

R2025-349

Motion by Councillor Briscoe

Seconded by Councillor Burbach

THAT Council support changing the staffing model at Anne Hathaway Day Care Centre;

AND THAT the Director of Social Services / Interim Director of Human Resources be authorized to implement the changes in staffing model as noted, removing 4,500 hours of teaching assistant supply hours and adding two full time Teaching Assistant positions.

Carried

7.5 Resolution - Appointment to the Festival Hydro Services Inc. Board of Directors (COU25-100)

R2025-350

Motion by Councillor Beatty

Seconded by Councillor Biehn

THAT John Hoo be appointed to the Festival Hydro Services Inc. Board of Directors for a four year term commencing December 1, 2025;

AND THAT a by-law be adopted to appoint John Hoo to the Board effective December 1, 2025.

Carried

7.6 Resolution - New Mobility Bus Tender Award (COU25-098)

R2025-351

Motion by Councillor Biehn

Seconded by Councillor Burbach

THAT the proposal (RFP-2025-45) for the supply and delivery of two (2) High Floor Mobility Buses be awarded to Girardin Ontario Inc. in the amount of \$345,600.10 (including HST).

Carried

7.7 Resolution - Resignation from Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee and Energy & Environment Advisory Committee

R2025-352

Motion by Councillor Biehn

Seconded by Councillor Burbach

THAT the resignation of Linda Wakenhut from the Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee and the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee effective December 31, 2025, be accepted.

Carried

7.8 Resolution - Resignation from the Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee

R2025-353

Motion by Councillor Biehn

Seconded by Councillor Nijjar

THAT the resignation of Zach Schultz from the Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee be accepted.

Carried

7.9 Proclamation - Rail Safety Week

R2025-354

Motion by Councillor Wordofa

Seconded by Councillor Hunter

THAT Stratford City Council hereby proclaims September 15 to 21, 2025 as "Rail Safety Week" in the City of Stratford to raise awareness of rail safety, save lives and prevent injuries in communities including the City of Stratford.

Carried

8. Business for Which Previous Notice Has Been Given:

None noted.

9. Reports of the Standing Committees:

9.1 Report of the Social Services Committee

R2025-355

Motion by Councillor Biehn

Seconded by Councillor Burbach

THAT the Report of the Social Services Committee dated August 11, 2025, be adopted as printed.

Carried

9.1.1 Annual Community Income Tax Clinic for Completion of 2024 Returns (SOC25-008)

THAT the City of Stratford issue a thank you to all businesses that provided their support and services during the Annual Community Income Tax Clinic.

10. Notice of Intent:

10.1 Notice of Motion

It was noted that at the September 8, 2025 Regular meeting, Councillor Wordofa intends to put forward the following motion for consideration:

THAT the Mayor be asked to include a temporary shelter in the Rotary Complex for homeless people in the winter as part of the 2026 budget.

10.2 Notice of Motion

It was noted that at the September 8, 2025, Regular Council meeting, Councillor Wordofa intends to put forward the following motion for consideration:

THAT a traffic light be installed at the intersection of George Street and Downie Street.

11. Reading of the By-laws:

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

A member requested that Item 11.6 (By-law 102-2025) be taken separately.

R2025-356

Motion by Councillor Beatty

Seconded by Councillor Hunter

THAT By-laws 95-2025 to 101-2025 be taken collectively.

Carried unanimously

R2025-357

Motion by Councillor Burbach

Seconded by Councillor Wordofa

THAT By-laws 95-2025 to 101-2025 be read a First and Second Time.

Carried two-thirds support

R2025-358

Motion by Councillor Beatty

Seconded by Councillor Nijjar

THAT By-laws 95-2025 to 101-2025 be read a Third Time and Finally Passed.

Carried

R2025-359

Motion by Councillor Biehn

Seconded by Councillor Beatty

THAT By-law 102-2025 be read a First and Second Time.

Carried two-thirds support

R2025-360

Motion by Councillor Burbach

Seconded by Councillor Hunter

THAT By-law 102-2025 be read a Third Time and Finally Passed.

Carried

11.1 Appoint Municipal By-law Enforcement Officers - By-law 95-2025

To amend By-law 60-2003 as amended, to appoint Municipal By-law Enforcement Officers for the purpose of enforcing City of Stratford By-laws.

11.2 Appoint Inspector under the Building Code Act - By-law 96-2025

To amend By-law 8-2009, as amended, to appoint Cole Archer as Inspector under the Building Code Act for The Corporation of the City of Stratford.

11.3 Award Proposal for High Floor Mobility Buses - By-law 97-2025

To authorize the acceptance of a proposal by Girardin Ontario Inc. for the supply and delivery of two (2) High Floor Mobility Buses (RFP-2025-45).

11.4 Festival Hydro Services Inc. Board Appointment - By-law 98-2025

To amend By-law 4-2023, as amended, to make an appointment to the Festival Hydro Services Inc. Board of Directors.

11.5 Encroachment Agreement - 40 Daly Avenue - By-law 99-2025

To authorize the entering into and execution of an encroachment agreement with Bruce Whitaker and Thomas Atlee to permit the existing retaining wall and parking pad to encroach onto the Daly Avenue municipal road allowance at 40 Daly Avenue.

11.6 Licensing Appeal Committee - By-law 102-2025

To establish a Licensing Appeal Committee.

11.7 Appoint Members to the Licensing Appeal Committee - By-law 100-2025

To amend By-law 4-2023, as amended, to appoint members to the Licensing Appeal Committee.

11.8 Amend Fees and Charges By-law - EV Charger User Fees - By-law 101-2025

To amend the Fees and Charges By-law 99-2024, as amended, for The Corporation of the City of Stratford, to include fees for Electric Vehicle Charging Stations.

12. Consent Agenda: CA-2025-097 to CA-2025-100

12.1 CA-2025-100

R2025-361

Motion by Councillor Burbach

Seconded by Councillor Biehn

THAT CA-2025-100, being a resolution from The Corporation of the City of St. Catherines regarding the Elect Respect Pledge, be endorsed.

Carried

13. New Business:

13.1 Avon River Incident

A member noted that the Avon River incident was a serious issue which resulted in losses for downtown businesses as well as the death of animals in the river. The member added that the incident is a tragedy for the community especially as it occurred at the height of tourist season.

Members of Council and staff held a discussion regarding the matter as follows:

- the Mayor noting that staff are working with the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority on proposals for raising the water level in the river;
- Upper Thames River Conservation Authority having been requested to provide Council with an update regarding the situation as well as the steps to be taken to mitigate the issue in the future;

- the City working with the individuals who have been directly impacted by the issue;
- the Interim Chief Administrative Officer noting their appreciation for staff who responded to the issue;
- staff being in close communication with the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority regarding the matter and a debrief as well as the release of information regarding the clean-up efforts being planned in the coming weeks;
- it being questioned who will be responsible for the incident; and
- the Interim Chief Administrative Officer noting that proper flood control infrastructure is in place and the failure did not result from the actions of staff but rather the design of the gate.

14. Adjournment to Standing Committees:

The next Regular Council meeting is September 8, 2025, in the Council Chamber, City Hall.

R2025-362

Motion by Councillor Biehn

Seconded by Councillor Burbach

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

- **Finance and Labour Relations Committee [7:05 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 August 11, 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 August 11, 2025 Reconvene meeting.

15.2 Committee Reports

15.2.1 Finance and Labour Relations Committee

R2025-363

Motion by Councillor Hunter

Seconded by Councillor Biehn

THAT Items 6.2 and 6.3 of the Finance and Labour Relations Committee meeting dated August 11, 2025, be adopted as follows:

6.2 Appointment of Deputy Mayor (FIN25-023)

THAT the process to appoint a deputy mayor continue to be completed by the Mayor and Council.

6.3 2026 Municipal and School Board Election Alternative Voting Methods (FIN25-024)

THAT the use of internet and telephone voting in the 2026 municipal and school board election be approved;

AND THAT free transit on election day be approved to support access and remove barriers to voting for the 2026 municipal and school board election;

AND THAT the Clerk be directed to prepare a by-law authorizing the use of internet and telephone voting in the 2026 municipal and school board election.

Carried

15.3 Reading of the Confirmatory By-law (reconvene):

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

11.9 Confirmatory By-law 103-2025

To confirm the proceedings of Council of The Corporation of the City of Stratford at its meeting held on August 11, 2025.

R2025-364

Motion by Councillor Biehn

Seconded by Councillor Burbach

THAT By-law 103-2025 be read a First and Second Time.

Carried two-thirds support

R2025-365

Motion by Councillor Nijjar

Seconded by Councillor Biehn

THAT By-law 103-2025 be read a Third Time and Finally Passed.

Carried

15.4 Adjournment of Council Meeting

R2025-366

Motion by Councillor Hunter

Seconded by Councillor Wordofa

THAT the August 11, 2025, Regular Council meeting adjourn.

Carried

Meeting Start Time: 7:00 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 7:44 P.M.

Reconvene Meeting Start Time: 8:24 P.M.

Reconvene Meeting End Time: 8:25 P.M.

Mayor - Martin Ritsma

Clerk - Tatiana Dafoe