



## **The Corporation of the City of Stratford Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee**

### **MINUTES**

Date: October 21, 2025  
Time: 4:30 P.M.  
Location: Council Chamber, City Hall

Sub-committee Present: Councillor Hunter - Chair Presiding, Councillor McCabe - Vice Chair, Councillor Beatty, Councillor Burbach, Councillor Nijjar

Staff Present: Karmen Krueger - Director of Corporate Services, Audrey Pascual - Deputy Clerk, Miranda Franken - Council Clerk Secretary

Also present: Zac Gribble - Executive Director Destination Stratford , Members of the Public

#### **1. Call to Order**

The Chair called the meeting to Order.

Land Acknowledgment

Moment of Silent Reflection

Respectful Conduct Statement

#### **2. Disclosure 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 otherwise comply with the *Act*.

Name, Item and General Nature of Pecuniary Interest

No disclosures of pecuniary interest were made by a Member at the October 21, 2025, Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee meeting.

**3. Delegations**

None scheduled.

**4. Report of the Director of Corporate Services**

**4.1 Destination Stratford Update Sept 16, 2025 (FIN25-028)**

**Staff Recommendation:** THAT the report titled, "Destination Stratford Update Sept 16 2025" (FIN25-028), dated September 16, 2025, be received for information.

**Sub-committee Discussion:** Zac Gribble, Executive Director of Destination Stratford, presented the update. Highlights of the discussion included:

- the year-to-date budget being on track;
- Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) revenues coming in more regularly and estimated to be on target with final numbers to be known in February 2026;
- success with grants related to Sport Tourism;
- \$25,000 Walking Soccer Senior Community Grant Program being largely completed but having an added objective of hosting a Walking Soccer Summit later this year;
- the summit not being a requirement but possible through stretching grant funds, building on the success of the community event and investing in Walking Soccer infrastructure;
- Walking Soccer being fast growing with a large opportunity for Stratford to play a leadership role in Canada;
- hosting the summit to show leadership in Ontario and nationally;
- the community Walking Soccer event hosted all four National teams with the local Walking Soccer membership club having seen a 25 percent increase in membership as a result of the event;
- other grants listed in the report being linked to Lights on Stratford;

- Winter Canada and the Bird Friendly City application being underway on behalf of the City;
- there being no fiscal responsibility from the City but there would be objectives to work towards annually to be a Bird Friendly City;
- results of the application expected the week of October 27, 2025;
- the Bird Friendly City designation being an example of regenerative tourism and a community building opportunity to benefit quality of life;
- Stratford After Dark Après Theatre is in process with the Winter Music pop up based on the success of 2024;
- the music pop up recipients to be announced the week of October 27, 2025 with the program being over subscribed;
- the Poet Laureate Program requiring three public activations and approximately fifty having been logged with a successful and active program;
- the program having a small investment from Destination Stratford and working with the Stratford Public Library to realize the program;
- the Youth Poet Laureate program being a 1 year post with recruitment for a second year to be announced in 2026;
- a poetry contest through the program with a focus on Perth County running to the end of October 2025 with 60 individual submissions to the contest;
- culinary trails sales being directly involved in economic and destination development;
- annual data to the end of September 2025 indicating 2,426 trail sales resulting in 13,500 visits to small businesses;
- January 2020 to September 2025 data indicating over 120, 000 visits to local business partners through the culinary trail sales;
- a Destination Stratford session at Communities in Bloom being dedicated to winter development initiatives with locations across the country reaching out to express interest;

- cell mobility reports being gathered a number of times annually with yearly usage of Tom Patterson Island in 2024 indicating January as the busiest month;
- Tom Patterson Island being a key part of park system and having been closed prior to Lights on Stratford;
- Market Square data indicating December as the busiest month with this being contrary to expectations of the summer tourist season;
- data indicating this as an active sector with Lights On bringing a concentrated number of people and opportunity;
- a quote was shared by the Stratford Festival in support of Lights On with the 2025 theatre season having been extended into December to meet Lights On Stratford;
- Lights On Stratford being a cultural anchor tenant to allow others to thrive and to demonstrate that it is possible to enrich experiences in winter months with collective contribution;
- in support of the Bird Friendly City application light art "Birds of a Feather" being cocreated for Tom Patterson Island and to be owned by Destination Stratford and Lights On for use throughout the city year round and to be lent to other cities for revenue;
- direct formal partnership with Nature Canada and Birds Canada who will be providing people and resources to add programming through Lights On and throughout the year through partners like Stratford Library; and
- a community naming challenge for the birds with over 250 people having supplied names including Houdini, Tom Twitterson and Jayston Peeper.

Motion by Councillor McCabe

**Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Destination Stratford Update Sept 16 2025" (FIN25-028), dated September 16, 2025, be received for information.**

**Carried**

#### **4.2 Treasurer's Statement for Development Charges and Parkland Reserve Funds 2024 (FIN25-031)**

**Staff Recommendation:** THAT the 2024 Treasurer's Statement for City of Stratford Development Charges Reserve Funds be received for information;

AND THAT the 2024 Treasurer's Statement for City of Stratford Parkland Dedication Reserve Fund be received for information.

Motion by Councillor Nijjar

**Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the 2024 Treasurer's Statement for City of Stratford Development Charges Reserve Funds be received for information;**

**AND THAT the 2024 Treasurer's Statement for City of Stratford Parkland Dedication Reserve Fund be received for information.**

**Sub-committee Discussion:** Members of Sub-committee and Staff discussed the report. Highlights included:

- a Member commented that a lot of development charges having been put towards recreation and a Recreation Master Plan being requested in the 2026 Budget package and this being needed to make a best plan on spending;
- in response to a Member question staff noted the Planning Act prescribing what Parkland Dedication Funds can be used for with the City not having a dedicated plan as it is not regularly incoming;
- there being periodical use as projects permit and a possible opportunity to use funds for the upcoming park development by the Rotary Complex with staff exploring options;
- the Reserve Fund Policy laying out generalities with typical use for growth and development projects rather than equipment replacement projects.

The Chair called the question.

**Carried**

**4.3 Festival Hydro Update for Q2 ending June 30, 2025 (FIN25-032)**

**Staff Recommendation:** THAT the Festival Hydro Inc. financial results and commentary for the period ended June 30, 2025, be received for information;

AND THAT Festival Hydro Services Inc. financial results and commentary for the period ended June 30, 2025, be received for information.

Motion by Councillor Beatty

**Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the Festival Hydro Inc. financial results and commentary for the period ended June 30, 2025, be received for information;**

**AND THAT Festival Hydro Services Inc. financial results and commentary for the period ended June 30, 2025, be received for information.**

**Carried**

**4.4 Municipal Debt Updates and Limits (FIN25-033)**

**Staff Recommendation:** THAT the report titled, "Municipal Debt Updates and Limits" (FIN25-033), be received for information.

Motion by Councillor McCabe

**Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Municipal Debt Updates and Limits" (FIN25-033), be received for information.**

**Carried**

**5. Report of the Council Committee Coordinator**

**5.1 Take-out Container Levy Update (FIN25-034)**

**Staff Recommendation:** THAT the review of a mandatory Single-use and Takeaway Items By-law in the City of Stratford, similar to the by-law developed by the City of Toronto, be referred to staff.

Motion by Councillor Burbach

**Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the review of a mandatory Single-use and Takeaway Items By-law in the City of Stratford, similar to the by-law developed by the City of Toronto, be referred to staff.**

**Carried**

**6. Advisory Committee/Outside Board Minutes**

There were no Advisory Committee/Outside Board minutes to be provided to Sub-committee.

**7. Next Sub-committee Meeting**

The next Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee meeting is November 18, 2025, at 4:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber, City Hall.

**8. Adjournment**

Motion by Councillor Burbach

**Sub-committee Decision: THAT the Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee meeting adjourn.**

**Carried**

Meeting Start Time: 4:30 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 4:48 P.M.