



The Corporation of the City of Stratford Community Services Sub-committee

MINUTES

Date: April 16, 2026
Time: 4:30 P.M.
Location: Council Chamber, City Hall

Sub-committee Present: Councillor Beatty - Chair Presiding, Councillor Briscoe, Councillor Sebben

Regrets: Councillor Henderson, Councillor Wordofa

Staff Present: Tim Wolfe - Director of Community Services, André Morin – Chief Executive Officer, Audrey Pascual - Deputy Clerk, Michael Mousley - Manager of Transit, Nathaniel Smith – Supervisor of Transit, Victoria Trotter - Council Committee Coordinator, Miranda Franken - Council Clerk Secretary

Also present: Members of the Public

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the Meeting to Order.

Councillor Henderson and Councillor Wordofa provided regrets for this meeting.

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 Community Services Sub-committee meeting.

3. Delegations

Delegations have been listed under item 4.1.

4. Report of the Council Committee Coordinator

4.1 Energy and Environment Advisory Committee Request for 2027 Free Transit Pilot (COM26-001)

Sub-committee Discussion: The Council Committee Coordinator provided a brief overview of the report. Highlights included the following:

- the Energy and Environment Advisory Committee (E&E) having initiated discussion regarding enhancements to transit to offset Green House Gas (GHG) emissions including extended transit hours and a free transit pilot;
- a motion was made at the March 5, 2026, E&E meeting in support of the Community Climate Action Plan and requesting a 1-year free transit pilot program; and
- the request from E&E suggests lost fare revenue be replaced with savings from fare collection procedures and rebates from the provincial gas tax revenue.

ADDED - Following the publishing of the agenda, Jane Marie Mitchell requested to speak to Sub-committee in support of Option 4, to approve the request and initiate a 1-year free transit pilot project in 2027.

Motion by Councillor Briscoe

THAT Jane Marie Mitchell be heard.

Carried

Jane Marie Mitchell spoke to Sub-committee to request staff be directed to prepare a report using Orangeville, Ontario as a model towards free transit. Benefits of the pilot were highlighted including improved equity and access, decreased emissions addressing climate concerns and improved operational simplicity.

Discussion was held between Sub-committee and staff. Highlights of the discussion included the following:

- Members noted support for the idea but want more information, further options and more time for review;

Motion by Councillor Sebben

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT staff be directed to review and conduct a cost/benefit analysis of options for implementing and funding a free transit pilot project, along with alternatives to increase transit ridership;

AND THAT the report be presented to Community Services Committee.

- a Member noted Stratford being a different city in each season and requested options be presented for a pilot period of minimum 1 year to capture a school year;
- Members noted the change in fuel prices and geopolitical changes that require further time to study;
- the Director of Community Services cautioned that the City does not currently run special buses to the high school with this being a yellow bus service;
- to implement City Transit to the high schools two more buses would be required and further cost analysis as well as discussion with the school board regarding how this would impact the current yellow bus service;
- staff noted additional hybrid buses are to be added to the fleet and further carbon footprint initiatives are upcoming; and
- Orangeville having 2 bus routes and Stratford having 7 routes with a more fulsome review required.

The Chair called the question on the motion.

Carried

5. Department Update

Sub-committee Discussion: The Director of Community Services provided an overview of the Department Update highlighting the following:

- a cemetery staff member is retiring after 37 years with the City;
- Parks and Cemetery being in a seasonal transition time with trees coming in for subdivisions and replacement trees;
- Transit staff working on the Local Partnership Agreement with West Perth being a partner;
- Parallel Transit having ordered 2 mobility buses with expectation these will be in the fleet early Summer, 2026;
- Recreation day camp and swim registration having opened and swim spaces filled within 30 seconds;
- Sports Tourism having hosted the Ontario Fencing Association Tournament with the event attended by 800 people;
- The Canadian Dairy Xpo (CDX) had 9,900 attendees on the first day and 8,800 attendees on the second day of the event;
- Capital Projects underway including the Boathouse railing and the Bandshell refurbishment with further projects to begin; and
- the projects being on budget.

6. Advisory Committee/Outside Board Minutes

The following Advisory Committee minutes were provided for the information of Sub-committee:

- The Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee minutes of August 7, 2025, December 4, 2025, and February 11, 2026.

7. Next Sub-committee Meeting

The next Community Services Sub-committee meeting will be held May 14, 2026, at 4:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber if required.

8. Adjournment

Motion by Councillor Briscoe

Sub-committee Decision: THAT the Community Services Sub-committee meeting adjourn.

Carried

Meeting Start Time: 4:30 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 4:54 P.M.