



**Stratford City Council
Special Council Open Session
AGENDA**

Meeting #: 4784th
Date: Monday, October 20, 2025
Time: 2:00 P.M.
Location: Council Chamber, City Hall
Council Present: Mayor Ritsma - Chair Presiding, Councillor Beatty, Councillor Biehn, Councillor Burbach, Councillor Hunter, Councillor McCabe, Councillor Sebben, Councillor Wordofa
Staff Present: André Morin - Chief Administrative Officer, Tatiana Dafoe - City Clerk, Audrey Pascual - Deputy Clerk, Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services and Interim Director of Human Resources, Taylor Crinklaw - Director of Infrastructure Services, Karmen Krueger - Director of Corporate Services, Tim Wolfe - Director of Community Services, Adam Betteridge - Director of Building and Planning Services, Neil Anderson - Director of Emergency Services/Fire Chief, Jeff Wilson - Manager of Housing

To watch the Council meeting live, please click the following link:

<https://video.isilive.ca/stratford/live.html>

A video recording of the meeting will also be available through a link on the City's website

<https://calendar.stratford.ca/meetings> following the meeting.

Pages

1. Call to Order:

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

Councillor Henderson and Councillor Nijjar provided regrets for this meeting.

Land Acknowledgment

Moment of Silent Reflection

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 Thereof

3. Orders of the Day:

3.1 Resolution - 'Not One More Night' Winter Warming Solutions (COU25-132)

1 - 5

Motion by

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Not One More Night' Winter Warming Solutions" (COU25-132), be received for information;

AND THAT Council direct next steps regarding the homelessness response for the upcoming winter.

4. Reading of the By-laws:

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

4.1 Confirmatory By-law

To confirm the proceedings of Council of The Corporation of the City of Stratford at its meeting held on October 20, 2025.

Motion by

THAT By-law 4.1 be read a First and Second Time.

Motion by

THAT By-law 4.1 be read a Third Time and Finally Passed.

5. Adjournment:

Motion by

THAT the October 20, 2025, Special Council Meeting adjourn.



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: October 20, 2025
To: Mayor and Council
From: Michelle Melady, Research and Program Analyst
 John Ritz, Supervisor of Homelessness and Housing Stability
 Jeff Wilson, Manager of Housing
Report Number: COU25-132
Attachments: None

Title: 'Not One More Night' Winter Warming Solutions

Objective: To provide information regarding current proposed winter warming solutions as well as housing stability and homelessness responses

Background:

The City of Stratford, in collaboration with municipal and community partners, has implemented comprehensive measures to address homelessness, focusing on housing stability and prevention. These efforts include the development of a Coordinated Access System for Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys. This system provides a standardized process for assessing, prioritizing, and matching households experiencing homelessness with appropriate housing and support services, ensuring a seamless and equitable approach across all agencies. Internally, the City of Stratford prioritizes expedited access to rent-geared-to-income housing for homeless individuals and families, aiming to reduce barriers to permanent housing solutions.

Mobile street outreach positions have been created to provide direct engagement and support, connecting unhoused individuals to necessary services throughout the region. The Intensive Case Management Program, operated in partnership with organizations such as Optimism Place, Little Lakes Residential, and the Canadian Mental Health Society Huron Perth, offers personalized support for individuals and families with multiple barriers, helping them access and maintain stable housing. Emergency accommodation is provided through local motels, with outreach support services offered according to individual needs. The City also implements a cold weather protocol, active when temperatures drop below -15° C with windchill, to protect the unhoused from exposure risks. Through our encampment mapping strategy outreach staff contacts the individuals living unsheltered, identify that there is a cold weather advisory and

encourage an emergency accommodation stay to get them out of the elements. If the individual is service restricted, they safety plan with the individual on best practices to stay safe.

Shelterlink Youth Services provides transitional housing for our youth population aged 16-24, and Optimism Place has recently expanded both their bed and service capacity for women and children fleeing violence.

From November to April, approximately 150 individuals access emergency accommodations supported by City of Stratford Social Services, with operations costing around \$300,000 for the 6-month period. This coordinated effort involves municipal staff, health and community service providers, and emergency services to support vulnerable populations. While these initiatives align with best practices in similar southwestern Ontario municipalities, a service delivery gap exists. If an individual is restricted from accessing emergency accommodation, there is no alternative program available. In such cases, outreach workers must create a safety plan to protect them from the elements. Consequently, some individuals resort to the hospital emergency room, 24-hour business establishments or police departments for warmth, which is not the intended use of these services.

The interventions listed above represent the municipality's and local service providers efforts to prevent homelessness. The long-term solution to preventing and ending homelessness is the creation of affordable housing, with a focus on supportive/supported projects that, meets the needs of all individuals and families.

At the September 8, 2025, Regular Meeting, Council adopted the following resolution:

THAT staff be directed to request an update from the Ending Homelessness Leadership Group and the Council of Churches on emergency shelter plans during the winter and that the update be provided at a future Council meeting.

Following this direction, City of Stratford staff coordinated a discussion amongst a group including members of the Ending Homelessness Leadership Group and the Council of Churches which was convened to follow Council's direction. Organizations in attendance included the City of Stratford, the Canadian Mental Health Association Huron Perth, the Stratford Police Service, the United Way Huron Perth, the Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance, Jubilee Stratford Church, and St. Paul's Anglican Church. A recommended solution is to leverage existing resources in the community by expanding the operations of the Connection Centre operated at St. Paul's Anglican Church by the Canadian Mental Health Association Huron Perth and funded through the City of Stratford. The intention of this solution is to be temporary and to create a collaborative program to support individuals who might be unable to access emergency accommodations through the motel programs. The cost of this program would be \$350,000. A proposed campaign to galvanize the community behind this project is envisioned to be titled 'Not One More Night' and is intended to raise funds, recruit volunteers, and solicit donations.

Analysis: The existing Connection Centre is funded by the United Way Perth Huron and the City of Stratford. The program currently offers service from 12:00 pm - 5:00 pm from Monday - Friday. It is being proposed to use the existing program to expand services for the use of a warming centre for up to six months over the colder winter months of the year. The proposed expansion would mean the service hours are extended and would operate 7 days a week from 10:00 am - 5:00 pm and 7:00 pm - 7:00 am overnight. The purpose for this service is to provide a warm, safe space for those experiencing homelessness or temporary respite for who may be precariously housed. This program would be an alternative to a shelter because no beds or meals would be provided, and the service would be a resting space with tables and refreshments. Emergency services have identified that this would assist them in finding a warm, safe space for individuals beyond regular business hours. The program would be staffed overnight by two Social Service Workers employed by the Canadian Mental Health Association Huron Perth and a private security guard. If approved, City staff will collaborate with the Canadian Mental Health Association Huron Perth to determine performance measures and will report to Council and the Ending Homelessness Leadership Group.

Surveys were conducted with individuals currently accessing the Connection Centre and, of the 16 individual respondents, 15 indicated they would access a warming centre. The results of the survey show a small sample of participants who access the Connection Centre, although the overall trend of the answers shows participants anticipate that there is a need for a warming centre to at least some capacity. The survey does not ask how often the participants would use the warming centre, so these results could not be used to predict attendance on a regular basis.

Council may consider enhancing service provisions by integrating the warming center with the existing emergency accommodation program, which currently utilizes motel stays. Alternatively, Council might opt to temporarily suspend the emergency accommodation program and utilize the warming center exclusively for a six-month duration.

If the warming center is established for a six-month period, it is essential to collect relevant data and analyze outcomes to assess the impact on addressing the identified gaps. Management will present reports to Council to evaluate the feasibility and efficacy of the warming center.

The proposed temporary winter warming centre would not remove the need for the creation of more affordable and supportive housing, rather it would temporarily address the gap of sheltering service restricted individuals until permanent accommodations become available.

This expansion program is an unbudgeted expense. At this time, there are no provincial or federal funds available to support this program. Community partners have expressed

interest in fundraising, volunteering, and soliciting donations but no funds have been committed at this time. The anticipated cost for the program would be \$350,000.

The potential options are:

- Activate both the warming center and the emergency accommodation response at an unbudgeted cost of \$350,000; the cost, net of any potential donations, would be expended in the 2025 and 2026 as incurred, which could result in operational deficits in the Social Services divisions. This could be partially mitigated by applying the funds received from the recent HST audit of \$196,000, reducing the impact to the City's overall financial position to approximately \$150,000.
- Temporarily cease the emergency accommodation program and use the warming center as the primary winter response at an unbudgeted net cost of \$50,000. The cost, net of donations, would be expended in 2025 and 2026 as incurred, which could result in operational deficits in the Social Services divisions. This could be fully mitigated by applying some of the funds received from the recent HST audit
- Continue to use the existing winter response programs and closely collaborate with all community partners to address the gaps of having service restricted individuals sheltered during cold weather advisory. This option does not have any financial implications outside the established budgets.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

The financial impacts depend on the option chosen as outlined above.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

The financial impacts in 2026 depend on the option chosen as outlined above, but as the program is intended to be temporary, it should not have impacts on future year budgets.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Work Together For Greater Impact

This report aligns with this priority as a warming centre would assist emergency services and community partners to have an option to for individuals seeking a warm, safe space.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Health and Happiness

Encouraging active, social, meaningful lives to promote good health and wellbeing.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "'Not One More Night' Winter Warming Solutions" (COU25-132), be received for information;

AND THAT Council direct next steps regarding the homelessness response for the upcoming winter.

Prepared by:

Michelle Melady, Research and Program Analyst
John Ritz, Supervisor of Homelessness and Housing Stability
Jeff Wilson, Manager of Housing

Recommended by:

Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services and Interim Director
of Human Resources
André Morin, CPA, Chief Administrative Officer



**BY-LAW NUMBER XXX-2025
OF
THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF STRATFORD**

BEING a By-law to confirm the proceedings of Council of The Corporation of the City of Stratford at its meeting held on October 20, 2025.

WHEREAS subsection 5(1) of the Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001 c.25, as amended, (“the Municipal Act, 2001”) provides that the powers of a municipal corporation are to be exercised by its council;

AND WHEREAS subsection 5(3) of the Municipal Act, 2001, provides that the powers of council are to be exercised by by-law unless the municipality is specifically authorized to do otherwise;

AND WHEREAS it is deemed expedient that the proceedings of the Council of The Corporation of the City of Stratford at this meeting be confirmed and adopted by By-law;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ENACTED by the Council of The Corporation of the City of Stratford as follows:

1. That the action of the Council at its meeting held on October 20, 2025, in respect of each report, motion, resolution, recommendation or other action passed and taken by the Council at its meeting, is hereby adopted, ratified and confirmed, as if each report, motion, resolution or other action was adopted, ratified and confirmed by its separate by-law.
2. The Mayor of the Council and the proper officers of the City are hereby authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to the said action, to obtain approvals where required, and, except where otherwise provided, to execute all documents necessary in that behalf in accordance with the by-laws of the Council relating thereto.

Read a FIRST, SECOND and THIRD time and

FINALLY PASSED this 20th day of October, 2025.

Mayor – Martin Ritsma

Clerk – Tatiana Dafoe