



Stratford City Council Regular Council Open Session

MINUTES

Meeting #: 4789th
Date: Monday, January 12, 2026
Time: 7:00 P.M.
Location: Council Chamber, City Hall

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

Regrets: Councillor Burbach and Councillor Henderson

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, 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, Will Mason - Rent Receivables Clerk

Also Present: Members of the Public and Media

1. Call to Order:

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

Councillor Burbach and 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

Councillor Hunter declared a pecuniary interest with respect to Item 5. Councillor Hunter is a part of a group investigating purchasing the subject property.

3. Adoption of the Minutes:

R2026-01

Motion by Councillor Nijjar

Seconded by Councillor Wordofa

THAT the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of Council of The Corporation of the City of Stratford dated December 8, 2025, be adopted as printed.

Carried

4. Adoption of the Addenda to the Agenda:

R2026-02

Motion by Councillor Biehn

Seconded by Councillor Nijjar

THAT the Addenda to the Regular Agenda of Council and Standing Committees dated January 12, 2026, be added to the Agenda as printed.

Carried

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

5.1 At the January 12, 2026 Session, under the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended, matters concerning the following items were considered:

4.1 Confidential Report of the Chief Administrative Officer with respect to the potential purchase of property for municipal purposes (CM-26-01) - Proposed or pending acquisition or disposal of land by the municipality or

local board (section 239.(2)(c)) (includes municipal property leased for more than 21 years).

5.2 Added - From the January 12, 2026 In-camera Session under the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended:

4.1 Confidential Report of the Chief Administrative Officer with respect to the potential purchase of property for municipal purposes (CM-26-01) - Proposed or pending acquisition or disposal of land by the municipality or local board (section 239.(2)(c)) (includes municipal property leased for more than 21 years).

R2026-03

Motion by Councillor McCabe

Seconded by Councillor Nijjar

THAT the entering into and execution of a Letter of Intent with the National Trust Company and the Bank of Nova Scotia for the potential purchase of the former Scotiabank building and property located at 10 – 52 Wright Boulevard, Stratford, be approved;

AND THAT a by-law authorizing the entering into and execution of the Letter of Intent be adopted.

Members of Council held a discussion regarding the motion. Highlights of the discussion included:

- a member noting their concerns with moving the police station outside of the downtown core;
- there being no substitute to the positive presence with having Police in the downtown;
- moving the location potentially removing patrons from the downtown and creating a vacancy;
- a member noting their support for the motion;
- there being a need for moving police services to the edge of town for expandability and due to growth; and

- Stratford Police also serving St. Marys and other municipalities making this a central location.

The Mayor called the question.

Carried

Councillor Hunter having declared a pecuniary interest did not participate in the discussion or vote on this matter.

6. Hearings of Deputations and Presentations:

None scheduled.

7. Orders of the Day:

7.1 Resolution - Applications for Part Lot Control (PLC18-25), (PLC19-25), (PLC20-25), and (PLC21-25) for Blocks 81, 84, 89, and 92 respectively, on Plan 44M-101(COU26-002)

R2026-04

Motion by Councillor Hunter

Seconded by Councillor McCabe

THAT Council APPROVE Part Lot Control Applications PLC18-25, PLC19-25, PLC20-25, and PLC21-25 to exempt Blocks 81, 84, 89, and 92 respectively, on Registered Plan 44M-101 from Part Lot Control for one year from the date of the passing of the By-law to permit the creation of separate lots for each of the street townhouse dwelling units such that each unit would be under separate ownership.

Carried

7.2 Resolution - Parking Permit Program Review (COU26-005)

Motion by Councillor Nijjar

Seconded by Councillor McCabe

THAT the maximum number of Erie Street Parking Lot monthly permits be increased from twenty-four (24) to thirty-five (35);

THAT the Erie Lot Overnight Parking Pilot Program be approved to provide the following parking permits on a first-come-first-served basis:

- **5 monthly overnight parking permits, and**

- **10 daily overnight parking permits;**

THAT staff be directed to prepare an amendment to the Fees and Charges By-law to include the expansion of the Erie Street Parking Lot permits;

AND THAT staff be directed to prepare an amendment to the Traffic and Parking By-law to designate the Erie Lot for overnight parking.

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

- a member noting that payment for parking is required beginning at 9:00 a.m.;
- allowing overnight permits to be valid from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 a.m. to eliminate any confusion regarding when payment for parking is required; and
- the Deputy Clerk noting that Council can change the hours for the overnight parking permits as presented by the member.

R2026-05

Motion by Councillor Hunter

Seconded by Councillor Nijjar

THAT the motion be amended to change the Erie Lot Overnight parking permit pilot project to allow permit holders to park in the lot from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 a.m.

Carried

Members of Council and staff continued the discussion regarding the following:

- it being questioned how the numbers for the additional permits were determined;
- the Deputy Clerk noting that the numbers were determined based on the current waitlist as well as the availability of permits for downtown residents and their usage;
- it being questioned whether there are restrictions on the parking permits;

- the Deputy Clerk noting that the Cooper Lot and York Lot permits are restricted to downtown residents only and proof of residency is required at the time of purchase; and
- there being no residency restriction for the proposed Erie Lot overnight parking permit.

R2026-06

Motion by Councillor McCabe

Seconded by Councillor Sebben

THAT the motion be amended to restrict the provision of the Erie Lot monthly overnight parking permits to downtown residents.

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

- it being questioned whether there are benefits to opening the overnight permits to non-residents of the downtown core; and
- the Deputy Clerk noting that the Erie Lot overnight parking permit will allow individuals who do not reside in the downtown but may work in the downtown to purchase the permits.

The Mayor called the question on the amendment.

Carried

R2026-07

Motion by Councillor Nijjar

Seconded by Councillor McCabe

THAT the maximum number of Erie Street Parking Lot monthly permits be increased from twenty-four (24) to thirty-five (35);

THAT the Erie Lot Overnight Parking Pilot Program be approved to provide the following parking permits on a first-come-first-served basis:

- **5 monthly overnight parking permits (downtown residents only), and**
- **10 daily overnight parking permits;**

THAT overnight Erie Lot parking permit holders be permitted to park in the lot from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 a.m.;

THAT staff be directed to prepare an amendment to the Fees and Charges By-law to include the expansion of the Erie Street Parking Lot permits;

AND THAT staff be directed to prepare an amendment to the Traffic and Parking By-law to designate the Erie Lot for overnight parking.

The Mayor called the question on the amended motion.

Carried

7.3 Resolution - Ontario Fire Protection Grant Transfer Payment Agreement

R2026-08

Motion by Councillor Beatty

Seconded by Councillor Biehn

THAT The Corporation of the City of Stratford enter into an Ontario Fire Protection Grant Transfer Payment Agreement with His Majesty the King in right of Ontario as represented by the Ministry of the Solicitor General to support the municipal fire service in acquiring critical equipment and other needs to improve and enhance the level of fire protection service being provided;

AND THAT the Mayor and City Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to sign the Ontario Transfer Payment Agreement provided through the Fire Protection Grant on behalf of the Corporation.

Carried

7.4 Resolution - Cooper Standard Youth Soccer Lease Agreement 2025 - 2035 (COU26-003)

R2026-09

Motion by Councillor Nijjar

Seconded by Councillor Wordofa

THAT Council authorize the entering into of an agreement between The Corporation of the City of Stratford, Cooper Standard Automotive Canada Limited, and Stratford Youth Soccer that outlines the responsibilities of each party for the use

of the soccer facility located to the south and west of Plant #2, 703 Douro Street, for a further ten years to December 31, 2035.

AND THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to sign the agreement on behalf of the municipal corporation.

Carried

7.5 Resolution - 2026 Tender Award for Pruning, Removal and Disposal of Designated Trees and Stumps (COU26-001)

R2026-10

Motion by Councillor Beatty

Seconded by Councillor Hunter

THAT the tender (T-2025-71) for the removal of designated trees and their stumps be awarded to Lange Bros. (Tavistock) Limited in the amount of \$60,796.26, including HST;

THAT the tender (T-2025-71) for regular, overtime and emergency pruning services be awarded to Lange Bros. (Tavistock) Limited in an amount up to \$257,075.00, including HST;

THAT the tender (T-2025-71) for removal of designated stumps be awarded to Davey Tree Expert Co. of Canada, Limited in the amount of \$10,176.40, including HST;

AND THAT the tender (T-2025-71) for locked-in second emergency call be awarded to Davey Tree Expert Co. of Canada, Limited at an hourly rate for \$318.83, per hour including HST.

Carried

7.6 Resolution - Gallery Stratford & Administration of Justice Building HVAC Units Replacement (COU26-004)

R2026-11

Motion by Councillor Nijjar

Seconded by Councillor Hunter

THAT the Tender (T-2025-59) for the replacement of the HVAC Units at Gallery Stratford and the Administration of Justice Building, be awarded to Jayden's Mechanical Ltd. at a total cost of \$461,307.18, including HST;

THAT the purchase be funded, as budgeted, from the Facilities Capital Reserve Fund R-R11-FACI;

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 scope of work from the Facilities Capital Reserve Fund R-R11-FACI and in accordance with Policy F.1.15 Capital Budget Authorization for Expenditures.

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

- it being questioned what led to the delay in the completion of the project when it was included in the 2023 budget;
- the Director of Community Services noting that due to organizational changes and additional structural repairs, the initial project was delayed;
- the initial project being for a like for like replacement, but additional considerations were taken following the completion of the Feasibility Study and its recommendations to reduce the carbon footprint of the building;
- the building condition assessment used for the initial project being completed in 2020; and
- a building condition assessment being completed recently and will be completed regularly moving forward to help inform the asset management plan.

The Mayor called the question on the motion.

Carried

7.7 Resolution - Canadian Dairy XPO Municipally Significant Event Request

R2026-12

Motion by Councillor Beatty

Seconded by Councillor Nijjar

THAT City Council hereby designates the 2026 Canadian Dairy XPO (CDX) event to be held April 1 and 2, 2026, including the

networking event on March 31, 2026, in the Cow Coliseum at the Stratford Rotary Complex as having municipal significance for the purpose of obtaining liquor licenses from the AGCO, subject to compliance with the City's Municipal Alcohol Risk Policy, required certificates of insurance being provided and approval being granted by the City's Building and Fire Departments.

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

- it being questioned how soon the organizers need to submit the required documentation;
- staff having been in regular contact with the organizers; and
- the organizers having been informed of the requirements for approval from the City.

The Mayor called the question on the motion.

Carried

7.8 Resolution - Resignation from the Energy and Environment Advisory Committee

R2026-13

Motion by Councillor McCabe

Seconded by Councillor Biehn

THAT the resignation of Linda Wakenhut from the Energy and Environment Advisory Committee be accepted.

Carried

8. Business for Which Previous Notice Has Been Given:

None noted

9. Reports of the Standing Committees:

9.1 Report of the Finance and Labour Relations Committee:

R2026-14

Motion by Councillor Hunter

Seconded by Councillor Biehn

THAT the Report of the Finance and Labour Relations Committee dated January 12, 2025 be adopted as printed.

Carried

9.1.1 Update of Natural Gas and Electricity Procurement (FIN25-035)

THAT the report titled, "Update of Natural Gas and Electricity Procurement" (FIN25-035), dated November 18, 2025, be received for information.

9.1.2 Festival Hydro Update for Q3 ending September 30, 2025 (FIN25-037)

THAT the Festival Hydro Inc. third quarter financial results and commentary for the period ended September 30, 2025, be received for information;

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

9.1.3 Ontario Regulation 284/09 – Excluded Expenses 2026 Budget (FIN25-037)

THAT the Report FIN25-037 dated November 18, 2025, from the Director of Corporate Services regarding legislative requirements of Ontario Regulation 284/09, and the impact of excluded expenses from the City's 2026 budget, be received for information.

9.1.4 Reserve and Reserve Fund Policy Review (FIN25-040)

THAT Council receive the Reserve and Reserve Fund Policy Review (FIN25-040) report for information;

THAT Council authorize the proposed housekeeping changes and the establishment of a new Reserve Fund for Affordable Housing;

AND THAT \$1,000,000.00 of the proceeds of sale be allocated to the Affordable Housing Reserve Fund and the remaining \$2,062,481.78 be allocated at the time of receipt of the Asset Management Plan with recommendations from the Director of Corporate Services.

9.1.5 Operating Budget Variance Report as at September 30, 2025 (FIN25-038)

THAT the report titled, "Operating Budget Variance Report as at September 30, 2025" (FIN25-038), dated November 18, 2025, be received for information.

9.2 Report of the Infrastructure, Transportation and Safety Committee:

R2026-15

Motion by Councillor Nijjar

Seconded by Councillor Wordofa

THAT the Report of the Infrastructure, Transportation and Safety Committee dated January 12, 2025 be adopted as printed.

Carried

9.2.1 Stratford Landfill Public Input Invite November 2025 (ITS25-027)

THAT Council consider any comments received as part of the Stratford Landfill Public Input November 2025;

AND THAT the report on the Stratford Landfill Public Input November 2025 (ITS25-027), be received for information.

9.2.2 Encroachment Application for 23 Albert Street (ITS25-026)

THAT the request for an encroachment onto municipal property of the lighting and sign at 23 Albert Street be approved;

THAT an annual fee of \$50.00 adjusted yearly by the CPI, be added to the property tax bill for 23 Albert Street for the encroachment agreement;

THAT the owners be required to apply for an awing permit for the two (2) awnings within six months from the date of approval of the encroachment;

AND THAT the City Clerk be directed to prepare a by-law authorizing the encroachment at 23 Albert Street.

10. Notice of Intent:

None

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:

R2026-16

Motion by Councillor Beatty

Seconded by Councillor Biehn

THAT By-laws 1-2026 to 12-2026 be taken collectively.

Carried unanimously

R2026-17

Motion by Councillor Hunter

Seconded by Councillor Nijjar

THAT By-laws 1-2026 to 12-2026 be read a First and Second Time.

Carried two-thirds support

R2026-18

Motion by Councillor Beatty

Seconded by Councillor Biehn

THAT By-laws 1-2026 to 12-2026 be read a Third Time and Finally Passed.

Carried

R2026-19

Motion by Councillor McCabe

Seconded by Councillor Biehn

THAT By-law 13-2026 be read a First and Second Time.

Carried two-thirds support

Councillor Hunter having declared a pecuniary interest did not participate in the discussion or vote on this matter.

R2026-20

Motion by Councillor Nijjar

Seconded by Councillor McCabe

THAT By-law 13-2026 be read a Third Time and Finally Passed.

Carried

Councillor Hunter having declared a pecuniary interest did not participate in the discussion or vote on this matter.

11.1 Cooper Standard Youth Soccer Lease Agreement 2025-2035 - By-law 1-2026

To authorize the entering into and execution of a lease agreement with Cooper-Standard Automotive Canada Limited and Stratford Youth Soccer to continue the use of the soccer facility located to the south and west of Plant #2, 703 Douro Street, for a ten-year term.

11.2 Part Lot Control Application PLC18-25 - Cachet - Block 81 - By-law 2-2026

To exempt Block 81 on Plan 44M-101, being Parts 1 to 13 (inclusive) on Plan 44R-6425 from the provisions of part-lot control for a period of one (1) year for the purpose of conveying street townhouse dwelling units to individual owners.

11.3 Part Lot Control Application PLC19-25 - Cachet - Block 84 - By-law 3-2026

To exempt Block 84 on Plan 44M-101, being Parts 1 to 10 (inclusive) on Plan 44R-6424 from the provisions of part-lot control for a period of one (1) year for the purpose of conveying street townhouse dwelling units to individual owners.

11.4 Part Lot Control Application PLC20-25 - Cachet - Block 89 - By-law 4-2026

To exempt Block 89 on Plan 44M-101, being Parts 1 to 8 (inclusive) on Plan 44R-6431 from the provisions of part-lot control for a period of one (1) year for the purpose of conveying street townhouse dwelling units to individual owners.

11.5 Part Lot Control Application PLC21-25 - Cachet - Block 92 - By-law 5-2026

To exempt Block 92 on Plan 44M-101, being Parts 1 to 9 (inclusive) on Plan 44R-6437 from the provisions of part-lot control for a period of one (1) year for the purpose of conveying street townhouse dwelling units to individual owners.

11.6 Award Tender for Regular, Overtime and Emergency Pruning Services in 2026 - By-law 6-2026

To authorize the acceptance of a tender, execution of the contract and the undertaking of the work by Lange Bros. (Tavistock) Limited for regular, overtime, and emergency pruning services in 2026 (T-2025-71).

11.7 Award Tender for the Removal of Designated Trees and Stumps in 2026 - By-law 7-2026

To authorize the acceptance of a tender, execution of the contract and the undertaking of the work by Lange Bros. (Tavistock) Limited for the removal of designated trees and stumps in 2026 (T-2025-71).

11.8 Award Tender for the Removal of Designated Stumps in 2026 - By-law 8-2026

To authorize the acceptance of a tender, execution of the contract and the undertaking of the work by Davey Tree Expert Co. of Canada, Limited for the removal of designated stumps in 2026 (T-2025-71).

11.9 Award Tender for Locked-in Second Emergency Call in 2026 - By-law 9-2026

To authorize the acceptance of a tender, execution of the contract and the undertaking of the work by Davey Tree Expert Co. of Canada, Limited for locked-in second emergency call services in 2026 (T-2025-71).

11.10 Fire Protection Grant Ontario Transfer Payment Agreement - By-law 10-2026

To authorize the execution of an Ontario Fire Protection Transfer Payment Agreement with His Majesty the King in right of Ontario as represented by the Ministry of the Solicitor General to receive funds through the Fire Protection Grant program.

11.11 Award Tender for New HVAC Units at Gallery Stratford and the Administration of Justice Building - By-law 11-2026

To authorize the acceptance of a tender by Jayden's Mechanical Ltd. for the supply and installation of new HVAC Units at Gallery Stratford and the Administration of Justice Building (T-2025-59).

11.12 Encroachment Agreement - 23 Albert Street - By-law 12-2026

To authorize the entering into and execution of an encroachment agreement with Leheon Property Corp. to permit the existing lighting and sign to encroach onto the Albert Street road allowance at 23 Albert Street.

11.13 Added - Authorize Letter of Intent for Potential Purchase of 10-52 Wright Boulevard, Stratford - By-law 13-2026

To authorize the entering into and execution of a Letter of Intent with the National Trust Company and the Bank of Nova Scotia for the potential purchase of the former Scotiabank building and property located at 10-52 Wright Boulevard, Stratford.

12. Consent Agenda: CA-2026-001 to CA-2026-011

12.1 CA-2026-007

R2026-21

Motion by Councillor Nijjar

Seconded by Councillor Sebben

THAT CA-2026-007, being resolutions regarding the Bill 68: Plan to Protect Ontario Act, be endorsed.

Carried

12.2 CA-2026-008

R2026-22

Motion by Councillor Nijjar

Seconded by Councillor Biehn

THAT CA-2026-008, being a resolution from The Corporation of the City of Sarnia regarding Financial Relief for Municipally-Policed Communities, be endorsed.

Carried

12.3 CA-2026-011

R2026-023

Motion by Councillor McCabe

Seconded by Councillor Nijjar

THAT CA-2026-011, being a resolution from the Town of East Gwillimbury regarding Opposition to Protect Ontario by Unleashing Our Economy Act, 2025, be endorsed.

Carried

12.4 CA-2026-010

R2026-24

Motion by Councillor Hunter

Seconded by Councillor McCabe

THAT CA-2026-010, being a resolution from the Town of Smith Falls regarding Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (OCIF), be endorsed.

Carried

13. New Business:

13.1 Diaper Drive

Councillor Biehn thanked everyone who participated in the Diaper Drive for the Stratford House of Blessing.

13.2 Alzheimer Society Fundraising

The Mayor congratulated the Alzheimer Society Huron Perth and their executive director Cathy Ritsema on their successful fundraising event. The Mayor also thanked those who participated and volunteered for the event.

14. Adjournment to Standing Committees:

There were no Standing Committee meetings held.

The next Regular Council meeting is January 26, 2026 in the Council Chamber, City Hall.

15. Confirmatory By-law 14-2026

To confirm the proceedings of Council of The Corporation of the City of Stratford at its meeting held on January 12, 2026.

R2026-25

Motion by Councillor Sebben

Seconded by Councillor Nijjar

THAT By-law 14-2026 be read a First and Second Time.

Carried two-thirds support

R2026-26

Motion by Councillor Hunter

Seconded by Councillor McCabe

THAT By-law 14-2026 be read a Third Time and Finally Passed.

Carried

16. Adjournment of Council Meeting

R2026-27

Motion by Councillor Biehn

Seconded by Councillor Nijjar

THAT the January 12, 2026 Regular Council meeting adjourn.

Carried

Meeting Start Time: 7:00 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 7:35 P.M.

"Martin Ritsma"

Mayor - Martin Ritsma

"Tatiana Dafoe"

Clerk - Tatiana Dafoe