

WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

Council Meeting Agenda Amended March 2, 2026

February 24, 2026 - 6:00 p.m.

In-person, Sanford Council Chambers, 76 Morison Dr, Windsor, NS

Virtual via Zoom (also YouTube Livestream)



1. Call to Order
2. Attendance
3. Announcements
4. Approval of the Agenda, including additions or deletions
5. Declaration(s) of Conflict of Interest
6. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes
 - a) 2025-12-09 Public Hearing Minutes Donation of Land PID 45285103 Old Walton Rd, Upper Burlington
 - b) 2026-01-27 Council Minutes
 - c) 2026-01-27 Public Hearing Minutes JDI - Rezoning and Development Agreement PIDs 45055282, 45439098 and 45190386, Windsor
 - d) 2026-01-27 Public Hearing Minutes Hwy 14 Rezoning
 - e) 2026-01-27 Public Hearing Minutes 5988 Highway 215, Kempt Shore Rezoning
 - f) 2026-02-03 Special Council Minutes
7. Presentations
 - a) Tax Parity - Brighter Community Brighter Community Planning, Chrystal Fuller
8. Public Hearings
 - a) LUB Amendments: 2037 Highway 1, Falmouth (PID 45242112) - Planner Hong
 - b) Peace and Good Order By-Law RCOPG-001
9. Second Readings (as it pertains to Public Hearings)
 - a) LUB Amendments: 2037 Highway 1, Falmouth (PID 45242112) - Planner Hong
 - b) Peace and Good Order By-Law RCOPG-001
10. PAC/HAC/ First Reading
 - a) Rezoning: Clifton Avenue, Windsor (PID 45049921) (Alex Dunphy - Planner Dunphy **(moved up the agenda)**)
11. Climate Action Committee Excerpt **(moved up the agenda)**
 - a) PACE Program Funding Recommendation Report – Coordinator Ogilvie

b) Rand Street Services and Street Renewal Award of Tender – Project Engineer Bouter

12. Unfinished Business/Postponed Motions
 - a) Elmcroft Playground RFP Tender Award Recommendation Report – Director Kehoe
 - b) Updated / amended CSO Buyout Recommendation Report – Councillor Ivey
13. Mayor’s Report
14. Committee(s) of Council Excerpts/Recommendations
 - a) Committee of the Whole Excerpts (February 10, 2026)
 - i. REMO agreement with Kings County
 - ii. Rescind the January 27, 2026 motion, that council request a report from staff on doing the Mill Lakes Pipe Diversion in-house for February Committee of the Whole meeting
 - b) Audit Committee Excerpts (February 4, 2026)
 - c) Diverse, Equitable and Inclusive Communities Committee – Advancement of Strategic Action #23 – Homelessness Engagement and Strategy Development (February 9, 2026)
15. Councillor(s) Municipal Business/Activity Monthly Reports (Districts 1-11)
16. Councillor(s) Municipal Advisory Board Activity/Information Reports
 - a) Accessibility Advisory Committee Information Report
 - b) Valley Regional Enterprise Network LOC Information Report
17. New Business
 - ~~a) Rand Street Services and Street Renewal Award of Tender – Project Engineer Bouter~~
 - a) Mill Lakes Diversion Tender Award – Councillor Ivey
18. Correspondence
 - a) General Correspondence Received Activity Log (as of February 20, 2026) - None
 - b) Requests Log (as of February 20, 2026)
 - i. Amanda Dunfield Request Council engage in a public discussion regarding Strong Mayor Powers
 - c) Outgoing Correspondence Log (as of February 20, 2026) - None
18. In-Camera - None
19. Next Meeting Date / Adjournment – March 10, 2026 Committee of the Whole Meeting 6 p.m.

WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

Council Meeting Minutes

February 24, 2026 - 6:00 p.m.

Sanford Council Chambers, 76 Morison Dr, Windsor, NS

And virtually via Zoom (also YouTube Livestreamed)



1. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Attendance

Council:

Abraham Zebian, Mayor

Rupert Jannasch, Councillor, District 1

Scott McLean, Councillor, District 2

Chrystal Remme, Councillor, District 3

Paul Wheadon, Councillor, District 4

Bob Morton, Councillor, District 6

Debbie Francis, Deputy Mayor, Dist. 5

Kayla Leary-Pinch, Councillor, District 7

John Smith, Councillor, District 9

Bonnie Smith, Councillor, District 10

Jim Ivey, Councillor, District 11

Regrets:

Paul Morton, Councillor, District 8

Staff:

Mark Phillips, Chief Administrative Officer

Todd Richard, Dir. Public Works

Kari Fougere, Acting Dir. Planning & Development

Alex Dunphy, Senior Planner (ZOOM)

Will Hong, Planner

Kevin Bennett – Manager of Parks & Recreation Facilities

Vanessa Lake, Planning Assistant

Deanna Snair, Municipal Clerk (ZOOM)

Carlee Rochon, Dir. Finance

Kathy Kehoe, Dir. Community

Dev. Tim Bouter, Project Engineer

Presenter and Gallery:

22 members of the public

Chrystal Fuller, Brighter Community Planning and Consulting

Mitch Brison, Brison Developments Ltd.

Bradley Eaglestone, Applicant

3. Announcements (6:01 p.m.)

West Hants Regional Municipality is in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. This land is governed by the treaties of Peace and Friendship signed in 1726. West Hants Regional Municipality recognizes we are all treaty people and have responsibilities to this land and each other. West Hants Regional Municipality also recognizes African Nova Scotians are a distinct people whose history, legacies, and contributions have enriched that part of Mi'kma'ki known as Nova Scotia for over 400 years.

Council and I as Chair are committed to ensuring this meeting and its participants conduct themselves in a respectful and professional manner as outlined in the municipality's Municipal Code of Conduct. Meeting presenters, staff and the public are expected to conduct themselves

in an equally respectful manner at all times the meeting is being conducted. I thank you all in advance for your commitment to these important meeting principles.

Prior to the meeting beginning, safety and fire alarm protocols were reviewed.

Attendees were reminded not to record the meeting out of respect for individuals in the gallery, as the proceedings were already being livestreamed on YouTube and publicly accessible.

A reminder has been shared regarding the upcoming Town Hall/District meeting scheduled for February 25, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. The meeting will take place at Falmouth Town Hall and will be attended by Councillor John Smith and Councillor Leary-Pinch.

A reminder was shared regarding the Ellershouse Community Hall breakfast scheduled for February 28, 2026 from 7:30 – 10:30 a.m.

A reminder was shared about the local Border Riders 4H Club was hosting a fundraiser at Upper Vaughan Community Hall on March 17 (St. Patrick's Day) at 6:00 p.m.

4. Approval of the Agenda including additions or deletions (6:03 p.m.)

Move up item 17 a) Rand Street Services and Street Renewal Award of Tender to 11 b) New Business. Mill Lakes Diversion Discussion was added under 11a) New Business.
The agenda was approved as amended with the proposed changes.

5. Declaration of Conflict of Interest (6:05 p.m.) - None

6. Approval of the Previous Meeting Minutes (6:05 p.m.)

- a) 2025-12-09 Public Hearing Minutes Donation of Land PID 45285103 Old Walton Rd, Upper Burlington
 - b) 2026-01-27 Council Minutes
 - c) 2026-01-27 Public Hearing Minutes JDI - Rezoning and Development Agreement PIDs 45055282, 45439098 and 45190386, Windsor
 - d) 2026-01-27 Public Hearing Minutes Hwy 14 Rezoning
 - e) 2026-01-27 Public Hearing Minutes 5988 Highway 215, Kempt Shore Rezoning
 - f) 2026-02-03 Special Council Minutes
- The minutes were approved as presented.

7. Presentations (6:07 p.m.)

- a) Tax Parity/Crossing Development - Brighter Community Planning, Chrystal Fuller and Mitch Brison, Brison Developments Ltd.

The presentation emphasized the need to harmonize residential and commercial PID rates within The Crossing to support the Housing Accelerator Fund and municipal consolidation goals in West Hants. The Crossing was an established, fully serviced mixed-use community spanning the former West Hants–Windsor boundary and represented the region's fastest-growing development, with diverse housing and over \$91 million in assessed value as of 2025. However, legacy municipal boundaries determine tax rates, creating a 69% disparity where homes on the Windsor side pay significantly more than identical neighbouring properties on the West Hants side for the same services. Since the developer funded all water, sewer, and street infrastructure, and residents pay utility costs through user fees, it was suggested there was no service-based justification for

the higher Windsor surcharge. This tax imbalance has stalled lot sales on the Windsor side, limiting municipal revenue. Harmonizing rates would remove this barrier, unlock an estimated \$141.2 million in future assessments, and support West Hants' target of 370 new housing units over the next three years.

The request before Council was to harmonize tax rates in the Crossing. The rationale was that it was one neighbourhood, and applying a single rate will help accelerate both growth and revenue.

Discussion Points:

- Concerns were raised about setting a precedent, as neighbouring properties, developers, or homeowners may request the same in the future. It was felt the proposal should not be supported without an information report on the long-term impacts.
- Similar concerns were noted regarding serviced rural areas, as other areas could make the same arguments. While the road as a connector was positive, there were concerns about increased outside traffic, including school buses.
- Although there were strong arguments in favour of the changes, concerns remain about broader impacts, including effects on municipal tax rates and precedent-setting. A staff report outlining the implications was recommended before moving forward.
- Support was expressed for the motion, noting that it is considered one community and not comparable to other areas. It was felt there are no similar situations elsewhere.
- Support was expressed, noting that it has been years in the making and there is concern about losing business to neighbouring counties. While there is a lot to consider, the overall position was in favour.
- Reference was made to the Housing Accelerator Plan, and that this is one of the remaining barriers at the Crossing. Removing this obstacle was seen as necessary to move the project forward.
- There would be no objection to receive a report afterward to review the impacts and outcomes.
- It was noted that once developed, each lot could generate approximately \$5,000 – \$7,000 in annual tax revenue. Reference was made to last year's tax rate discussion, where a proposed 10-cent increase was reduced to 4 cents. It was suggested that achieving anything less than a 10-cent rate moving forward may be unlikely, and that additional revenue was needed.
- Support was expressed both fundamentally and in principle, emphasizing the broader importance for West Hants.
- The CAO noted support for in principle but encouraged that staff present a model to Council to make an informed decision. It was highlighted that existing legislation regarding historical debt and consolidation provides a framework, and that developing a model would be the more appropriate approach.

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS J. SMITH AND B. MORTON THAT COUNCIL DIRECTS STAFF TO HARMONIZE THE RESIDENTIAL TAX RATES FOR ALL PIDS IN THE CROSSING. MOTION CARRIED. Nays: Jannasch, Francis, Leary-Pinch and B. Smith

8. Public Hearings (6:46 p.m.)

Public Hearings and Second Readings (Second reading was held immediately following Public Hearing)

a) LUB Amendments: 2037 Highway 1, Falmouth (PID 45242112) - Planner Hong (6:46 pm)

The meeting moved into Public Hearing at 6:46 pm. Further information on the Public Hearing was available in the 2026-02-24 Public Hearing Minutes.

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS LEARY-PINCH AND B. MORTON THAT COUNCIL MOVE INTO PUBLIC HEARING AT 6:46 P.M. MOTION CARRIED

At 7:32 p.m. the Public Hearing concluded, and the regular Council meeting resumed.

9. Second Readings (as it pertains to Public Hearings)

a) LUB Amendments: 2037 Highway 1, Falmouth (PID 45242112) - Planner Hong (7:32 pm)

Discussion Points:

- The concern raised was not against rezoning itself, but focused on the reduced separation distances, which were considered substantially less than usual. The main issues were with the use and separation distances.

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS LEARY-PINCH AND WHEADON THAT COUNCIL GIVES SECOND READING AND APPROVES AMENDING THE MAPS OF SCHEDULE A OF THE WEST HANTS LAND USE BY-LAW TO REZONE THE LOT AS IDENTIFIED AS PID 45242112 FROM GENERAL COMMERCIAL (GC) TO HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL (HC) ZONE AND AMENDING SECTION 5.20 OF THE WEST HANTS LAND USE BY-LAW IN A MANNER SUBSTANTIVELY THE SAME AS THE DRAFT SET OUT IN APPENDIX A OF THE COUNCIL REPORT #25-24A DATED JANUARY 27, 2026.

MOVED BY DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS AND COUNCILLOR B. SMITH THAT COUNCIL AMEND THE MOTION TO REMOVE THE NEED FOR WRITTEN PERMISSION. MOTION CARRIED. Nays: Jannasch and Ivey

Full motion as amended:

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS LEARY-PINCH AND WHEADON THAT COUNCIL GIVES SECOND READING AND APPROVES AMENDING THE MAPS OF SCHEDULE A OF THE WEST HANTS LAND USE BY-LAW, REMOVING THE NEED FOR WRITTEN PERMISSION FROM ADJACENT PROPERTIES, TO REZONE THE LOT AS IDENTIFIED AS PID 45242112 FROM GENERAL COMMERCIAL (GC) TO HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL (HC) ZONE AND AMENDING SECTION 5.20 OF THE WEST HANTS LAND USE BY-LAW IN A MANNER SUBSTANTIVELY THE SAME AS THE DRAFT SET OUT IN APPENDIX A OF THE COUNCIL REPORT #25-24A DATED JANUARY 27, 2026. MOTION CARRIED. Nays: Ivey and Jannasch

8. Public Hearings (7:35 p.m.)

Public Hearings and Second Readings (Second reading was held immediately following Public Hearing)

b) Peace and Good Order By-Law RCOPG-001 (7:35 p.m.)

The meeting moved into Public Hearing at 7:35 pm. Further information on the Public Hearing was available in the 2026-02-24 Public Hearing Minutes.

**MOVED BY COUNCILLORS LEARY-PINCH AND J. SMITH THAT COUNCIL
MOVE INTO PUBLIC HEARING AT 7:35 P.M. MOTION CARRIED**

At 7:49 p.m. the Public Hearing concluded, and the regular Council meeting resumed.

9. Second Readings (as it pertains to Public Hearings)

b) Peace and Good Order By-Law RCOPG-001 (6:56 p.m.)

Discussion Points:

- It was clarified that this was not a Noise By-Law, but rather a Peace and Good Order By-Law, and that there was a distinction between the two.
- The main challenge with this by-law, and other noise by-laws, was that West Hants is a large, mostly rural area where residents live far apart. Because of this, noise concerns were different from those in more built-up communities like Hantsport and Windsor. Concern was raised that the one clause that seemed to address this issue was removed.
- The by-law was intended to apply to the entire region. Currently, noise by-laws were only in place for Windsor and Hantsport. The former Towns of Windsor and Hantsport by-laws would remain in effect unless they were repealed.
- Initially there was support for the by-law because it was seen as a way to address fireworks being set off randomly on non-celebratory days. However, since fireworks were regulated by the Province, support changed and it was felt the by-law could not be supported.

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS IVEY AND REMME THAT COUNCIL APPROVES THE PEACE AND GOOD ORDER BY-LAW RCOPG-001 ATTACHED AS APPENDIX A SUBSTANTIVELY THE SAME AS THE REPORT PRESENTED AT THE FEBRUARY 24, 2026 COUNCIL MEETING. MOTION DEFEATED. Nays: J. Smith, Leary-Pinch, B. Morton, Wheadon, Remme, McLean, Jannasch, Francis and Zebian

A break occurred at 7:59 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 8:13 p.m.

10. Planning and Heritage Advisory Committee Excerpts (First Reading) (8:13 p.m.)

a) Rezoning: Clifton Avenue, Windsor (PID 45049921) - Planner Dunphy

Planner Dunphy presented the report noting an application was received on November 28, 2025 from Dave LeRiche requesting to rezone part of the property from Low Density Residential (R-1) to Medium Density Residential (R-2) to allow subdivision and a six-unit residential development. A Public Information Meeting was held on January 8, 2026, with eight members of the public in attendance. No correspondence was received during the comment period. One attendee asked about on-site parking requirements and whether the project included an affordable housing component.

On February 12, 2026, staff presented a recommendation report to the Planning and Heritage Advisory Committee (PAC/HAC). The Committee discussed the potential appearance of the final development, requested a stormwater management plan, and considered whether the existing development was contingent on this project or vice versa.

MOVED BY DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS AND COUNCILLOR B. SMITH THAT COUNCIL GIVES FIRST READING AND WILL HOLD A PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER AMENDING SCHEDULE A OF THE WINDSOR LAND USE BY-LAW TO REZONE A PORTION OF PID 45049921 ON CLIFTON AVENUE IN WINDSOR FROM THE LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (R-1) ZONE TO THE MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (R-2) ZONE AS SHOWN IN THE REPORT #25-26 TO THE PLANNING AND HERITAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE DATED FEBRUARY 12, 2026. MOTION CARRIED.

11. Climate Action Committee Excerpt (8:21 p.m.)

a) PACE Program Funding Recommendation Report

Coordinator Ogilvie reviewed the report. Highlighting WHRM's aim to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 45% by 2030, with the Switch West Hants PACE program as the key tool. The Climate Action Committee recommended continuing the Switch West Hants PACE program with up to \$600,000 in external funding for 2026-27. The program provides loans for energy-efficiency upgrades, reducing emissions, energy costs, and improving comfort, while operating on a user-pay model. Without continued funding, alternative strategies or target adjustments will be needed to meet the 2030 goal.

Discussion Points:

- The program was fully funded by participants. A 5% admin fee was paid to Switch Pace to run the program, and the loan was repaid to the private lender.
- The program budget was \$600,000. Activity was anticipated to rise in the coming year due to the discontinuation of federal and provincial grant programs. As funding for these programs runs out, the municipality becomes a more attractive funding source.
- Since the program started in 2023, \$20,000 has been repaid through homeowner payments.
- Different funding options were being considered. Right now, the preferred option was a line of credit instead of one large loan. Funds would be used as needed, and interest would only be paid on the amount used.
- There have been no discussions about an end date. Staff recommend continuing the program until the funds were used up to help meet emission goals. Based on current forecasts, the funding will last only 1–2 years.
- Funding would come from borrowed money since the Operating Reserves balance of \$464,000 limited internal funding. The interest rate was unknown and would be confirmed after applying to a lender. Homeowners would pay the interest through the payment agreement. This information would come back to Council for the approval process.
- If no applications were received, there would be no need to borrow funds.

MOVED BY DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS AND COUNCILLOR B. SMITH THAT COUNCIL APPROVES THE CONTINUANCE OF THE PROPERTY ASSESSED CLEAN ENERGY PROGRAM, SWITCH WEST HANTS, WITH INCREASED FUNDING OF UP TO \$600,000, TO BE FUNDED BY EXTERNAL FUNDING. MOTION CARRIED. Nays: J. Smith, Leary-Pinch, McLean and Zebian

b) Rand Street Services and Street Renewal Award of Tender (8:36 p.m.)

Project Engineer Bouter reviewed the report. Rand Street in Hantsport has been prioritized for infrastructure and street renewal in the 2025/26 Capital Budget due to aging underground services and deteriorated road conditions. The project includes replacement of water, sanitary, and storm mains, along with full street reconstruction and new curb, gutter, and sidewalk. Following a January 2026 tender, Gary Parker Excavating Ltd. submitted the lowest compliant bid at \$4,672,059.00 (before HST) and was recommended for award. DesignPoint Engineering & Surveying Ltd. will provide construction-phase engineering services, and the project contingency has been reduced from 15% to 10% due to improved site certainty and project coordination.

Discussion Points:

- The new infrastructure was PVS piping, designed to last over 100 years. The older pipes, made from previous materials, were expected to last 60–75 years. Having exceeded that lifespan, these aging pipes were now deteriorating, leading to more frequent water main breaks.
- Third-party funding was largely dependent on available opportunities. At present, there haven't been many. WHRM did apply for funding for the third process train, but overall, the number of funding programs has decreased.
- By going to tender earlier, WHRM was able to secure better pricing. However, while overall project costs were lower, borrowing costs were higher due to the limited availability of third-party funding.
- When the 2025/26 five-year Capital Budget was originally developed, 50% of the project funding was to come from depreciation reserves, with the remaining 50% expected from third-party funding. As third-party funding was no longer available, the Municipality must now borrow that portion. While the depreciation funding remains as planned, the loss of third-party funding meant that \$499,000 needs to be financed through borrowing instead of maintaining the original 50/50 funding split.

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS WHEADON AND B. SMITH THAT COUNCIL PRE-APPROVE THE AWARD OF TENDER WHRMPW26-01 — RAND STREET SERVICES AND STREET RENEWAL — TO GARY PARKER EXCAVATING LTD. FOR THE TENDERED PRICE OF \$4,672,059.00 BEFORE APPLICABLE TAXES. MOTION CARRIED

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS WHEADON AND B. SMITH THAT COUNCIL PRE-APPROVE THE CONSTRUCTION PHASE ENGINEERING SERVICES TO DESIGNPOINT ENGINEERING & SURVEYING LTD. FOR THE TOTAL PRICE OF \$78,437.00 BEFORE APPLICABLE TAXES. MOTION CARRIED

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS WHEADON AND B. SMITH THAT COUNCIL PRE-APPROVE A CONSTRUCTION CONTINGENCY AMOUNT OF \$475,049.60 BEFORE APPLICABLE TAXES. MOTION CARRIED. Nays: Ivey

12. Unfinished Business/Postponed Motions

a) Elmcroft Playground RFP Tender Award Recommendation Report (8:52 p.m.)

Manager Bennett reviewed the report. The Elmcroft Play Structure was approved for replacement in 2025, with the old structure removed in December and the new playground

expected to be completed by summer 2026. The design prioritized accessibility, safety, and ease of maintenance. Seven vendors submitted proposals, and the recommended option features turf that meets accessibility standards while being easy to clean and repair. The project was budgeted at \$400,000.

Discussion Points:

- The proposal was for a high-quality play structure designed to attract visitors from beyond Windsor. As a destination playground, it will provide a unique recreational experience and encourage longer visits. This first phase will lay the foundation for a multi-year project, supporting future expansions to further enhance the site's appeal.

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS B. SMITH AND LEARY-PINCH THAT COUNCIL APPROVES THE AWARD OF TENDER WHRMCD25-11 RFP TO PLAYPOWER CANADA FOR THE PLAYGROUND DESIGN AND INSTALL FOR ELMCROFT PARK IN THE AMOUNT OF \$389,982.70 PLUS APPLICABLE TAXES TO BE FUNDED THROUGH THE CANADA COMMUNITY BUILDING FUND. MOTION CARRIED

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS B. SMITH AND LEARY-PINCH THAT COUNCIL APPROVES A CONTINGENCY AMOUNT OF \$58,497.41 OR 15% OF THE PROJECT COSTS, PLUS APPLICABLE TAXES FOR THE PROJECT, TO BE FUNDED THROUGH THE CANADA COMMUNITY BUILDING FUND. MOTION CARRIED. Nays: McLean and Ivey

b) Updated / amended CSO Buyout Recommendation Report (8:56 p.m.)

Councillor Ivey reviewed the report. Flooding around Cunnabel Creek has persisted for over 140 years, with the earliest report dating to 1884. Recent summers (2021–2024) underscored ongoing combined sewer overflow risks, prompting council motions, studies, and outreach to provincial and federal authorities, yet a ready solution has not been implemented. Residents continue to face significant safety and property risks, and discussions on property buyouts and managed retreats began in late 2023. This report consolidates those discussions, aims to formalize the policy, and supports municipal advocacy for funding from provincial and federal governments.

Discussion Points:

- The intent of the report was to relocate the families. Once the homes are vacant, decisions can be made about their future; either sold “as is” with full disclosure or demolished and turned into parkland.
- There was currently no need for these parcels in the stormwater plan, no direct stormwater uses for the land, and the preliminary concept design was still under review.
- It was noted that purchasing these properties would not reduce flooding or change the scope of the Cunnabel Creek project.
- To date, no funding for the purchase of these homes has been confirmed by either the Provincial or Federal governments.
- The policy depended on federal and provincial funding to purchase the properties. If no federal, provincial, or shared funding was secured, the property buyout program could

not proceed. The municipality was in a position to advocate for and assist in securing these funds, including exploring shared funding opportunities.

- The 1884 report highlighted striking price differences; the longer this initiative was delayed, the higher prices will climb.

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS IVEY AND WHEADON THAT COUNCIL DIRECTS THE CAO, (SUBJECT TO THE COST OF FUNDING BEING SHARED AMONGST THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF CANADA AND THE PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA AND THE WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY) TO IMPLEMENT THE WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY'S POLICY AS DRAFTED FOR ITS COMBINED SEWER OVERFLOW, CSO RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY BUYOUT PROGRAM. MOTION CARRIED. Nay: Francis, Jannasch and Zebian

13. Mayor's Report (9:10 p.m.)

Written report was included in the agenda package.

14. Committee(s) of Council Excerpts/Recommendations

a) Committee of the Whole Excerpts (February 10, 2026)

i. REMO agreement with Kings County (9:11 p.m.)

MOVED BY DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS AND COUNCILLOR LEARY-PINCH THAT COUNCIL APPROVE THAT THE WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY ENTER INTO AN INTERMUNICIPAL SERVICE AGREEMENT, SUBSTANTIVELY THE SAME AS THE KINGS REMO AGREEMENT PRESENTED AT THE FEBRUARY 10, 2026 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING, TO FORM A REGIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION WITH NEIGHBORING KINGS COUNTY MUNICIPALITIES FOR THE PROVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SERVICES FOR THE GEOGRAPHIC AREAS OF KINGS COUNTY AND THE WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY. MOTION CARRIED

- ii. Rescind the January 27, 2026 motion, that council request a report from staff on doing the Mill Lakes Pipe Diversion in-house for February Committee of the Whole meeting (9:12 p.m.)**

MOVED BY DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS AND COUNCILLOR J. SMITH THAT COUNCIL RESCIND THE JANUARY 27, 2026 MOTION, THAT COUNCIL REQUEST A REPORT FROM STAFF ON DOING THE MILL LAKES PIPE DIVERSION INHOUSE FOR THE FEBRUARY COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING. MOTION CARRIED. Nays: B. Morton and McLean

b) Audit Committee Excerpts (February 4, 2026) (9:13 p.m.)

Director Rochon reviewed the excerpt. On February 4, 2026, the Audit Committee received the MNP report for the 2022/23 Water Utility Operational Audit, as well as the 2024/25 Financial Statements. The Municipality received an unqualified audit opinion, with auditors confirming the statements were prepared in accordance with Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards and

contained no material misstatements. Overall, the audit was clean, and the Municipality's financial position was described as healthy and vibrant. Revenues increased by \$2.4 million over the prior year, largely due to growth in tax revenue, while some decreases were noted in grant and service-related revenues. Expenditures remained generally consistent year over year, with increases largely attributable to inflation, higher Regional School Board payments, and increased amortization reflecting recent capital investments. The Municipality reported a consolidated accumulated surplus of \$100 million and a positive net asset position. Approximately \$12–13 million was invested in capital assets during the year, with the majority funded internally, as only \$3 million in new debt was issued. While cash balances decreased slightly from \$30 million to \$27 million, the overall financial position remains strong, with a modest net financial debt position of \$2.6 million and no concerns identified by the auditors. The Water Utility operated at a break-even position, largely due to increased depreciation reflecting ongoing capital investment.

Council reviewed the recently received audit reports, noting several concerns. Only a brief report was initially presented, and the full reports were not yet public. Questions were raised about water loss and inventory tracking, which were outside MNP's scope, as their operational audit focused solely on the credit process and related controls. Annual water loss audits by AWWA, conducted by Mr. Kingsley, cover leakage monitoring and are tracked by the CET position. Council approved MNP's engagement through the RFP and Audit Committee process.

Financial discussions highlighted that consolidated statements included all receivables, and timing of billing affected the reported balances. Fire protection revenues were partially removed from the consolidated schedule due to intermunicipal eliminations but were reflected in non-consolidated statements, showing actual revenues exceeding budget. Concerns were also raised about the narrow scope of the audit, the write-off of lost water, and why the original motion for a financial and operational audit was changed to only an operational review.

Finally, Council noted the absence of MNP to formally present the report and answer questions, and a copy of the approved motion was requested for clarification. Councillor Ivey expressed he would not be supporting the recommendation.

MOVED BY DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS AND COUNCILLOR JANNASCH THAT COUNCIL APPROVES THE AUDITED CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENT ENDING MARCH 31, 2025, FOR WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY, AS PRESENTED TO THE AUDIT COMMITTEE. MOTION DEFEATED. Nays: Ivey, B. Smith, Leary-Pinch, B. Morton, Wheadon and McLean

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS JANNASCH AND WHEADON THAT COUNCIL DIRECTS STAFF TO BRING BACK THE REPORT FROM MNP FOR THE MARCH COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING.

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS IVEY AND WHEADON THAT THE MOTION BE AMENDED TO INCLUDE AN INVITATION TO MNP, EITHER THE LEAD OR A MEMBER OF THE TEAM TO BE PRESENT AND AVAILABLE FOR QUESTIONS AT THAT MEETING. MOTION CARRIED

Full motion as amended:

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS JANNASCH AND WHEADON THAT COUNCIL DIRECTS STAFF TO BRING BACK THE REPORT FROM MNP AND THAT MNP, EITHER THE LEAD OR A MEMBER OF THE TEAM BE PRESENT AND AVAILABLE FOR QUESTIONS AT THE MARCH COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING. MOTION CARRIED

c) Diverse Equitable and Inclusive Communities Committee Excerpt (February 9, 2026)
(9:39 p.m.)

i. Advancement of Strategic Action #23 – Homelessness Engagement and Strategy Development

Jess West, citizen member of the Diverse, Equitable and Inclusive Communities Committee, presented the report, On March 25, 2025, West Hants Regional Municipality Council adopted the Equity, Anti-Racism, and Accessibility Strategy Plan, a ten-year framework to advance inclusion, accessibility, and equity while addressing hate and fostering community belonging. Developed with input from residents and a working group of community leaders, the plan guides committees in implementing key priorities. Strategic Action #23 focuses on homelessness, proposing an advisory group of people with lived experience and collaboration with municipal, provincial, and community partners to develop coordinated, year-round support.

Discussion Points:

- A new motion was proposed as more suitable and aligned with the Municipality's role, with the understanding that the intended outcome could still be achieved. Staff were asked to research strong examples and present options to Council.
- The motion aimed for staff to prepare a report outlining possible ways to move forward, noting that similar initiatives across the country have succeeded without direct municipal leadership, and sometimes progressed faster this way. Local examples, including several in Kings County, could also be reviewed.
- It was felt that the Municipality had the capacity to act as a facilitator and bring the right people together, provide a space, and support those who assist others in need, while remaining within its jurisdiction and mandate. This approach would allow the Municipality to stay in its jurisdiction, while still playing a meaningful supporting role.
- There was interest in checking whether Housing Support meetings were still active and what their current focus was.
- Requesting a report was seen as more practical since WHRM lacked the expertise and capacity to lead such a large initiative directly.

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR REMME AND DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS THAT COUNCIL DIRECT STAFF TO EXPLORE AND REPORT BACK ON OPTIONS TO FACILITATE A COORDINATED REGIONAL HOMELESSNESS ENGAGEMENT MODEL, INCLUDING COLLABORATION WITH EXISTING COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND PROVINCIAL REPRESENTATIVES, ALIGNED WITH STRATEGIC ACTION #23, WHILE CLEARLY DEFINING MUNICIPAL ROLE AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS PRIOR TO ESTABLISHING A FORMAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE OR MUNICIPAL STRATEGY. MOTION CARRIED.

15. Councillor(s) Municipal Business/Activity Reports

Written reports were included in the agenda package.

16. Councillor(s) Municipal Advisory Board Activity Reports

- a) Accessibility Advisory Committee Information Report
- b) Valley Regional Enterprise Network LOC Information Report

Written reports were included in the agenda package.

17. New Business

- a) Mill Lakes Diversion Pipe Tender Award (9:49 p.m.)

CAO Phillips reviewed the parliamentary process required to occur in order to revisit the Mill Lakes Diversion Pipe Tender Award. The first step was to add the matter to the agenda, which was successful. The next step required a motion to suspend the rules, which must be approved by two-thirds of Council (8 members). The motion to suspend must clearly identify the specific rules to be set aside. Section 12.30 of the Meeting and Committee Procedural Policy provides Council with the authority to suspend the rules. Section 12.26, outlines who may revisit a motion of Council, and would need to be suspended because the Councillor bringing the matter forward was not on the prevailing side of the original vote. Section 12.27 requires seven days' Notice of Reconsideration, and would also need to be suspended, as that notice was not provided.

If the motion to suspend the rules was successful, a motion for reconsideration of the original motion would then be required. There is no debate permitted on the motion to reconsider. If the motion for reconsideration is successful, the matter returns to Council for debate and discussion; however, the original motion cannot be amended.

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS IVEY AND B. SMITH THAT COUNCIL SUSPEND THE RULES AS PER SECTION 12.30 IN THE MEETING AND COMMITTEE PROCEDURAL POLICY SPECIFICALLY RELATED TO SECTION 12.27 WHICH IS THE NOTICE PROVISION OF 7 DAYS BEING WAIVED AND SECTION 12.26 WHICH IS THE MOTION BEING PUT FORWARD BY A MEMEBR WHO WAS NOT ON THE PREVAILING SIDE OF THE VOTE. MOTION DEFEATED. Nays: J. Smith, Leary-Pinch, B. Morton, Wheadon, McLean, Jannasch, Francis and Zebian

18. Correspondence (9:53 p.m.)

- a) General Correspondence Received Activity Log (as of February 20, 2026)
 - i. NSFM Re Hon. Kim Masland Re Fire Services Modernization Questions & Answers
- b) Requests (as of February 20, 2026)
 - i. Amanda Dunfield Request Council engage in a public discussion regarding Strong Mayor Powers
- c) Outgoing Correspondence Log (as of February 20, 2026) – None

19. In-Camera – None

20. Next Meeting Date / Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:54 p.m. The next meeting will be the Committee of the Whole meeting on March 10, 2026, at 6 p.m.

Mayor Zebian (Chair)

Deanna Snair, Municipal Clerk