

WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

Council Meeting Agenda

March 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) 2026-02-24 Council Minutes
 - b) 2026-02-24 Public Hearing Minutes LUB Amendments: 2037 Highway 1, Falmouth (PID 45242112)
 - c) 2026-02-24 Public Hearing Minutes Peace and Good Order By-Law RCOPG-001.00
7. Public Hearings
 - a) Rezoning: Clifton Avenue, Windsor (PID 45049921) – Planner Dunphy
8. Second Readings (as it pertains to Public Hearings)
 - a) Rezoning: Clifton Avenue, Windsor (PID 45049921) – Planner Dunphy
9. Unfinished Business/Postponed Motions
 - a) Reconsideration — Defeat of the Audited Consolidated Financial Statement for the West Hants Regional Municipality ending March 31, 2025 presented at the February 24, 2026 Council meeting – Councillor Leary-Pinch
 - b) AVRL Update Regarding Funding - CAO Phillips
10. Climate Action Committee Excerpt (**moved up the agenda**)
 - a) PACE Program Funding Recommendation Report – Coordinator Ogilvie
11. Mayor's Report
12. Committee(s) of Council Excerpts/Recommendations
 - a) Committee of the Whole Excerpts (March 10, 2026)
 - i. 2026 Citizen Member Appointment to the Climate Action Committee

- ii. 2027 3-year agreement Cooperative Funding of Provincial J Class Roads
 - iii. O'Brien Street Development Agreement PID 45055902 - Commencement Date Extension Request
 - iv. In-Camera MGA 22(2)(a) Land Matter
- 13. Councillor(s) Municipal Business/Activity Monthly Reports (Districts 1-11)
- 14. Councillor(s) Municipal Advisory Board Activity/Information Reports
 - a) Police Advisory Board Information Report
- 15. New Business
 - a) Windsor Food Bank Recommendation Report – Mayor Zebian
 - b) Citizen Member Appointment to the Diverse, Equitable and Inclusive Communities Committee – Clerk Snair
- 16. Correspondence
 - a) General Correspondence Received Activity Log (as of March 20, 2026) - None
 - b) Requests Log (as of March 20, 2026) - None
 - c) Outgoing Correspondence Log (as of March 20, 2026) - None
- 17. In-Camera
 - a) 2025-11-25 Council In-Camera Minutes
 - b) 2026-01-27 Council In-Camera Minutes
 - c) 2026-02-03 Special Council In-Camera Minutes
 - d) MGA 22 (a) Land Matter
 - e) MGA 22(2)(e) Contract Matter
- 18. Next Meeting Date / Adjournment – April 14, 2026 Committee of the Whole Meeting 6 p.m.

WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

Council Meeting Minutes

March 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 pm

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 (6:08 pm)

Paul Morton, Councillor, District 8

John Smith, Councillor, District 9

Bonnie Smith, Councillor, District 10

Jim Ivey, Councillor, District 11

Staff:

Mark Phillips, Chief Administrative Officer

Todd Richard, Dir. Public Works

Kari Fougere, Acting Dir. Planning & Development

Alex Dunphy, Senior Planner

Deanna Snair, Municipal Clerk

John Ogilvie, Climate Action Coordinator

Carlee Rochon, Dir. Finance

Presenter and Gallery:

2 members of the public

3. Announcements (6:01 pm)

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.

A reminder was shared that the Windsor Curling Club in partnership with the Wolfville Curling Club, were hosting the National Stick Curlin Championships in Windsor and Wolfville beginning tomorrow evening through to Saturday.

Congratulations were extended to both the Girls and Boys Avon View Hockey teams for qualifying for Provincials. This year, the AV Boys team will host the tournament at the West Hants Sports Complex, while the Girls team will travel to Sackville to compete.

A reminder was shared regarding the Brooklyn Fire Department Auxiliary Online auction. All were encouraged to hop online and view the items.

A reminder was shared regarding the upcoming Easter Egg hunt at the Brooklyn Elementary school this coming Saturday. In addition, events were being hosted inside the school for all wishing to attend this event.

A reminder was shared about the upcoming breakfast hosted by the Ellershouse Hall this coming Saturday from 8 -10:30 am. All were encouraged to attend.

4. Approval of the Agenda including additions or deletions (6:04 pm)

With no proposed changes, the agenda was approved as circulated.

5. Declaration of Conflict of Interest (6:04 pm) - None

6. Approval of the Previous Meeting Minutes (6:04 pm)

a) 2026-02-24 Council Minutes

b) 2026-02-24 Public Hearing Minutes LUB Amendments: 2037 Highway 1, Falmouth (PID 45242112)

c) 2026-02-24 Public Hearing Minutes Peace and Good Order By-Law RCOPG-001.00

The minutes were approved as presented.

7. Public Hearings (6:04 p.m.)

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

a) Rezoning: Clifton Avenue, Windsor (PID 45049921) (6:04 pm)

The meeting moved into Public Hearing at 6:04 pm. Further information on the Public Hearing was available in the 2026-03-24 Public Hearing Minutes.

**MOVED BY COUNCILLORS LEARY-PINCH AND P. MORTON THAT
COUNCIL MOVE INTO PUBLIC HEARING AT 6:04 P.M. MOTION CARRIED**

At 6:12 p.m. the Public Hearing concluded, and the regular Council meeting resumed.

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

a) Rezoning: Clifton Avenue, Windsor (PID 45049921) (6:12 pm)

**MOVED BY COUNCILLORS B. SMITH AND IVEY THAT COUNCIL GIVES
SECOND READING AND APPROVES 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**

9. Unfinished Business/Postponed Motions (6:14 pm)

- a) Reconsideration — Defeat of the Audited Consolidated Financial Statement for the West Hants Regional Municipality ending March 31, 2025 presented at the February 24, 2026 Council meeting. (6:14 pm)

Notice was previously provided by Councillor Leary-Pinch, who met all the requirements for the Notice of Reconsideration. It was reminded that a motion to reconsider was not debatable. If the motion to reconsider was passed, the original motion was placed back on the table for discussion and voting.

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS LEARY-PINCH AND P. MORTON THAT COUNCIL RECONSIDER THE DEFEATED MOTION MADE AT THE FEBRUARY 24TH, 2026 COUNCIL MEETING TO APPROVE THE AUDITED CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENT ENDING MARCH 31, 2025, FOR WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY, AS PRESENTED TO THE AUDIT COMMITTEE. MOTION CARRIED.

The original motion was back on the floor for discussion.

Discussion Points:

- The budgeting errors and misstatements that impacted the 2023/24 tax year were addressed and presented to Council throughout that year. Updates were provided, including the RCMP cost of \$236,000, which were missed during budgeting. This amount was incorporated into a mitigation strategy presented to Council and successfully addressed, resulting in a reported deficit of \$143,000, which was covered from Reserves. All issues were resolved within the 2023/24 year, with no impacts carried forward into 2024/25.
- Further questions were able to be addressed by referencing the financial report March 31, 2024, which was presented at the July 24, 2024 meeting.
- Nothing from the 2023/24 errors carried forward in the 2024/25 or 2025/26. All of the errors were dealt with in the year 2023/24 with the transfer of \$143,000 from Reserves.
- Collusion and fraud were considered as part of the auditor's independence and risk assessment processes. Auditors do not examine every transaction but apply materiality to determine which transactions to test, focusing on high-risk areas. In audited presentations, this often includes cash, due to its higher potential for fraud, as well as asset appropriation and accounts payable. The level of testing was guided by a risk-based analysis. WHRM has been identified by the auditor as having strong internal controls.
- With respect to RCMP services, the Municipality was required by contract to budget for a full complement of officers. However, at year-end, if the full complement was not provided (due to officers being off duty for various reasons), the corresponding amount was credited back to the Municipality.

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS LEARY-PINCH AND P. MORTON THAT COUNCIL APPROVES THE AUDITED CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENT ENDING MARCH 31, 2025, FOR WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY, AS PRESENTED TO THE AUDIT COMMITTEE. MOTION CARRIED. Nays: Ivey

b) AVRL Update Regarding Funding (6:24 pm)

CAO Phillips presented a report on the regional library's funding, noting that WHRM currently covers staffing, books, programming, and building-related costs, while the Library Board's additional request focused on staffing, programming, and materials. The Board was seeking a 50% increase in municipal contributions for the 2026–2027 fiscal year, highlighting that municipalities currently cover 26% of operational costs, the Province 71%, and the Board 3%. Other municipalities were considering varied contributions, with some planning only 26% of the requested increase and others waiting on potential provincial funding. The report emphasized that without increased support, the library faces financial challenges and potential reductions in services. It was noted the draft budget included the additional 50% requested (\$210,600); however, this has yet to be decided by Council.

Discussion Points:

- A Library Board meeting was upcoming, and any questions Council may have can be raised there in hopes of receiving a response.
- West Hants has two libraries (Hantsport and Windsor). There were a total of 11 branches through the Annapolis Valley.
- Under the current library funding model, all municipal contributions were pooled and distributed evenly across all libraries. This means West Hants' funding was not allocated specifically to its two libraries. The Library Board makes decisions based on the needs of the entire Annapolis Valley, rather than any single municipality.
- If it was decided to approve the additional funding, Council could specify how its portion was used and place conditions on the approval to mitigate West Hants libraries not being impacted by potential service level reductions.
- Interlibrary loans were an important part of library services but were considered a potentially costly component. It would be useful to determine what proportion of total costs was associated with interlibrary loans, as not every library maintains its own full collection of books.
- Outside of building-related costs, it was important to understand the operational expenses of running the two West Hants libraries. Key questions included what percentage of these costs was currently covered by municipal contributions and how much would be covered if the additional funding was approved.

**MOVED BY COUNCILLOR P. MORTON AND J. SMITH THAT THE
MEETING MOVE IN -CAMERA AT 6:37 P.M. MOTION CARRIED**

At 6:52 pm the meeting resumed.

Discussion continued on the matter. Further questions to ask the Library Board included:

- Has the Board explored partnering with third-party organizations facing similar challenges due to the provincial budget, funding constraints, or inflation, to help sustain programs at risk of being reduced or eliminated?
- Have they explored paid service models as a potential option to support the long-term sustainability of funding?

Libraries were recognized as an important part of WHRM. It was noted that Council currently contributes approximately \$70,000 per year to operate both the Hantsport and Windsor

libraries, in addition to its mandatory contribution. It was suggested that Council signal its intent to support library services and provide the Library Board with stronger footing to approach the province before budgets were finalized, clearly demonstrating what each partner within the AVRLB was prepared to contribute. This show of commitment could serve to influencing provincial funding decisions. A motion, with attached contingencies, was proposed, noting that the requested funding amount had already been included in the draft budget.

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS WHEADON AND P. MORTON THAT COUNCIL ALLOCATE THE MANDATORY LIBRARY FUNDING PLUS AN ADDITIONAL 50% FUNDING FOR A TOTAL OF \$201,600 FOR THE 2026/27 FISCAL YEAR TO THE ANNAPOLIS VALLEY REGIONAL LIBRARY BOARD WITH THE ADDITIONAL 50% FUNDING CONTINGENT ON SERVICE LEVELS REMAINING THE SAME FOR BOTH THE HANTSPORT AND WINDSOR LIBRARIES AND CONFIRMATION OF SUCH FROM THE LIBRARY BOARD WITHIN 30 DAYS OF THIS APPROVAL. MOTION CARRIED. Nays: McLean

10. Climate Action Committee Excerpt (6:59 pm)

a) PACE Program Funding Recommendation Report

Coordinator Ogilvie reviewed the report noting this recommendation was the formal step required to continue the Switch West Hants PACE program. The program provides repayable loans for home energy upgrades and has exhausted its initial funding, meaning it would pause without additional support. Council approved continuing the program with up to \$600,000 in external funding, it was recommending that borrowing interest costs be passed on to participants but noted Council could choose to subsidize costs (e.g., interest or fees), especially for low-income households, pending further analysis.

Discussion Points:

- Applying for a line of credit to fund the program would have an impact on the Municipality's overall debt financing, which may impact further Capital project decisions.
- The Municipality would not be responsible for paying any interest on funds borrowed to support the program, as all costs, including interest and administrative fees, would be passed on to the applicant.
- The motion specified a maximum interest rate of up to 10%, noting that while a lower rate was anticipated, ongoing market uncertainty made it difficult to predict the final rate.
- A borrowing method similar to a line of credit was proposed for accessing the funds, with draws made as applications were received.
- Repayment terms for loans were generally set over 10 years with a fixed interest rate for all projects, except for solar projects. It was proposed that a cushion be added to the interest rate to ensure that, in the event of rising market rates, WHRM would not absorb additional costs. Once the agreement was signed, the resident's interest rate was fixed, with the administrative cushion serving as a buffer to manage potential interest rate fluctuations.
- This was a long-term arrangement and predicting how long the Municipality might potentially hold the line of credit was difficult, as the duration could extend depending on the pace at which loans were repaid.

- A total of \$300,000 was allocated in December 2022, with the program opening in October 2023, providing just over two years to fully utilize the funds. The environment for homeowners has changed with the discontinuation of provincial and federal programs, making municipal support more appealing. Current modeling predicted the funds could be fully drawn within two years, though uptake could occur more quickly depending on demand.
- There was support for maintaining the program, even if the funding amount was adjusted, as many residents continue to rely on it, particularly with provincial and federal funding sources disappearing.
- Concerns were raised regarding the open-ended nature of the motion and the absence of a specified end date.
- If the program were started, it could not be fully discontinued immediately, as funding would continue to come in from repayments. It may be more practical to establish a funding pool, with new applications closed once the funds are fully allocated, reopening only as future repayments replenish the pool.
- If the motion were defeated, it could be revisited at a future meeting, as this motion specifically pertained to the funding source and interest rate. The original motion from Council would remain in effect.

MOVED BY DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS AND COUNCILLOR WHEADON THAT COUNCIL APPROVES BORROWING UP TO \$600,000 FROM THE ROYAL BANK OF CANADA, SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION OF AN INTEREST RATE NOT EXCEEDING 10%, TO ALLOW WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY TO ISSUE THIRD-PARTY FUNDING UNDER THE PROPERTY ASSESSED CLEAN ENERGY PROGRAM, WITH FUNDS TO BE HELD UNTIL ALL AGREEMENT TERMS ARE FULLY MET. MOTION DEFEATED. Nays: McLean, B. Morton, Leary-Pinch, P. Morton, J. Smith, Ivey and Zebian

11. Mayor's Report (7:32 pm)

A verbal report was provided highlighting recent activities and community engagements. Town Halls have been well attended. Attended the Accessibility Awareness flag raising event. In addition to the flag raising, the committee has been promoting information videos on social media to help spread awareness throughout the month. Attended a consolidation discussion with the CAO and the Town of Shelburne, the Municipality of Shelburne and the County, and Town of Lockport, and had extensive discussions with Queens County regarding WHRM's consolidation.

Congratulations were extended to Mary Turner on her 100th birthday.

Attended the Wolfville Town Council meeting, which included discussions regarding the VREN. Residents have been reaching out with feedback on the budget, roads, public works, and snow clearing, which has been commended as a great job. Comments were also raised regarding garbage accumulation as snow melts; the Municipality has previously offered support for garbage collection and supplies.

Receiving many comments on garbage trash as snow melts. Residents and groups interested in community led clean ups were encouraged to contact the Municipality as support (garbage bags, gloves and pick up arrangements) have been supported in the past.

12. Committee(s) of Council Excerpts/Recommendations

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

- i. 2026 Citizen Member Appointment to the Climate Action Committee (7:37 pm)

MOVED BY DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS AND COUNCILLOR B. SMITH THAT COUNCIL APPROVES LAUREN DOUGLAS BE APPOINTED TO THE CLIMATE ACTION COMMITTEE FOR THE TERM MARCH 24, 2026 TO MARCH 31, 2028. MOTION CARRIED

- ii. 2027 3-year agreement Cooperative Funding of Provincial J Class Roads (7:38 pm)

MOVED BY DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS AND COUNCILLOR LEARY-PINCH THAT COUNCIL APPROVE AND DIRECT THE MAYOR AND THE CLERK TO SIGN THE THREE (3) YEAR COST SHARE AGREEMENTS EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2027, NO. 2026-022" RESOLUTION, AS PRESENTED AT THE MARCH 10TH COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING. MOTION CARRIED. Nays: Jannasch, McLean, P. Morton and J. Smith

- iii. O'Brien Street Development Agreement PID 45055902 - Commencement Date Extension Request (7:38 pm)

MOVED BY DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS AND COUNCILLOR P. MORTON THAT COUNCIL APPROVES THE REQUESTED EXTENSION TO THE COMMENCEMENT DATE DEADLINE FOR THE 549 O'BRIEN STREET DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT BY 48 MONTHS, SO THAT THE NEW COMMENCEMENT DATE IS FEBRUARY 2ND, 2028. MOTION CARRIED

- iv. In-Camera MGA 22(2)(a) Land Matter (7:38 pm)

MOVED BY DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS AND COUNCILLOR LEARY-PINCH THAT COUNCIL DIRECT THE CAO TO PROCEED WITH THE PURCHASE AND SALE AGREEMENT FOR PID #45059987 AS DISCUSSED IN-CAMERA. MOTION CARRIED

13. Councillor(s) Municipal Business/Activity Reports

Written reports were included in the agenda package.

14. Councillor(s) Municipal Advisory Board Activity Reports

a) Police Advisory Board Information Report

The written report was included in the agenda package.

15. New Business

a) Windsor Food Bank Recommendation Report (7:39 pm)

Mayor Zebian reviewed the report. The upcoming ending of municipal funding for the Windsor Food Bank on March 31, 2026, poses a significant risk to its operations and its ability to support vulnerable families in the region. The request was to consider extending funding to sustain services, recognizing that doing so would have budgetary implications requiring further review.

Discussion Points:

- In the first year, funding was approved from February to March, with funds coming from

the Operating Reserve. For the following year, funding was approved by Council from March to March prior to budget deliberations, but it did not include funds from the operating budget; instead, it was intended to be incorporated into the budget, effectively extending it from April to March as part of the tax rate. Since funding did not extend past March 31, there could be a shortfall if approval was not granted. This approach was intended to bridge the gap until budget deliberations were completed, where future funding for the foodbank would be discussed. Additional discussion on potential solutions for securing a more permanent location for the food bank would occur during budget deliberations.

MOVED BY MAYOR ZEBIAN AND COUNCILLOR WHEADON THAT COUNCIL APPROVES \$3,700/MONTH TO MARCH 31, 2027. MOTION CARRIED

- b) Citizen Member Appointment to the Diverse, Equitable and Inclusive Communities Committee (7:48 pm)

Clerk Snair reviewed the report. The Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive Communities Committee serves in an advisory role to Council, promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion by addressing social marginalization, reducing barriers, and supporting inclusive policies and programs. Ongoing recruitment efforts have struggled to fill Committee vacancies; however, a recent posting produced one qualified candidate with strong professional and lived experience in diversity and inclusion that would enhance the Committee's ability to reflect community perspectives and guide inclusive municipal initiatives. Appointing this individual would fill a vacancy while ongoing recruitment continued to fill the two (2) remaining vacancies.

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS LEARY-PINCH AND IVEY THAT COUNCIL APPROVES KIMBERLY HOADLEY BE APPOINTED TO THE DIVERSE, EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE FOR THE TERM MARCH 24, 2026 TO MARCH 31, 2028. MOTION CARRIED

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

- a) General Correspondence Received Activity Log (as of March 20, 2026) - None
- b) Requests (as of March 20, 2026) - None
- c) Outgoing Correspondence Log (as of March 20, 2026) – None

17. In-Camera

- a) 2025-11-25 Council In-Camera Minutes
- b) 2026-01-27 Council In-Camera Minutes
- c) 2026-02-03 Special Council In-Camera Minutes
- d) MGA 22(2)(a) Land Matter
- e) MGA 22(2)(e) Contract Matter

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS P. MORTON AND J. SMITH THAT THE MEETING MOVE IN-CAMERA AT 7:50 P.M. MOTION CARRIED

Councillor Remme was not in the room and did not participate in the vote.

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS P. MORTON AND LEARY-PINCH THAT THE MEETING MOVE IN-CAMERA AT 8:26 P.M. MOTION CARRIED

MOVED BY DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS AND COUNCILLOR P. MORTON THAT COUNCIL APPROVE THE SALE OF PID 45059987, FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE WINDSOR COURT HOUSE, BY DIRECTING THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER TO EXECUTE THE PURCHASE AND SALE AGREEMENT SUBSTANTIALLY THE SAME AS DISCUSSED IN-CAMERA. MOTION CARRIED

MOVED BY DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS AND COUNCILLOR P. MORTON THAT COUNCIL AUTHORIZE THE WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY'S WITHDRAW FROM THE VALLEY REGIONAL ENTERPRISE NETWORK, AS PERMITTED IN THE INTERMUNICIPAL SERVICE AGREEMENT, EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2028. MOTION CARRIED

18. Next Meeting Date / Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m. The next meeting will be the Committee of the Whole meeting on April 14, 2026, at 6 p.m.

Mayor Zebian (Chair)

Deanna Snair, Municipal Clerk