



WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY REPORT

Information ✓	Recommendation ☐	Decision Request ☐	Councillor Activity ✓
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To: West Hants Regional Municipality Council Meeting

Submitted by: Councillor Jim Ivey, District 11, Windsor South

Date: December 9, 2025 (For the period Sept -Dec)

Subject: Councillor Activity Report and Issues: Water Utilities, Budget, Audit Committee & other

I am pleased to provide the following since my last report as updates for the months from September to date (few items overlooked in prior report). This will ideally provide a brief account of highlights as well as other items brought to my attention with reflection on a few items that will follow.

- **December 6, 2025:** Attended and assisted in the photos with Santa event at the Ardoise Hall, with my wonderful assistant Chrissy
- **December 5, 2025:** Attended the Windsor Township Business Association's business and community Holiday Social hosted at Gerrish and Grey
- **December 4, 2025:** Attended the Budget review workshop with other councillors and staff. This was a session to serve as a guide for Councillors identifying components of the budget by department for the current year's financials to assist with future budget work in the new year
- **December 3, 2025:** Met with representatives of the Harvest House Outreach Support group with Councillor Bonnie Smith to better understand their future plans and current status for assisting with the unhoused in our community
- **December 3, 2025:** Received an update from Care Mongers support group regarding its shelter plans for the coming winter
- **December 2, 2025:** Attended the Committee of the Whole meeting with members of Council
- **December 1, 2025:** Attended a special workshop and presentation on the future of emergency and fire services as envisioned through a provincial and local lens
- **Nov 29, 2025:** Attend the delicious monthly breakfast put on at the *Ellershose Hall*, one of the many exceptional halls we have operating in West Hants. 😊

- **Nov 28, 2025:** Had a discussion and regarding support for the unhoused this winter through the Care Mangers support group to get a sense of their current status and plans for the colder season that is upon us
- **November 25, 2025:** Attended our monthly Council meeting with the other councillors across our West Hants region
- **November 24, 2025:** Attended the Zero Emission Transportation information session held at the Brooklyn Civic Center
- **November 23, 2025:** Attended the Ardoise Hall's plentiful pancake and sausage breakfast with Mrs. Claus spectacularly served by the Matre'd of the Ellershouse Hall community breakfasts, Mr. Paul Wheadon.
- **November 22, 2025:** Attended a spectacular parade and display of light in the Annual Santa Parade of Light In Windsor NS as well as a tree-mendous tree lighting ceremony at Vicotria Park following the parade
- **November 19, 2025:** Attended the Zero Emission Transportation information session held at the Ardoise Hall and later again at the West Hants Sports Complex
- **November 13, 2025:** Attended the Planning and Heritage Advisory Committee Meeting. Draft minutes can be found here
- **November 12, 2025:** Attended the Committee of the whole with all our other Councillors from across the West Hants Region
- **November 12, 2025:** Attended the Climate Action Committee
- **November 11, 2025:** So very pleased to have been able to attend the Remembrance Day services held in Windsor's Victoria Park along with many members of Council in honor, memory and reflection for those who have died, served and continue to serve in our military, police, fire and special services corps
- **November 8, 2025:** I began my month of more breakfasts than I could handle by attending the splendid South-West Hants Fire Hall's feast. Not surprisingly I also encountered Councillor Leary-Pinch on site serving the throng of people who attend this event on a monthly basis.
- **November 6, 2025:** Attended the second of two sessions for *"Building Your Municipal Budget (Open House / Information Sessions for the Public)"* at the Brooklyn Civic Center.
- **November 4, 2025:** Attended the *"Windsor Storm Water Plan Community Information Session"* at the Super 8 Motel for the purposes of further informing the public on the current status of the research and report findings.
- **October 28, 2025:** Attended the monthly Council meeting in chambers at 76 Morison Drive along with the other municipal councillors from a cross the West Hants Region.

- **October 23, 2025:** Attended the first of two sessions for “*Building Your Municipal Budget (Open House / Information Sessions for the Public)*” at the West Hants Sports Complex
- **September 24, 2025** So very pleased to be able to attend and present at the valued Volunteer Award Banquet hosted at the Brooklyn Civic Center with a marvelous meal served by the Auxiliary.
- **September 23, 2025** So very pleased to be able to attend and present at the valued Volunteer Award Banquet hosted at the Brooklyn Civic Center with a marvelous meal served by the Auxiliary.
- **September 23, 2025:** Attended the monthly Council meeting in chambers at 76 Morison Drive along with the other municipal councillors from across the West Hants Region. Other matters in September were included in my report that was dated for September 23rd).

Other Activity:

Water Utility Audit: I have conversations on a monthly to weekly basis regarding the reporting on the water utilities (now consolidated for just over a year). A motion to undertake a detailed audit of the utilities was unanimously passed by Council in January 2024, almost two years ago.

The motion did not specify the year (or years) to audit because it wasn’t clear based on the information provided to Council at that time (discussions and questions between October 2023 through January 2024) how deep or far the apparent issues existed. It has been determined since then that issues have existed for many years.

The motion reflecting the unanimous and agreed direction of Council which is presently due to be delivered in January 2026 is:

“Council directs CAO to secure an independent firm to undertake a detailed, operational and financial audit of the West Hants and Windsor Water Utilities.”

Given the additional and changed information since the issuance of the motion, additional work may still be required. This would include more recently water volume reported as treated through the plant, consumption through the bulk meters and at the end-use customer taps.

Further the Audit Committee has not met since June of 2025. The audited statements for 2024-25 remain outstanding, (typically due for delivery to the province by Sept 30th of each year). To additionally note, the detailed operational and financial audit of the Water Utilities was, last reported to the Committee to be due in July of 2025, yet it is now, not expected to be available, until January 2026 (two years after the motion to initiate the audit).

The following motion from September 23, 2025 appears to have become waylaid. (It didn’t make it to the dashboard before it disappeared shortly thereafter).

Moved by Councillor Ivey and B. Smith that Council directs the CAO to engage staff to provide a report to council identifying the costs which contributed to the increased residential area rate of 4 cents for the residents of West Hants for the 2025-26 fiscal tax year, the costs which resulted in a budgeted amount within the West Hants operating reserve of \$1.180 million for purposes of reducing a potential tax rate increase for West Hants residential properties in 2024-25 fiscal tax year, the identification of changes in any

area rated or general rated cost allocations as well as any miscalculations or oversights that may have contributed to the upward pressure on the West Hants tax rates which may include the general rating or roads, increased principal and interest payments, allocation of costs for rcmp and / or any other items deemed relevant, the calculations used in determining the operating reserve ratio (10% of revenues). Motion carried.

The information sought in the preceding motion was identified as necessary to clarify the rationale for the increase in the West Hants tax rate which still remains uncertain (at least in my mind).

As noted in the September report, the reason for this request was a result of the variance in explanations provided during the budget discussions, in stark contrast to the explanation provided in August to the press, which was that the increase was due to errors in the West Hants allocation for the 2023-2024 RCMP charges. This explanation of an error in 2023-24 has not previously been provided to Council.

It should not have to be said, but these sorts of questions and discrepancies surrounding the financial results should not continue to stretch out further.