

**WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY**

**Committee of the Whole - Meeting Agenda Amended April 17, 2026**

**April 14, 2026 - 6:00 p.m.**

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

**Virtual via Zoom (also YouTube Livestream)**

*Agenda is subject to change due to additions that may not be able to be reflected until after the meeting.*

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**West Hants**  
something inspiring awaits

1. Call to Order
2. Attendance
3. Approval of the Agenda, including additions or deletions
4. Declaration(s) of Conflict of Interest
5. Announcements
6. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes
  - a) 2026-03-10 Committee of the Whole Minutes
  - b) 2026-03-25 Special Committee of the Whole Budget Minutes
7. Presentations
8. Unfinished Business
  - a) 2026 Provincial Representative Volunteer Recommendation Report – Manager Johnston – Isenor **(Moved up on the agenda)**
  - b) Coordinated Regional Homelessness Engagement Model Information Report – Clerk Snair
9. Reports
  - a) **CAO Activity Update - Information Report**
  - b) Dangerous or Unsightly Information Report for March 31, 2026
  - c) General Operating ending January 2026 (2025/26 Fiscal Year)
  - d) Water Utility Operating ending January 2026 (2025/26 Fiscal Year)
  - e) Water Consumption ending January 2026 (2025/26 Fiscal Year)
10. Correspondence
  - f) 2024-2028 Council Term General Correspondence Received Ledger as of April 10, 2026 - None
  - b) 2024-2028 Council Term Correspondence Sent as of April 10, 2026
    - i. WHRM Correspondence to Annapolis Valley Regional Library

- ii. WHRM Correspondence to the Valley Regional Enterprise Network (VREN) Re Notice of Withdrawal
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- 11. New Business
    - a) Employee Pension Plan Decision Request - Councillor Bonnie Smith
    - b) Kamstrup AMR Water Meter Pilot Program Recommendation Report – Director Richard
    - c) 2026 Citizen Member Appointment to the Accessibility Advisory Committee – Clerk Snair
  
  - 12. Public Comment Period
  
  - 13. In-Camera
    - a) 2026-03-10 Committee of the Whole In-Camera Minutes
    - b) MGA 22(2)(a) Land Matter
    - c) MGA 22(2)(d) Labour Matter
    - d) MGA 22(2)(d) Labour Matter
  
  - 14. Next Meeting Date / Adjournment – April 28, 2026 Council Meeting at 6 p.m.

**WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY**  
**Committee of the Whole - Meeting Minutes**  
**April 14, 2026 - 6:00 p.m.**  
**In-person Sanford Council Chambers, 76 Morison Dr, Windsor, NS**  
**Virtual via Zoom (also YouTube Livestream)**

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

2. **Attendance**

Council

Abraham Zebian, Mayor

Rupert Jannasch, Councillor Dist. 1

Scott McLean, Councillor Dist. 2

Chrystal Remme, Councillor Dist. 3

Paul Wheadon, Councillor Dist. 4

Bob Morton, Councillor Dist. 6

Debbie Francis, Deputy Mayor, Dist. 5

Kayla Leary-Pinch, Councillor Dist. 7 (6:10 pm)

Paul Morton, Councillor Dist. 8

John Smith, Councillor, Dist. 9

Bonnie Smith, Councillor Dist. 10

Jim Ivey, Councillor Dist. 11

Staff

Mark Phillips, CAO

Todd Richard, Director of Public Works

Carlee Rochon, Director of Financial Services

Deanna Snair, Exec. Asst/ Clerk

Kathy Kehoe, Director of Community Dev

Kathy Johnston -Isenor, Manager of Recreation  
& Community Engagement

Regrets:

Kari Fougere, Act Dir Planning & Development

Gallery:

Two (2) members of the public

3. **Approval of the Agenda including additions or deletions (6:00 p.m.)**

As no additions were proposed, the agenda was accepted as presented.

4. **Declaration(s) of Conflict of Interest (6:00 p.m.) - None**

5. **Announcements (6:01 p.m.)**

Deputy Mayor Francis provided the Land Acknowledgement and Code of Conduct reminder.

A reminder was shared about the importance of water conservation. In an effort to increase awareness and fundraise the Windsor Daycare were selling rain barrels. Individuals interested in purchasing a rain barrel were encouraged to contact the Daycare to place their orders.

6. **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes (6:02 p.m.)**

a) 2026-03-10 Committee of the Whole Minutes

b) 2026-03-25 Special Committee of the Whole Budget Minutes

With no proposed changes the minutes were approved as presented.

7. **Presentations - None**

8. **Unfinished Business/Postponed Motions (6:03 p.m.)**

a) Coordinated Regional Homelessness Engagement Model Information Report (6:04 p.m.)

Clerk Snair reviewed the report in response to Council's request to look at ways to support a coordinated community led approach to homelessness. The report identified supports and services already existing within the community, who was involving in providing the support and highlighted where gaps may exist. It also looked at what neighbouring municipalities were doing and identified the municipal role as being a supportive role bringing partners together for a cohesive and collaborative approach from all parties, improving coordination, communication and sharing of information and helping to advocate for provincial funding. The goal was to have an approach that was practical and collaborative and avoids duplication that sees long term solution with locally driven resources.

Discussion Points:

- It was felt that collaboration through the Housing Coalition was the most effective approach, as the Coalition was already established and actively addressing housing issues. There was value in having a Council representative at the table for informational and liaison purposes, similar to other committees.
- A recent meeting in Kings County brought together all service providers in one room, allowing for meaningful discussion around service gaps and potential solutions. A similar model would be beneficial for West Hants, with strong communication between the Housing Coalition and local service providers. West Hants already has many active organizations that should be included in these ongoing discussions.
- The Municipality's role would primarily be to facilitate connections and ensure Council remains informed, recognizing the significant expertise already present within the community.
- Regarding abandoned sites, cleanup was the responsibility of the Municipality, as these locations were on municipal property. Costs vary depending on site size and conditions. Estimated costs were approximately \$1,000 for the waterfront and \$2,500–\$5,000 for Shell Park, due to the more extensive nature of cleanup required. These costs were currently absorbed by the Municipality, and no provincial programs specific to outdoor site cleanups have been identified. Cost recovery has not yet been explored; however, it was noted that the Province has historically been supportive of homelessness initiatives, and future cost-sharing opportunities may exist. An amount of \$10,000 has been allocated in the budget to address homelessness throughout the year.
- Looking ahead, the Municipality's plan was to clean up remaining materials left behind by individuals living rough, while focusing enforcement and municipal resources on Shell Park as the single designated site. The Municipality continues to work collaboratively with service providers to support individuals at this location. Individuals along the Causeway Trail have been contacted and were being assisted with relocation where possible or connected with appropriate supports. Messaging remains consistent that Shell Park was the only designated location.
- Shell Park was selected as the designated site due to its ability to accommodate individuals at scale and support the delivery of dedicated resources such as portable washrooms and waste collection. Other locations were considered and trialed, each with advantages and

challenges, but the Municipality was currently following the same model as last year and focusing efforts on one centralized site.

**MOVED BY COUNCILLOR REMME AND MAYOR ZEBIAN THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL APPOINT A COUNCILLOR LIAISON TO PARTICIPATE IN THE WEST HANTS HOUSING COALITION OR ANY FUTURE COORDINATED HOMELESSNESS ENGAGEMENT TABLE FOR THE PURPOSE OF SUPPORTING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE GROUP AND COUNCIL. MOTION CARRIED**

## 9. Reports

### a) CAO's Report (6:18 p.m.)

The CAO provided an overview report outlining key governance, administrative, operational activities undertaken since the last Committee of the Whole meeting. A meeting with the Avon View High School Grad Ceremony committee occurred to facilitate this year's Grad ceremony at the Sports Complex as it was a much larger venue that would allow more people to attend the ceremony.

Warming Centre update: Warming Centre operations ended March 31. Appreciation was extended to Caremongers for their support in delivering that support.

Finance: A number of meetings have occurred.

Little River Bridge replacement - Work has started on the approaches to the bridge. Once the bridge was complete and the washout fixed, we will have a continuous trail system from the GFL arena straight through to the Stanley Airport.

Planning Department: The Regional Planning Strategy was underway, and staff were currently working through key takeaways. Information will be brought forward to the Planning and Heritage Advisory Committee and Council in the near future for review and approval.

The Windsor Courthouse, the sale was ongoing. The Municipality was awaiting the purchaser's development application, at which time the project will become more public.

Economic Development: WHRM served a Notice of Withdrawal, along with all other partners within the IMSA.

Protective Services: Attended Alert Ready Quarterly training with Manager Burgess. The recruitment for the Director of Fire Services will enter into a second application process as the first process did not result in securing a candidate. A recruiting firm will be engaged in this second process to ensure the process is as thorough as possible in recruiting a candidate through a national search.

### Discussion Points:

- The completion date for the bridge was the end of May.

### b) Dangerous or Unsightly Information Report for March 31, 2026 (6:27 p.m.)

CAO Phillips reviewed the report. The report covered Dangerous or Unsightly Premises complaints received between September 1, 2025, and March 31, 2026. During this period, 10 written complaints were received. Of these, 4 were remedied by the property owners, while 6 were newly received and have not yet been started. From the previous reporting period, 6 files

were in progress; 5 have been resolved and closed, and 1 remains near completion, with delays attributed to winter snow conditions. No cleanup orders were issued by the Administrator during this reporting period.

c) General Operating as of January 31, 2026 (2025/26 Fiscal Year) (6:28 p.m.)

Director Rochon reviewed the report and noted a \$431,598 increase in the surplus. This increase was mainly due to the approval of the financial statements, which resulted in a change to Unconditional Transfers from the Province, specifically related to the Municipal Financial Capacity Grant. There was an increase in the Deed Transfer Tax revenue between September and November. As a result, the projection was updated showing a larger increase than previously reported. On the expense side, net transfers increased compared to the last report due to a reassessment of the Asset Retirement Obligation contribution. In addition, year-end projections for Environmental Health Services were adjusted slightly higher to better reflect spending levels consistent with prior years.

Discussion Points:

- Business Property Transfers were from other bodies; MT&T, Bell Aliant, Nova Scotia Power, and the HST Offset Grant. These payments are usually received all at once after the funds are collected.
- Deed Transfer Tax revenue was higher than expected. \$2.1 million was originally budgeted, but current projections were closer to \$2.6 million. This revenue was paid by the Province on a monthly basis, although there was often a delay in receiving the payments each month.
- Revenue from the Benjamin's Mills wind farm will not be received until the turbines are built and assessed by Nova Scotia Power. Billing occurs once the operational turbines were assessed based on the amount of electricity they produce. Legislation limits billing to 50% of the assessed amount in the first year. Nova Scotia Power provides confirmation of the kilowattage being produced, which triggers billing. This revenue was expected to be realized once these steps were completed.

d) Water Utility Operating as of January 31, 2026 (2025/26 Fiscal Year) (6:36 p.m.)

Director Rochon reviewed the report and noted that the overall surplus increased by \$160,000, bringing the total projected surplus to \$176,889. Many of the changes reflected the year-end closing, which allowed estimates to be replaced with actual figures. This included receiving final numbers for revenue from the bulk water station, improving accuracy. Water treatment cost projections were also adjusted based on updated information for chemicals and maintenance-related items. Transmission and Distribution costs came in higher than expected, due to water main maintenance and leak detection work, along with some account reallocations. In addition, Administration and General expenses increased by \$5,431 due to higher audit fees related to additional water discussions, partially offset by reductions in other administrative areas. Overall, the utility was now projecting a year-end surplus of \$176,889.

Discussion Points:

- Under Administration and General, depreciation costs made up a large portion of the expenses. In Water Transmission and Distribution, higher costs were mainly related to

maintenance, including work on water mains, standpipes, leak detection, hydrants, and repairs. While some of this work may be capitalized, overall costs were still expected to be higher than originally projected.

e) Water Consumption as of January 31, 2026 (2025/26 Fiscal Year) (7:52 p.m.)

Director Rochon reviewed the report noting that in January, thirteen (13) accounts were closed, and no adjustments. The variance was 61.4%.

Discussion Points:

- Third-quarter water usage in Falmouth was lower compared to the second quarter, which reflected peak summer and drought conditions, higher outdoor water use, the absence of restrictions early in the quarter, along with limited bulk water station availability.
- Closed accounts represent those that required final meter readings, mostly due to property sales. Most of these accounts were likely to reopen, while some were closed permanently because meters were removed for demolitions.
- Magnetic (mag) meters provide more accurate and reliable flow data. As the water utility has transitioned to a regional system, some existing bulk meter locations no longer effectively represent individual zones. With the commissioning of the new Burgess Road water tank, previously closed valves between the County and Windsor systems will be opened, making bulk meters at locations such as Dill Road and Underwood less relevant. Going forward, these meters will be referred to as District Meter Areas (DMAs). DMAs involve installing mag meters within defined zones to accurately measure and track water flows. In relation to the consumption report, staff were developing a new reporting format that will better reflect water treatment plant flows and district-level usage. While DMAs will be incorporated, it will take time to fully establish the zones and align residential meter readings with district meter reading periods.
- Over the long term, the capital plan included installing more district meters. Although there were costs involved, these meters provide more accurate zone data, help track water use, and allow staff to better identify and predict leaks.
- Leachate has a different chemical composition but was relatively clean. It still had to be disposed of in accordance with regulations at an approved treatment facility, which was why it could be treated through the WHRM system. Required processes, permits, and testing were in place, and there was capacity to handle the landfill leachate.
- With respect to treating fracking water, there was an agreement with a mining company in 2012 that permitted this to occur. It was later determined that some substances in the fracking water could not be treated through the treatment process. As a result, the Department of Environment issued an order to stop accepting and treating this water at the Windsor plant.
- Approval of fracking wastewater would need to follow provincial regulations. However, no requests have been made for WHRM to treat fracking wastewater at our facilities, so it was hard to comment on specific treatment requirements. If a significant change such as fracking wastewater were proposed, it would require both a technical (chemistry) review and a policy decision, with input from Council.

**10. Correspondence (6:52 p.m.)**

a) 2024-2028 Council Term General Correspondence Received Log as of April 10, 2026 – None

b) 2024-2028 Council Term Correspondence Sent as of April 10, 2026

- i. WHRM Correspondence to Annapolis Valley Regional Library
- ii. WHRM Correspondence to the Valley Regional Enterprise Network (VREN) Re Notice of Withdrawal

**11. New Business**

a) Employee Pension Plan Decision Request (6:54 p.m.)

Councillor Bonnie Smith reviewed the report. The West Hants pension plan currently requires all employees to contribute the full 9% of eligible earnings, which represents a significant upfront deduction from each pay. While this approach provides strong long-term benefits through retirement income security and tax advantages, it can place financial pressure on employees in the short term. Exploring an option for reduced contribution flexibility could help employees better manage current living expenses while still supporting future retirement goals and aligning with individual financial planning preferences.

Discussion Points:

- WHRM has a Pension and Benefits Committee with employee representation. This issue has been discussed during labour relations meetings, including both contribution rates and their impact. Council determines resource allocation, and staff welcome Council's direction. Any changes would involve consultation with the committee. While the goal was to provide flexibility and choice for employees, there was concern that different choices over time could create inequities, making clear communication and education essential.
- If half the workforce chose a lower contribution rate, there could be some savings to the municipal contribution, but it would be important that employees clearly understand the long-term impact of their choices.
- A policy would be needed.
- Most municipalities use defined contribution plans rather than defined benefit plans.

**MOVED BY COUNCILLORS B. SMITH AND LEARY-PINCH THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL DIRECT STAFF TO EXPLORE AMENDING THE EXISTING PENSION POLICY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY TO ESTABLISH A FLEXIBLE EMPLOYEE PENSION CONTRIBUTION RATE WITHIN A RANGE OF NO LESS THAN 5% AND NO GREATER THAN 9% OF ELIGIBLE EARNINGS; PERMIT EMPLOYEES TO SELECT THEIR PREFERRED CONTRIBUTION RATE WITHIN THIS RANGE; AND REPORT BACK TO COUNCIL WITH THE NECESSARY POLICY AMENDMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS FOR IMPLEMENTATION. MOTION CARRIED.** Nays: Wheadon and B. Morton

b) Kamstrup AMR Watermeter Pilot Program Recommendation Report (7:04 p.m.)

Director Richard reviewed the report. As West Hants Regional Municipality continues to manage a newly consolidated regional water utility alongside rapid local development, protecting infrastructure and reducing water loss have become critical priorities. Traditional leak detection methods were often reactive, costly, and resource-intensive. The proposed Kamstrup flowIQ® 2200 smart meter pilot offered an opportunity to modernize water management by introducing advanced, always-on acoustic leak detection directly into residential meters and allowed staff to identify and address leaks earlier and more precisely, improve operational efficiency, reduce non-revenue water, and better preserve system capacity.

Discussion Points:

- Option 2 (300 metres) was the recommended package, and the quoted price included HST.
- If all meters were not installed, the remaining units would be kept in stock at no additional charge. With the addition of a new technician, it was anticipated that an aggressive rollout could occur, with as many meters installed as possible. WHRM has a long-standing working relationship with the proponent, and they were even willing to offer assistance to support implementation of the pilot program.
- The smart meters communicate with one another, and increasing the number of listening devices in the distribution system would help identify non-revenue water before it becomes a larger issue.
- The data collected was cloud-based and provided to WHRM in the form of alerts and graphs indicating when noise was detected. Increasing the number of meters improves data accuracy.
- Some battery-powered meters were nearing the end of their lifecycle, and areas such as Windsor, where meters are read manually, were identified as priorities. Replacing walk-by meters with automated, leak-detecting units would reduce manual reading time, allow for more frequent readings, and support monthly consumption and leak detection instead of quarterly, resulting in better data and easier system management.
- The meters were intended to be distributed across all utilities; however, the Windsor system had the highest number of meters not yet on the automated read system.
- The pilot program provided loaned software and a reading device for a six-month period. If the program continued beyond the pilot, the software and reading device would need to be purchased.
- Meter purchases were the primary cost; software was approximately \$2,500 annually and the reading device about \$2,000, with the meters being less expensive than those currently in use.
- Once automated, all meter reads could be completed by a single employee using a vehicle
- The system currently uses meters from multiple suppliers, and both the existing and proposed software can read all meter types, resulting in no concerns with switching systems.
- The water utility owns the meters; new customers were not charged for the cost of a meter. A portion of the base charge was intended to compensate for the cost, installation, maintenance, and replacement of all meters within the distribution system.

- Other municipalities that have implemented these meters have reported very high success rates, with consistently high levels of accuracy.
- The larger the leak, the more sound it generates. The new system was capable of detecting leaks on both metallic and plastic pipes.
- The meters carry a 20-year warranty on battery life. Partial replacement costs were prorated based on the number of years the meter were in service.
- After the six-month pilot program concluded, the plan was to discontinue the existing meter-reading software and transition to the Kamstrup reading software.
- Currently, treatment plant operators were responsible for installing water meters. A fair amount of staff time was also required to complete final readings. Under the pilot program, this individual will take on some of those responsibilities, with continued support from treatment plant operators. The plan was to be very aggressive with meter installations during the six-month timeframe in order to deploy as many meters as possible and evaluate the software's performance. The supplier has also committed to providing support throughout this process.
- Concerns were raised that a significant amount of water loss occurs in Three Mile Plains, while the initial meter installations and leak-detection efforts were to be concentrated in Windsor. Questions were asked about whether leak detection would also occur in Three Mile Plains. It was confirmed some meters would be installed on the Three Mile Plains system as well, not exclusively in Windsor.
- Meter installation was a one-person task, with no safety or operational concerns identified.
- The meter supplier was not a Canadian company; it was a Danish company. There were no Canadian manufacturers producing acoustic meters, and the current meter supplier was also not Canadian.

**MOVED BY COUNCILLORS WHEADON AND IVEY THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL DIRECT STAFF TO PROCEED WITH THE KAMSTRUP PILOT PROGRAM TO EVALUATE THE ULTRASONIC WATER METERS AND EXPLORE INDUSTRY LEADING AUTOMATED METER READING TECHNOLOGY WITH INTEGRATED ACOUSTIC LEAK DETECTION TO REDUCE NON-REVENUE WATER AND OPTIMIZE OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY AND APPROVE THE EXPENDITURE OF \$91,500 PLUS APPLICABLE TAXES AS INDICATED IN THIS REPORT AS PILOT PROGRAM PACKAGE #2. MOTION CARRIED.** Nays: Francis, B. Morton, P. Morton and Zebian

c) 2026 Citizen Member Appointment to the Accessibility Advisory Committee (7: 28 p.m.)  
 Clerk Snair reviewed the report. The Accessibility Advisory Committee advises Council on improving accessibility and removing barriers for persons with disabilities across municipal programs, services, and facilities. It supports compliance with provincial accessibility legislation and advances the Municipality's Anti-Hate, Anti-Racism, and Accessibility Plan by reviewing policies, monitoring requirements, and engaging the community. The Committee's work ensures

municipal decisions are inclusive, informed by lived experience, and focused on building a barrier-free West Hants for all residents. The recommendation would bring valuable knowledge to the Committee. Appointing this individual would strengthen the Committee’s ability to provide informed, practical guidance, ensuring municipal decisions reflect the needs of people with disabilities and support equitable access for all residents.

**MOVED BY MAYOR ZEBIAN AND COUNCILLOR B. SMITH THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL APPROVES JAMIE PATTERSON BE APPOINTED TO THE ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THE TERM APRIL 28, 2026 TO APRIL 30, 2028. MOTION CARRIED**

**13. Public Comment Period (7:29 p.m.) – None**

**14. In-Camera (7:29 p.m.)**

- a) 2026-03-10 Committee of the Whole In-Camera Minutes
- b) MGA 22(2)(a) Landl Matter
- c) MGA 22(2)(d) Labour Matter
- d) MGA 22(2)(d) Labour Matter

**MOVED BY COUNCILLORS P. MORTON AND J. SMITH THAT THE MEETING MOVE IN-CAMERA AT 7:29 P.M. MOTION CARRIED**

**MOVED BY COUNCILLORS P. MORTON AND LEARY-PINCH THAT THE MEETING MOVE OUT OF IN-CAMERA AT 9:20 P.M. MOTION CARRIED**

**15. Next Meeting Date / Adjournment – April 28, 2026 Council meeting**  
With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

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Deputy Mayor Debbie Francis, Chair

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Deanna Snair, Municipal Clerk