

WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

Committee of the Whole - Meeting Agenda Amended July 14, 2026

July 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.



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) 2026-06-09 Committee of the Whole Minutes
7. Presentations
 - a) Friends of the Hantsport Library – Lorraine McQueen
 - b) Capital Project Update Presentation – Project Engineer Bouter
8. Unfinished Business
 - a) Request for Additional Support Re Plan Review from WSP Recommendation Report –Director Poirier
 - b) RCOFN-010.01 - Reserve Policy Amendments – Director Rochon
 - c) Annapolis Valley Regional Library (AVRL) Update Information Report Updated July 14, 2026 – Councillor Remme
 - d) Annapolis Valley Regional Library (AVRL) Meeting and Council Direction – Mayor Zebian
9. Reports
 - a) CAO Activity Update - Information Report
 - b) Water Consumption Report 2025-26
 - c) Water Financial Update - March 31, 2026
 - d) Gen Ops Financial Update - March 31, 2026
10. Correspondence
 - a) 2024-2028 Council Term General Correspondence Received as of July 10, 2026
 - i. Library Closure Concerns
 - ii. Waste Collection Concerns

- iii. East Hants Notification of Official Community Plan
 - iv. Rick Smith Re WHRM Procurement Practices - Audit Services
- b) 2024-2028 Council Term Correspondence Sent as of July 10, 2026 - None
- 11. New Business
 - a) Blue Route Sweeping Request for Consideration – Deputy Mayor Francis
 - b) Procurement Practices - Audit Services Recommendation Report – Councillor Ivey
- 12. Public Comment Period
- 13. In-Camera
 - a) 2026-06-09 Committee of the Whole In-Camera Minutes
 - b) MGA 22(2)(a) Land Matter
 - c) MGA 22(2)(a) Land Matter
- 14. Next Meeting Date / Adjournment – July 28, 2026 Council Meeting at 6 p.m.

WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
Committee of the Whole - Meeting Minutes

July 14, 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** – 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

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, Dir. of Public Works

Carlee Rochon, Director of Financial Services

Sara Poirier, Director of Planning & Dev.

Deanna Snair, Exec. Asst/ Clerk

Todd Richard, Director of Public Works

Tim Bouter, Public Works Project Engineer

Regrets:

Kathy Kehoe, Director of Community Dev.

Gallery:

36 participants in the Gallery

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

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

4. **Declaration(s) of Conflict of Interest (6:03 p.m.) - None**

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

Deputy Mayor Francis provided the Land Acknowledgement and Code of Conduct reminder, along with the emergency protocols.

On behalf of Council, Mayor Zebian had the honour of recognizing Elijah Parker for his exceptional commitment to community engagement and his positive contributions through the monthly SWHFS Jam Sessions and numerous other community initiatives. Elijah's dedication, leadership, and willingness to support a wide range of events have made a meaningful impact on the community and have helped foster a spirit of connection, inclusiveness, and volunteerism. His ongoing efforts serve as an inspiration to others and reflect the values of community service and pride.

A reminder was shared about the upcoming Family Fun Day scheduled for this coming Saturday beginning at 8:30 am with a breakfast and car show.

A reminder was shared about the upcoming Annual Nova Scotia Bluegrass Music Festival beginning July 20th, 2026 at the Beechbrook Campground in Ardoise.

6. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes (6:08 p.m.)

a) 2026-06-09 Committee of the Whole Minutes

With no proposed changes the minutes were approved as presented.

7. Presentations

a) Friends of the Hantsport Library – Lorraine McQueen (6:08 p.m.)

Ms. McQueen spoke to concerns regarding proposed changes to rural library services within the Annapolis Valley Regional Library (AVRL) system. The presentation highlighted the importance of rural libraries as community hubs, noted the temporary pause of planned branch closures until September 30, 2026, and emphasized the need for community consultation and public confidence in future service decisions. Requests to Council included preserving the Hantsport library space for community use, supporting community engagement, encouraging accountability within the regional library system, and advocating for consultation requirements before rural library closures. The overall message focused on the value of rural libraries and the importance of maintaining accessible library services for local communities.

Ms. McQueen was advised a community meeting would occur.

b) Capital Project Update Presentation (6:24 pm)

Project Engineer Bouter provided a Capital Project Update, highlighting the major projects currently under construction for the 2025/26 fiscal year. The update included progress on the Windsor Water Storage Expansion, Nesbitt Street Renewal, Avondale Boat Launch, Tregothic Creek Sanitary Pipe Crossing, Riverview Road Renewal and Main Street Renewal. The projects represented key infrastructure investments aimed at supporting community growth, improving municipal services, and enhancing transportation and recreational assets throughout the region.

8. Unfinished Business

a) Request for Additional Support Re Plan Review from WSP Recommendation Report (6:37 p.m.)
Director Poirier reviewed the report. West Hants Regional Municipality was completing a long-overdue review of its planning documents, many of which have not been comprehensively updated since 2005–2010. Following the consolidation of Hantsport and Windsor into the municipality, extensive research, public engagement, and draft policy development have been undertaken to create a unified planning framework. To address Council's request for additional information and workshops on the proposed changes, staff were recommending retaining WSP Canada Inc. to complete the work efficiently and maintain momentum, citing limited internal capacity and the need to support growth, housing, environmental, and development priorities.

Discussion Points:

- Due to current staffing constraints, ongoing planning priorities, and funding-related deadlines it was not possible to complete this work inhouse. If staff were to take on this project it would likely not be completed before spring 2027, with final recommendations and approvals extending several months beyond that.

- The volume of changes was significant, key issues remained unresolved, and it was felt that a clear summary of the major changes would be more helpful than reviewing numerous minor edits, as the scope of revisions made it difficult for Council, committees, and the public to fully understand the proposed documents.

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS IVEY AND WHEADON THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL APPROVES THE ADDITIONAL BUDGET OF \$38,490.00 PLUS HST FOR WSP CANADA INC. TO COMPLETE THE CHANGE IN SCOPE IN RELATION TO THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS # WHRMPD23-04, CONSULTANT SERVICES TO COMPLETE MUNICIPAL PLANNING DOCUMENT REVIEW. MOTION CARRIED. Nays: Zebian, Francis, J. Smith, B. Smith and P. Morton

b) RCOFN-010-01 Reserve Policy Amendments (6:47 p.m.)

Director Rochon provided a brief overview of the draft amended policy, as previously presented at the last meeting, and highlighted the revisions made in response to feedback received.

Discussion Points:

- There was no specific time limit identified for how long funds may remain in the Carryover Reserve; for example, debt servicing can span over more than one year.
- It was noted that changing the wording from “shall” to “may” provided Council with flexibility when making reserve contributions. Additional information on municipal building values was requested to better understand the contribution targets and help determine whether the contributions should be mandatory or discretionary. The change to “may” was intended to avoid binding Council to contribution levels that could significantly impact tax rates.
- Concern was raised that no contribution was allocated to the Sewer Reserve despite significant future sewer capital projects being identified. It was noted that the Sewer Reserve receives amortization transfers when available and that Council may make additional contributions through the budget process.

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS WHEADON AND IVEY THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL APPROVES THE UPDATED RESERVE POLICY RCOFN-010.01 FOR THE WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY. MOTION CARRIED

c) Annapolis Valley Reginal Library (AVRL) Update Information Report (6:55 p.m.)

Councillor Remme reviewed the report. A special Board meeting was held last evening, during which the Board approved a temporary extension of service at the five library branches previously slated for closure until September 30, 2026. The Board also reaffirmed its request for additional funding from the eight funding municipalities. However, the updated financial projections indicated that these municipal contributions alone would not sustain operations through the end of the fiscal year, and additional funding would still be required.

Discussion Points:

- It was felt that funding remained the primary factor driving the proposed library closures.

- An update would be provided once responses to the request for additional funding have been received from the eight funding municipalities, which have until September 12, 2026, to respond.

d) Annapolis Valley Reginal Library (AVRL) Meeting and Council Direction (6:59 p.m.)

Mayor Zebian reviewed the report. As previously noted, libraries were an important part of each community and there remains uncertainty regarding the future of library services in West Hants. While the recent decision to temporarily pause the proposed branch closures through the use of AVRL reserve funds was viewed positively, it was a short-term measure intended to provide additional time for discussions with funding municipalities. West Hants has already committed the additional funding requested earlier this year. The intent of the report was to seek Council's support for continued discussions with the Library Board and funding partners, explore all available options, and report back on potential approaches to address the underlying funding challenges, which continue to be the primary issue affecting the long-term sustainability of library services.

Discussion Points:

- There was no interest in replacing West Hants Regional Municipality's representative on the Annapolis Valley Regional Library Board. Rather, the focus was on ensuring the long-term sustainability of library services in West Hants and exploring what was needed to maintain both local library branches moving forward.
- There was a need for all partners to clearly communicate their intentions regarding the future of library services. West Hants has consistently expressed its support for maintaining both libraries and has already committed the additional funding requested earlier this year.
- Should discussions lead to consideration of a new funding model or changes to municipal contributions, there was value in having those conversations openly and with Council's endorsement. While the best solution remained uncertain, continued dialogue was important to explore all available options and identify an approach that best supports the long-term sustainability of library services in West Hants.

MOVED BY MAYOR ZEBIAN AND COUNCILLOR P. MORTON THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL DIRECT THE CAO AND MAYOR TO EXPLORE OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF LIBRARY SERVICES WITHIN THE WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY WITH THE PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA AND THE ANNAPOLIS VALLEY REGIONAL LIBRARY AND TO REPORT BACK TO COUNCIL AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY. MOTION CARRIED

MOVED BY MAYOR ZEBIAN AND COUNCILLOR P. MORTON THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL RECONFIRM AN ADDITIONAL \$67,200 FOR THE CONTINUED OPERATION OF BOTH THE WINDSOR AND HANTSPORT LIBRARIES UP TO MARCH 31, 2027 AS PER THE AVRL FUNDING REQUEST.

A second motion was made regarding the request for additional funding from AVRL and recommitting the funding that was previously approved.

Discussion Points:

- The additional contributions requested from municipal partners would still not be sufficient to keep the branches slated for closure open until March 31, 2027, and would only extend operations to the end of February.
- A suggestion was made to avoid specifying a date; however, concerns were raised about committing additional funding without a clear understanding of the outcome. There was hesitation to provide further financial support if it would not prevent the closure of a library branch or provide adequate time to identify and implement a long-term solution.

A friendly amendment to change the date from March 31, 2027 to February 28, 2027 was made.

**MOVED BY MAYOR ZEBIAN AND COUNCILLOR P. MORTON THAT
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL RECONFIRM
AN ADDITIONAL \$67,200 FOR THE CONTINUED OPERATION OF
BOTH THE WINDSOR AND HANTSPORT LIBRARIES UP TO FEBRUARY
28, 2027 AS PER THE AVRL FUNDING REQUEST. MOTION CARRIED**

9. Reports

a) CAO's Report (7:13 p.m.)

The CAO shared some highlights from the report. Key activities included Council and Committee of the Whole meetings, regional library discussions, labour-management meetings, intergovernmental engagement, and participation in provincial and municipal forums.

Continued efforts focused on supporting community infrastructure and services, including the successful Avon View High School Graduation Ceremony, ongoing evaluation of the 100 King Street facility for municipal operations, municipal water supply planning and drought preparedness initiatives, housing and unhoused community discussions, and the recruitment of a Director of Fire Services.

Discussion Points:

- The Make It Rain pipeline was constructed last year, but the connection to the Martock system was deferred to this year due to adequate water supply conditions resulting from significant rainfall. As a result, the system has yet to be commissioned or used.
- WHRM has obtained all necessary approvals from the Department of Environment and DFO and plans to conduct a 4–6 hour flow test with Martock staff in the coming weeks. While it is hoped the contingency water supply will not be needed, the system will be ready should an emergency arise.
- The goal was to have an approved contingency plan in place should the need arise, but we were still working towards having that broad approved contingency plan.

b) Financial Update - 2025-26 Water Consumption Report (7:22 p.m.)

Director Rochon reviewed the 2025/26 water consumption report, which reflected a full year of usage. The year saw considerable account activity, with 6.5% of accounts closed and many subsequently reopened, as well as 0.6% in adjustments. Compared to March 31, 2025, the

variance in bulk water consumption was reduced by 1.48%. As noted previously, some variance in the bulk master meter remains due to the effects of the open distribution system.

Discussion Points:

- The current inventory of existing meters was being used before the pilot program began. The supplier has confirmed time limitation noted within the pilot program would not begin until the software was fully operational. In addition, the new position approved by Council has been filled, and the employee was in place and actively working.
- The Three Mile Plains area increase (approximately 15%) was attributed primarily to growth within the Windsor system on the Three Mile Plains side, including development in The Crossing and other major projects. The installation of newer meters has also improved the ability to capture water usage that may previously have been classified as non-revenue water.

c) Financial Update - Water Financials - March 31, 2026 (7:28 p.m.)

Director Rochon reviewed the report noting there was not a lot of change since the previous predictions. An update to the deficit showed an improvement of \$24,233, reducing the projected deficit to \$18,903; however, there were still some outstanding entries (depreciation) that needed to be done, which may impact this number before the 2025/26 was finalized. At this time last year (March 2025), revenues were projected at approximately 5.8%, while the February 2026 report projected 5.6%, which remained unchanged. Expenses also remained stable, with projected expenditures of approximately \$5.1 million, compared to the \$5.2 million reported in February.

Discussion Points:

- Administration and General expenses totaled \$835,211, with a forecasted March 31, 2026 balance of \$1,934,419. The higher balance was primarily attributed to depreciation costs exceeding budget, with expenses estimated at approximately \$1.0 million compared to the \$697,000 budgeted in 2025/26. Administration fees were also projected to be about \$60,000 over budget, along with several other administrative expense categories. Non-operating expenses were trending higher due to the purchase of additional water meters, the costs of which were recovered through user rates.
- Transmission and Distribution expenses totaled approximately \$1.6 million and were forecasted to increase by an additional \$400,000. As previously reported, this category significantly exceeded the budgeted amount of \$220,000, primarily due to water main breaks and the associated costs of repairs, including flagging, paving, and related restoration work
- Deficits within the Water Utility did not impact the General Operating Fund. In accordance with Utility rules and regulations, all depreciation funding was transferred to the Depreciation Reserve Fund.
- No rate study was planned for the water utility.
- Due to the ongoing sewer utility deficit, budget deliberations included a discussion that Council could consider increasing sewer rates outside of a formal rate study. It was noted that a rate increase may be recommended in the new year, followed by the completion of a rate study.

d) Financial Update - General Ops Financials - March 31, 2026 (7:35 p.m.)

Director Rochon reviewed the report noting that there had been little change since the previous month, with a few final items still requiring completion. The report showed a surplus of \$398,281, which was slightly lower than anticipated. The most significant variance was within Transportation, specifically related to J-Class Roads. The Municipality received the J-Class Roads invoice, and because these roads are not municipal assets, the costs could not be recorded as capital assets and instead flowed through the operating fund. A corresponding transfer from the Consolidation Reserve was made to offset these costs. Overall, expenses were approximately 3.5% higher than the March 31, 2025 results, largely due to the additional \$400,000 in J-Class Road costs. Revenues were approximately 0.3% lower than the previous year, resulting in an overall surplus variance of 1.1% of the total budget.

With respect to the Sewer Utility, revenues totaled approximately \$2.9 million, while expenses were approximately \$2.5 million before depreciation, resulted in a small operating surplus for the year, which was anticipated to be transferred to the Sewer Reserve. The final amount remained subject to the completion of the year-end depreciation calculation.

Discussion Points:

- It was noted that a sewer rate study remains on the horizon, although it was unlikely to be undertaken during the current fiscal year. Given the ongoing deficits within the sewer utility, it was anticipated that staff would likely recommend a rate increase of approximately 2.5% during upcoming budget deliberations. This approach would help address short-term financial pressures while allowing time to complete a comprehensive rate study and present its findings and recommendations to Council.
- It was suggested that having a breakdown of sewer utility revenues in a format similar to the water utility, including base rates and consumption-based revenues would be beneficial and help provide a clearer understanding of the utility's financial position and trends.
- The delayed invoice received in 2025/26 related to work completed under the 2024/25 J-Class Roads Program for Etter Road, Etter Road Extension, and Churchill Drive.
- The Municipality submits a list of eligible J-Class roads for consideration; however, the Province determines which projects proceed based on available funding and tender results. For 2026/27, three roads were submitted, but only Maple Lane in Ellershouse was approved for resurfacing, resulting in a municipal contribution of \$62,500.

10. Correspondence (7:45 p.m.)

a) 2024-2028 Council Term General Correspondence Received Log as of July 10, 2026

- i. Library Closure Concerns
- ii. Waste Collection Concerns

Councillor Wheadon advised he would be bringing a report forward at the next meeting regarding the waste concerns from residents in his district.

- iii. East Hants Notification of Official Community Plan
- iv. Rick Smith Re WHRM Procurement Practices – Audit Services

b) 2024-2028 Council Term Correspondence Sent as of July 10, 2026 - None

11. New Business

Deputy Mayor stepped away from the Chair at 7:46 p.m. and Mayor Zebian assumed the Chair at this time.

a) Blue Route Sweeping Request for Consideration (7:46 p.m.)

Deputy Mayor Francis reviewed the report. Concerns were raised about the maintenance of the paved shoulder on Highway 1 between Windsor and St. Croix, which serves as an important active transportation corridor and safety buffer on a high-traffic route. While routine mowing and general maintenance were planned, there was currently no plans for shoulder sweeping. Given the important role it plays in supporting active transportation and Blue Route objectives, there was an opportunity to advocate for enhanced Provincial maintenance to ensure the route remains safe and accessible for users.

Discussion Points:

- This has been a long-standing issue since the road shoulders were paved. Traffic frequently pushes gravel and loose rock onto the paved shoulder, creating safety concerns for cyclists. With the estimated cost to address the issue being approximately \$4,500, it was felt that this would be a relatively straightforward and cost-effective fix for the Province.
- It was also noted that gravel driveways contribute to the problem by depositing additional gravel onto the paved shoulder. The boat launch in Falmouth was specifically identified as a location of concern.

MOVED BY DEPUTY MAYOR FRANCIS AND COUNCILLOR LEARY-PINCH THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL DIRECT STAFF TO WRITE A LETTER TO ADVOCATE TO HAVE THE BLUE ROUTE BICYCLE LANE ON HIGHWAY 1 FROM WINDSOR TO ST. CROIX AND FROM FALMOUTH TO HANTSPORT CLEANED OF THE GRAVEL THAT HAS BEEN ACCUMULATING. MOTION CARRIED

Mayor Zebian stepped down from the Chair at 7:51 p.m. and Deputy Mayor Francis assumed the Chair at this time.

b) WHRM Procurement Practices - Audit Services Recommendation Report (7:51 p.m.)

Councillor Ivey reviewed the report. The Audit Committee reviewed and approved the appointment of auditors on June 17, 2026, with Council subsequently approving the recommendation on June 23, 2026. Following Council's decision, correspondence was received raising concerns regarding inconsistencies in the RFP scoring methodology and the interpretation of applicable procurement policies. In response to these concerns regarding the procurement process, Council passed a motion directing staff to share the correspondence with the Audit Committee for its review and consideration.

Discussion Points:

- The service contract has been awarded, and preliminary discussions have begun with the selected proponent to initiate the project.

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS IVEY AND WHEADON THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL DIRECT THE CAO TO

PROVIDE THE CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED ON JUNE 30TH, TITLED “WHRM PROCUREMENT PRACTICES – AUDIT SERVICES” IN ADVANCE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE FOR ITS REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION. MOTION CARRIED. Nays: Jannasch, Francis and P. Morton

12. Public Comment Period (7:55 p.m.)

Bill Preston, a resident of Hantsport, raised concerns about speeding in his neighbourhood (cul-de-sac), noting increased traffic due to existing and new residential development. He suggested installing signage to encourage drivers to slow down. He also expressed concerns about the lack of regular ditch maintenance, as overgrown ditches create both aesthetic and drainage concerns.

Steve Boone, a resident of Hantsport, asked whether a schedule exists for ditch and road maintenance, including planned ditch-cleaning dates. He expressed concern that ditches in McCully Pines, Hantsport, appear to be neglected compared to other areas and suggested that any maintenance schedule be made publicly available to residents.

Consensus was that a break occurs at 8:03 p.m. prior to moving the meeting in-camera.

13. In-Camera (8:03 p.m.)

- a) 2026-06-09 Committee of the Whole In-Camera Minutes
- b) MGA 22(2)(a) Land Matter
- c) MGA 22(2)(a) Land Matter

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS LEARY-PINCH AND P. MORTON THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE DIRECTS THAT THE MEETING MOVE IN CAMERA AFTER THE BREAK. MOTION CARRIED

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS B. MORTON AND J. SMITH THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE DIRECTS THAT THE MEETING MOVE OUT OF IN CAMERA AT 8:45 PM. MOTION CARRIED

14. Next Meeting Date / Adjournment – July 28, 2026 Council meeting

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Deputy Mayor Debbie Francis, Chair

Deanna Snair, Municipal Clerk