



WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
Climate Action Committee (CAC) Meeting Minutes
February 11, 2026, 11:04am – 11:53am
Sanford Council Chambers / Zoom / YouTube Live

- PRESENT:** Councillor Jim Ivey, District 11, Chair
Deputy Mayor Debbie Francis, District 5
Councillor Bonnie Smith, District 10
Lisa Sisson, Resident Member
Mark Phillips, Chief Administrative Officer
Kari Fougere, Acting Director of Planning & Development
Carlee Rochon, Director of Financial Services
Kaleigh McCarthy, Environmental Technologist (Public Works designate)
Kathy Kehoe, Director of Community Development
- STAFF:** John Ogilvie, Climate Action Coordinator
Saarah Kunaseelan, Clean Foundation Community Navigator
Vanessa Lake, Meeting Secretary
- PUBLIC:** 0 members of the public.
- REGRETS:** There were no regrets.

1.0 Call to Order and Introductions

Deputy Mayor Francis, Chair, and Councillor Bonnie Smith, Vice-Chair, were unable to attend in person and Councillor Ivey took the Chair. Chair Ivey called the meeting to order at 11:04am. Everyone introduced themselves and identified their designation.

2.0 Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as circulated by unanimous consent.

3.0 Approval of Minutes (November 12, 2025)

The minutes were approved as circulated by unanimous consent.

4.0 New Business

4.1 Recommendation: PACE Program Funding (John Ogilvie)

John apologized for the report not being sent with the agenda package. There were unexpected delays in preparing and reviewing the report. The full report will be uploaded to the website after the meeting.

John reviewed his report in detail. In summary, he is looking for Committee support in recommending Council continue the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program, Switch West Hants, and to identify funding. This program provides loans to homeowners to assist with financing energy-efficient home upgrades. John provided a background on the program. The full details are available within his report.

The number of participants has increased by 33% since September 30, 2025, and so far, WHRM has used \$291,265 of the initial \$300,000 allocated for this program. Additional funding will be required to keep the program in operation. Staff are investigating different funding options, including municipal reserves, a line of credit/debt, and grants. John noted that this money is cycled back to the Municipality as homeowners pay the loans back over ten (10) to fifteen (15) years, and to date there have not been any delinquent payments.

CAO Phillips asked Director Rochon if the Municipality could get pre-approval for a certain amount and take out project-sized amounts at a time. Director Rochon replied that the banks offer various products, and something to this effect would be akin to a credit line. This would set a rate on the amount borrowed, and the interest will fluctuate over the borrowing years. In the end, it would come down to Council's risk tolerance. CAO Phillips felt there should be a net-zero impact to the Municipality. He said the homeowner should pay the full amount, including the

interest. Director Rochon added that this will have to be something Council considers for the overall plan for the Municipality. She said there is the capacity to borrow money at this time.

Lisa Sisson asked how the corporate and community emissions are being measured. John replied that an inventory was completed in 2021 which calculated both corporate and community emissions. It is within the Committee's 2026-27 action plan to update this inventory. Incremental updates to community emissions are provided regularly by SwitchPACE, and in the transportation sector from the Municipality's electric vehicle chargers. John noted that approximately 41% of the 45% target is expected to take place without the Municipality's action, due to things like the greening of the electrical grid.

Councillor Smith asked what the recourse is if a participant does not repay their loan. John explained that it would be a similar process to the tax sale. Councillor Smith asked John about his capacity to search out grants. John replied that it varies by day. He keeps tabs on the NSFME funding portal and is fortunate to have assistance from the Clean Foundation and SwitchPACE who actively help John in seeking grant funding and preparing applications.

The Committee discussed their funding options, and potential impacts on the municipal tax rate. John recommends doing it much the same as the \$300,000 in 2022, with a pot of money available to use until it runs out. He had suggested the amount of \$600,000, which could potentially provide \$1.2 million in programming, and keep the program running for another year or two. If the money were to come out of the operating budget, Director Rochon said there would be a less-than 3 cent impact on the general rate. There are many different options available.

Moved by Mark Phillips and seconded by Debbie Francis that the Climate Action Committee recommends the continuance of the Property Assessed Clean Energy program, Switch West Hants, with a funding allocation up to \$600,000 for the 2026-27 fiscal year, to be funded by external funding. Motion carried unanimously.

5.0 Business Arising from the Minutes

5.1 Update: PACE Program Expansion (John Ogilvie)

Staff are currently investigating expanding the PACE program to include adaptation financing, with a focus on drought and well support. It will use the same delivery vehicle as the rest of the PACE program. John has applied to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) for a grant to support a feasibility and design study, in partnership with the Municipality of Pictou County (MOPC). The expansion of the program will include updated by-laws, updated policies, and new agreements for participants. Council allocated \$20,000 from the Committee's workplan budget from the 2025-26 fiscal year as the Municipality's contribution to the study costs, and the MOPC has allocated an additional \$20,000. The application may provide a grant of up to \$150,000 from the FCM. John is hoping, if all goes well, applications for capital funding from the FCM will be open by the summer.

5.2 Update: Comparison of Level 2 and Level 3 Electric Vehicle Chargers (John Ogilvie)

John provided a more detailed comparison between the two types of chargers, as requested by the Committee at the last meeting. As of December 31, 2025, the Level 2 EV chargers owned by the Municipality have had 2,038 charging sessions, consuming 26,201 kWh, at a rate of \$1.50/hr. The Level 3 EV chargers, owned by Nova Scotia Power and in place since April 2025, have hosted 806 sessions as of December 31, 2025. This consumed 21,820 kWh at a rate \$0.60/hr, plus an idle fee of a dollar per minute (finished charging but still plugged in).

For pricing, John used the Municipal EV (Hyundai Ioniq 5) as an example. The vehicle has an approximately 60 kWh capacity battery. For a full charge, it would cost \$40 at the Level 3 charger, and \$13-15 at the Level 2 charger.

John is hoping to have a breakdown of the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions reductions for this available soon.

6.0 Roundtable Discussion

Director Kehoe shared that WHRM was contacted by the Climate Challenge Network to participate in a research program for the energy performance of the West Hants Sports Complex. She and John met with the Climate Challenge Network to provide more information on the Sports Complex.

CAO Phillips thanked John for his hard work. He felt people are motivated to participate in municipal programming.

7.0 Public Comments

The public is encouraged to attend the meeting or contact staff directly with any questions or comments. No members of the public were present at the meeting. John can be reached at JOgilvie@westhants.ca or 902-798-8391 ext. 147.

8.0 Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is scheduled for April 8, 2026, at 11:00am. The Committee and the public will be notified if there are any changes.

9.0 Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:53am.