

WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
Committee of the Whole - Meeting Agenda

July 8, 2025 - 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
 - a) Dashboard Action Items – Information Log
 - b) Dashboard Action Items – Dangerous or Unsightly Premises
4. Declaration(s) of Conflict of Interest
5. Announcements
6. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes
 - a) 2025-05-06 Special Committee of the Whole Minutes (Budget)
 - b) 2025-05-12 Special Committee of the Whole Minutes (Budget)
 - c) 2025-05-14 Special Committee of the Whole Minutes (Budget)
 - d) 2025-05-22 Special Committee of the Whole Minutes (Budget)
 - e) 2025-05-28 Special Committee of the Whole Minutes (Budget)
 - f) 2025-06-02 Special Committee of the Whole Minutes (Budget)
 - g) 2025-06-10 Committee of the Whole Minutes
 - h) ~~2025-06-16 Special Committee of the Whole Minutes (Budget)~~
7. Presentations
 - a) Community Solar Project – Tracy Zheng (Chief Development Officer from SolarBank) and Joel MacNeil, Principal and Sr. Engineer from Trimac Engineering)
8. Unfinished Business/Postponed Motions
 - a) 2025-26 Chalet Hamlet Updated Taxing Resolution Recommendation Report –Director Rochon
 - b) Code of Conduct - Appointment of Second Investigator Recommendation Report –Clerk Snair
 - c) Upper Burlington Land Donation Request for Decision Report – CAO Phillips
 - d) Municipal Complex Information Report – CAO Phillips
 - e) Municipal Buildings – Mayor Zebian
9. Reports

- a) CAO Activity Update - Information Report
10. Correspondence
- a) Information
 - 1. Correspondence Received Ledger as of July 4, 2025
 - i. Emily Carroll Letter to WHRM Re Serious Safety and Zoning Concerns – Proposed Childcare Centre, PID 45285103
 - ii. West Hants Uniacke Community Health Board Letter to WHRM Re Advocacy for Emergency Shelter Funding
 - iii. Attorney General and Minister of Justice Letter to WHRM Re Comprehensive Policing Review Update
 - iv. Kathleen O'Brien Re Telecommunication Tower Procedure
 - v. Acadia's Environmental & Sustainability Studies Letter to Premier on Uranium Exploration (WHRM copied)
 - 2. Correspondence Sent (as of July 4, 2025)
 - i. WHRM Letter Re Urgent Concerns Regarding Uranium Exploration and Need for Increased Transparency
11. New Business
- a) Notice of Motion (Policy Change) - Amending the time period required to provide a Notice of Reconsideration reducing it from 14 days – Councillor Ivey
 - b) Notice of Motion (Policy Change) – Amend Section K, Audit Committee composition– Councillor Ivey
 - c) ~~Municipal Complex Chronology – Councillor Ivey~~
 - d) ~~Financial and Budget Reporting – Councillor Ivey~~
 - e) West Hants 2026/2027 Budget Process Recommendation Report – Mayor Zebian
 - f) Windsor Community Centre Structural Assessment Information Report –Director Kehoe
12. Public Comment Period
13. In-Camera
- a) MGA 22(2)(a) Land Matter
 - b) MGA 22(2)(f) Legal/Enforcement Matter
 - c) MGA 22(2)(c) Personnel Matter
 - d) MGA 22(2)(c) Personnel Matter
 - e) MGA 22(2)(c) Personnel Matter
14. Next Meeting Date / Adjournment – July 22, 2025 Council Meeting at 6 p.m.

WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
Committee of the Whole - Meeting Minutes

July 8, 2025 - 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 6:02 p.m.

2. Attendance (6:00 p.m.)

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 (6:26 p.m.)

Debbie Francis, Deputy Mayor, Dist. 5

Kayla Leary-Pinch, Councillor Dist. 7 (ZOOM) 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 Public Works

Carlee Rochon, Dir. Financial Services

Kathy Kehoe, Director Community Development

Deanna Snair, Exec. Asst/ Clerk

Kari Fougere, Act. Director Planning & Development

Presenters:

a) NS Community Solar Project – Tracy Zheng (Chief Development Officer) and Joel MacNeil (Principal and Senior Engineer from Trimac Engineering)

3. Approval of the Agenda including additions or deletions (6:03 p.m.)

a) Dashboard Action Items – Information Log

b) Dashboard – Dangerous or Unsanitary Premises – Information log

Items 13 (c) and (d) were removed as there were no reports presented. The agenda was accepted as amended.

4. Declaration(s) of Conflict of Interest (6:04 p.m.) - None

5. Announcements (6:04 p.m.)

West Hants Regional Municipality is in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People and this land is governed by the treaties of Peace and Friendship signed in 1726. West Hants Regional Municipality also recognizes that 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 is

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.

Congratulations were extended to Hantsport and Ellershouse on their successful Canada Day celebrations.

The Pride committee was congratulated on their successful celebration, which was the largest event since the committee's formation.

Congratulations were extended to Darren and Erica Porter on the release of their informative and relaxing colouring book, with encouragement for all to obtain a copy.

A reminder was shared about the upcoming Meet Your Neighbour event, taking place this Sunday at 2 p.m. at the Sweets Corner Hall.

A reminder was shared about the 52nd annual Bluegrass Festival, happening at Beechbrook Campground from July 24–27.

A reminder was shared about the upcoming community breakfast at the Southwest Hants Fire Hall, taking place this Saturday from 8–10 a.m.

A reminder was shared to watch the Upper Vaughan Facebook page for upcoming community events.

6. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes (6:05 p.m.)

- a) 2025-05-06 Special Committee of the Whole Minutes (Budget)
- b) 2025-05-12 Special Committee of the Whole Minutes (Budget)
- c) 2025-05-14 Special Committee of the Whole Minutes (Budget)
- d) 2025-05-22 Special Committee of the Whole Minutes (Budget)
- e) 2025-05-28 Special Committee of the Whole Minutes (Budget)
- f) 2025-06-02 Special Committee of the Whole Minutes (Budget)
- g) 2025-06-10 Committee of the Whole Minutes (Budget)
- h) 2025-06-16 Special Committee of the Whole Minutes (Budget)

The clerk will review the June 16, 2025 minutes and amend accordingly with the intention to bring them back at the next Committee of the Whole meeting. With no changes proposed, the remaining minutes were approved as presented.

Voting occurred by a show of hands, as there was a Councillor attending via ZOOM.

**MOVED BY COUNCILLORS P. MORTON AND WHEADON THAT
THE MINUTES BE APPROVED AS AMENDED. MOTION CARRIED**

7. Presentations

- a) NS Community Solar Project – Tracy Zheng (Chief Development Officer) and Joel MacNeil (Principal and Senior Engineer from Trimac Engineering) (6:03 p.m.)

Nova Scotia's Community Solar Program, launched on March 1, 2024, allows residents and businesses without rooftop solar to subscribe to community solar gardens ranging from 500 kW to 10 MW AC, contributing to a total capacity of 100 MW AC. Projects are reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis and operate under 25-year contracts. Project owners build and operate

the solar gardens, which connect to Nova Scotia Power Inc. (NSPI), while NSPI manages energy distribution and billing. In West Hants, the project would be located on private land through long-term lease agreements and connect to the local grid to enhance community energy resilience. Subscribers can save 10–15% on their power bills via a \$0.02/kWh credit, with no fees or commitment. Priority is given to local and marginalized groups, including low-income households, seniors, and First Nations. The project also supports emission reductions, local job creation, and economic growth. The next step was to secure a Municipal Support Resolution or letter.

Discussion Points:

- Solar panels emit no noise. While transformers may produce minimal sound, it is very low, and natural tree barriers help further reduce any potential noise.
- The link for the online meeting on July 21, 2025 can be obtained by contacting Mila Simon at 647-713-7752 or via email at mila.simon@solarbankcorp.com.
- The subscriber agreement was provided by the Province. Residents interested in becoming subscribers are placed on a priority list. Once the interconnection is approved, NS Power will provide a subscriber agreement, contingent upon confirmation that the project was viable.
- The program design was inclusive, allowing any Nova Scotia Power customer to subscribe to the Community Solar Program. However, preference was given to residents of the community hosting the project, as well as marginalized communities within that area. If interest from local residents, marginalized communities, and the business community was fully met, then the opportunity to subscribe was opened to other areas outside the local community.
- The power purchase agreement contract granted by the Minister was set for 25 years. However, the actual lifespan of the solar project is between 30 to 35 years. At the 30-year mark, the panels are still able to produce at least 80% of their original capacity. Upon reaching the end of the 25-year agreement, several options may be considered. If the program was deemed viable and both parties (the Province and the landowner) agree, the program could be extended. If there was no interest in extending the program beyond the 25-year term, it becomes Solarbank’s responsibility to decommission the project. Fixed racking will be used for projects in Nova Scotia, as single-axis trackers have been tested but proved problematic (mechanical issues) in icy winter climates.

**MOVED BY MAYOR ZEBIAN AND COUNCILLOR MCLEAN THAT
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL ISSUE A
LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE SOLARBANK NOVA SCOTIA
COMMUNITIES SOLAR PROGRAM PROJECT IN WEST HANTS.
MOTION CARRIED**

All three presenters left the meeting after the presentation.

8. Unfinished Business/Postponed Motions

- a) 2025-26 Chalet Hamlet Updated Taxing Resolution Recommendation Report (6:35 p.m.)

Director Rochon reviewed the report. At the June 10th meeting, Council approved the 2025–2026 budgets and related items, including tax rates and utility budgets. Afterward, an error was found in the approved resolution for the Chalet Hamlet Property Owners Association fee—the lot fee was incorrectly listed as \$652.80 instead of the correct amount, \$652.08.

MOVED BY MAYOR ZEBIAN AND COUNCILLOR J. SMITH THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL APPROVES THE UPDATED 2025-2026 CHALET HAMLET PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION UNIFORM CHARGE AS PRESENTED TO COUNCIL ON JULY 8, 2025. MOTION CARRIED

b) Code of Conduct – Appointment of Second Investigator Recommendation Report (6:36 p.m.) Clerk Snair reviewed the report. Although Council approved a contract with Bardsley Investigative Solutions on June 24, 2025, the firm later indicated they would be unavailable for 3–6 months due to a prior commitment. To maintain continuity in Code of Conduct investigations, staff recommend appointing Mobile Resource Group as an interim or secondary investigator.

Discussion Points:

- The RFP was completed by AMANS, not WHRM. The proponent communicated with AMANS their limitation after the RFP closed and remains on AMANS preferred list.
- There was no retainer fee required by the proponent.
- Both investigators will be available, allowing members of the public to choose whom they wish to submit their concern to.

MOVED BY MAYOR ZEBIAN AND COUNCILLOR J. SMITH THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL APPROVES THAT MOBILE RESOURCE GROUP BE APPOINTED AS THE SECONDARY INVESTIGATOR AND THAT THE CAO BE AUTHORIZED TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT ON BEHALF OF THE WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY. MOTION CARRIED. Nays: McLean

c) Upper Burlington Land Donation Request for Decision Report (6:41 p.m.) CAO reviewed the report highlighting the some history behind the parcel of land that was recently uncovered and the process for Council to consider should they chose to support the request from the Hants Shore Child Care Association for the parcel of the land (PID 45285103) to be donated to them to pursue establishing a licensed childcare centre to serve families in the Hants Shore area.

Discussion Points:

- The fastest mechanism would be for WHRM to deem the parcel as surplus and submit a rezoning application on behalf of Council to permit the proposed use.
- It was understood that the general area acknowledges the historical significance of the Planters, Mi'kmaq, and Acadians, though not specifically the parcel of land in question. However, as the public engagement process moves forward, additional historical information may be identified and highlighted.
- The trails identified on the property were along the property line, closer to the boundaries.

- In order for the Planning Department to proceed with rezoning the property, the property would first need to be deemed surplus, as there was no existing policy framework that permits rezoning from Open Space to a commercial zone.

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS JANNASCH AND IVEY THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE DIRECTS COUNCIL TO DEEM THE LOT OF LAND KNOWN AS PID 45285103 AS SURPLUS. MOTION CARRIED

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS JANNASCH AND MCLEAN THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE DIRECTS COUNCIL TO DIRECT THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION TO THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT TO CONSIDER REZONING PID 45285103 TO PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE HANTS SHORE CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION TO EXPLORE ESTABLISHING A LICENSED CHILDCARE CENTRE TO SERVE FAMILIES IN THE HANTS SHORE AREA. MOTION CARRIED

d) Municipal Complex Information Report (6:54 p.m.)

CAO Phillips provided a brief overview of the past reports and motions made regarding discussions pertaining to a Municipal Complex, with the suggested action being to schedule a specific stand-alone strategic session to review historic information and to determine what this current Council's wishes are or direction.

It was agreed to blend the Municipal Complex discussion with the Municipal building discussion as they overlapped each other.

Council held a lengthy discussion emphasizing the need for a full cost analysis comparing lease, renovation, and new build options. The original motion from the Coordinating Committee was based on such an analysis being completed. The situation has since become more complex due to the addition of more buildings and recent developments regarding the Court House.

Council agreed that a strategy session or workshop would be helpful to review all municipal assets comprehensively before making recommendations. There was recognition that a clear understanding of "growth"—how it is defined and measured—was essential for planning future building needs. Additionally, the organizational review was seen as important to assess staffing requirements. There was consensus that a workshop would be beneficial.

MOVED BY MAYOR ZEBIAN AND COUNCILLOR B. SMITH THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL DIRECT STAFF TO SET UP A STRATEGY SESSION TO DISCUSS THIS TOPIC (MUNICIPAL COMPLEX AND BUILDINGS) AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. MOTION CARRIED

- e) Municipal Buildings – Item was discussed at the same time the Municipal Complex discussion occurred.

9. Reports

- a) CAO's Report (7:06 p.m.)

CAO provided a brief overview of his report which was circulated prior to the meeting. Highlights included attending the DEM CAO Advisory Table discussion. The DEM CAO Advisory Table advises on emergency management and business continuity in Nova Scotia. At the June 26th meeting, discussions covered the NS Fire Services Review, NS Policing Review, and a review of REMO standards, including the Vulnerable Persons Registry, EMC job description, REMO grants, and community risk assessments and emergency plans. Community beautification efforts are underway, with planters and baskets being placed in Growth Centres, especially in Windsor and Hantsport. Additional seasonal projects are progressing now that the full summer staff are in place. The final Windsor Storm Water Study report from CBCL has been submitted to staff for review, with a Council session scheduled for July 16th. The draft report will be shared with a request not to distribute it outside the Council environment.

10. Correspondence (7:12 p.m.)

a) Information

1. Correspondence Received Log as of July 4, 2025

- i. Emily Carroll Letter to WHRM Re Serious Safety and Zoning Concerns – Proposed Childcare Centre, PID 45285103
- ii. West Hants Uniacke Community Health Board Letter to WHRM Re Advocacy for Emergency Shelter Funding
- iii. Attorney General and Minister of Justice Letter to WHRM Re Comprehensive Policing Review Update
- iv. Kathlene O’Brien Re Telecommunication Tower Procedure
- v. Acadia's Environmental & Sustainability Studies Letter to Premier on Uranium Exploration (WHRM copied)

2. Correspondence Sent (as of July 8, 2025)

- i. WHRM Letter Re Urgent Concerns Regarding Uranium Exploration and Need for Increased Transparency

11. New Business

a) Notice of Motion (Policy Change) - Amending the time period required to provide a Notice of Reconsideration, reducing it from 14 days (7:13 p.m.)

Councillor Ivey provided verbal notice, reports would be presented at the July Council meeting.

b) Notice of Motion (Policy Change) – Amend Section K, Audit Committee composition (7:13 p.m.)

Councillor Ivey provided verbal notice, reports would be presented at the July Council meeting.

c) Municipal Complex Chronology – item was removed from the agenda.

d) Financial and Budget Reporting – item was removed from the agenda.

e) West Hants 2026/2027 Budget Process Recommendation Report (7:14 p.m.)

Mayor Zebian reviewed the report. In recent years, budget deliberations have required multiple sessions, placing significant demands on staff and Council time and limiting opportunities for public engagement. Budgets have also been presented later in the spring, creating added pressure. Given growing community needs, inflation, and increasing infrastructure demands, Council and staff recognize the importance of gathering public input earlier. To improve the 2026-2027 budget process, resident engagement sessions would be held during the month of October and a follow-up workshop with Council. This will allow Council to provide clear direction for a draft budget, enabling its presentation by March 1, 2026.

Discussion Points:

- While the public has always been invited to engage in the budget process, meaningful opportunities for input have been limited. The goal was to hold an open public engagement session to discuss the upcoming budget, reflect on past budgets, and gather input to help guide staff before work begins on the 2026/27 budget.
- Entering public discussions without proper preparation could be ineffective, it was important to enter these discussions prepared. Relying solely on past budget documents may not reveal what the public truly wants. With expected high public interest, it's important to be ready to discuss growth and the Municipality's current status. Key statistics, like population, should be used to provide context for expenses (e.g., policing, fire, recreation) and to offer a clearer perspective on WHRM's financial situation and growth.
- It would be helpful to receive PVSC's breakdown of the tax roll value, separating growth from property revaluation and new development. This distinction will clarify the sources of growth and support better financial planning.
- Digby hosts a budget session with key stakeholders like Police, RCMP, and EMO to engage the public, show how tax dollars are spent, and gather feedback. A similar approach in West Hants was seen as beneficial, as it allowed the whole council to hear directly from residents in a public participation setting, adding greater value to the process.
- The report's goal was to gauge interest in holding public sessions and give staff direction to develop the structure. Whether as a workshop or multiple seminars, there would be time to design the format to maximize feedback and information.

MOVED BY MAYOR ZEBIAN AND COUNCILLOR P. MORTON THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL DIRECT STAFF TO HOLD PUBLIC PARTICIPATION/FEEDBACK MEETINGS REGARDING THE 2026/2027 BUDGET DURING THE MONTH OF OCTOBER 2025. MOTION CARRIED

MOVED BY MAYOR ZEBIAN AND COUNCILLOR P. MORTON THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL DIRECT STAFF TO PREPARE TO HOST A BUDGET WORKSHOP WITH COUNCIL FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION/FEEDBACK MEETINGS TO GET INITIAL DIRECTIONS FROM COUNCIL ON THE DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2026/2027. MOTION CARRIED

It was noted that the former West Hants Council had set an annual budget deadline. The report aimed to introduce a current motion to be renewed yearly, ensuring the deadline remains current and prioritized.

The March 1 budget deadline, only 30 days before the fiscal year-end, raised concerns about timing. It may be more effective to present a draft by February 1 or 14 to allow Council time to review, discuss, and provide feedback. While there's no issue with seeing the draft earlier, in the past, Council's requests for up-to-date figures couldn't always be met due to limited processing time for financial data. This raised concerns about rushing decisions without complete information.

MOVED BY MAYOR ZEBIAN AND COUNCILLOR P. MORTON THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL DIRECT STAFF TO PRESENT THE DRAFT 2026/2027 MUNICIPAL BUDGETS TO COUNCIL NO LATER THAN MARCH 1, 2026. MOTION CARRIED.

Nays: Jannasch

e) Windsor Community Centre Structural Assessment Information Report (7:32 p.m.)

Director Kehoe gave a brief overview of the draft condition assessment for Windsor Community Centre, covering structural and accessibility evaluations and the building's capacity for solar panel installation. The report also offered recommendations to guide future capital projects at the facility.

Discussion Points:

- The report outlined priority projects based on a needs-versus-wants assessment, identifying which work should be completed first. It also highlighted that, should the decision be made to proceed with solar panel installation, preliminary work would be required, as the facility in its current state cannot support solar infrastructure. The report served as a guide for the necessary upgrades. Some financial capacity was available within the current 2025/26 Capital Budget; however, all projects would need to undergo the Procurement process and be brought back for formal consideration and approval.
- Some of the accessibility issues identified were not surprising given the age of the building. However, several concerns appeared to have relatively simple solutions, such as lowering fixtures or installing/replacing handles. Other issues were more complex, particularly those related to structural elements like stairways and landings. There may be opportunities to leverage external funding for some of these projects, as several potential funding sources have been identified by the Accessibility committee to help support the necessary work.
- Some of the costs, such as those related to timber purlins and steel trusses, would only apply if there was support to proceed with the installation of solar panels.
- The Capital Budget allocated \$187,000 for flood protection improvements. Design Point has developed a chamber-type system to support flood mitigation efforts. The budget also includes funds to address foundation repairs alongside the flood protection work. While there was no guarantee that flooding would not occur again, the engineer's review

indicated this work was a necessary and recommended step toward improving the building's flood resilience.

13. Public Comment Period - No members of the public were in attendance.

14. In-Camera

- a) MGA 22(2)(a) Land Matter
- b) MGA 22(2)(f) Legal Matter
- c) MGA 22(2)(c) Personnel Matter
- d) MGA 22(2)(c) Personnel Matter
- e) MGA 22(2)(c) Personnel Matter

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS P. MORTON AND B. SMITH THAT THE MEETING MOVE IN-CAMERA AT 7:40 P.M. MOTION CARRIED

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS P. MORTON AND B. SMITH THAT THE MEETING MOVE OUT OF IN-CAMERA AT 10:20 P.M. MOTION CARRIED

15. Next Meeting Date / Adjournment – July 22nd, 2025 Council meeting
The meeting adjourned at 10:20 p.m. as there was no further business to discuss.

Deputy Mayor Francis

Deanna Snair, Municipal Clerk