



Elgin County Council

Minutes

**February 25, 2025, 9:00 a.m.
Council Chambers
450 Sunset Drive
St. Thomas ON**

Members Present: Warden Grant Jones
Deputy Warden Ed Ketchabaw
Councillor Dominique Giguère
Councillor Mark Widner
Councillor Jack Couckuyt
Councillor Andrew Sloan
Councillor Todd Noble
Councillor Mike Hentz
Councillor Richard Leatham

Staff Present: Blaine Parkin, Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk
Nicholas Loeb, Director of Legal Services
Michele Harris, Director of Homes and Seniors Services
Brian Masschaele, Director of Community & Cultural Services
Jennifer Ford, Director of Financial Services/Treasurer
Peter Dutchak, Director of Engineering Services
Mat Vaughan, Director of Planning and Development
Andrea Loughlean, Manager of Emergency Management &
Elgin-Middlesex Regional Fire School (virtual)
Carolyn Krahn, Manager of Economic Development, Tourism &
Strategic Initiatives
Ryan Terpstra, Manager of Corporate Facilities
Katherine Thompson, Manager of Administrative
Services/Deputy Clerk
Mike Hoogstra, Manager of Purchasing and Risk
Jenna Fentie, Legislative Services Coordinator
Stefanie Heide, Legislative Services Coordinator

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. with Warden Jones in the chair.

2. Adoption of Minutes

Moved by: Councillor Widner
Seconded by: Councillor Noble

RESOLVED THAT the minutes and closed minutes of the meeting held on February 11, 2025 be adopted.

Motion Carried.

3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

None.

4. Presenting Petitions, Presentations and Delegations

4.1 Director Heather Sheridan - St. Thomas-Elgin Social Services Service Review

The Director of St. Thomas-Elgin Social Services, Heather Sheridan, Manager of Ontario Works, Joanne Weber, Manager of Housing Stability Services, Danielle Neilson, and Manager of Children's Services, Teresa Sulowski, provided a Service Review presentation.

Moved by: Councillor Noble

Seconded by: Deputy Warden Ketchabaw

RESOLVED THAT the presentation from the Director of St. Thomas-Elgin Social Services be received and filed.

Motion Carried.

5. Committee of the Whole

Moved by: Councillor Hentz

Seconded by: Councillor Giguère

RESOLVED THAT we do now move into Committee of the Whole.

Motion Carried.

6. Reports of Council, Outside Boards and Staff

6.1 Manager of Procurement and Risk - Procurement Activity Report Q4 (October 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024)

In accordance with the County's Procurement Policy, the Manager of Procurement & Risk presented an information report containing the details relevant to the exercise of delegated authority for all contracts awarded that exceed \$15,000, including amendments and renewals, covering the period from October 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024.

Moved by: Councillor Leatham

Seconded by: Councillor Hentz

RESOLVED THAT the report titled "Procurement Activity Report Q4 (October 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024)" from the Manager of Procurement & Risk dated February 25, 2025 be received and filed.

Motion Carried.

6.2 Director of Homes and Seniors Services - Homes – Emergency Plans – Elgin County and Thames Valley District School Board (MOU)

The Director of Homes and Seniors Services presented a report for Council's consideration for execution of an agreement with the Corporation of the County of Elgin (Elgin Manor) and Thames Valley District School Board (Southwold Public School) for the use of each other's facilities in the event that a temporary evacuation is required.

Moved by: Deputy Warden Ketchabaw

Seconded by: Councillor Leatham

RESOLVED THAT the report titled "Homes - Emergency Plans - Elgin County and Thames Valley District School Board (MOU)" from the Director of Homes and Seniors Services dated February 25, 2025 be received and filed; and

THAT Council authorize the Director of Homes and Seniors Services to execute the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for emergency planning with the Corporation of the County of Elgin and Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB).

Motion Carried.

6.3 Director of Engineering Services - Administration Building Exterior Renovation – Options Presentation

The Director of Engineering Services and the Manager of Corporate Facilities, as well as Fishburn Sheridan & Associates Ltd. Project Engineer and Director, Stefano Ierullo and Civil Engineering Technologist, Craig MacInnes, presented the report providing information on the status of the brick exterior, windows, and doors of the Elgin County Administration Building located at 450 Sunset Drive and renovation options provided by Fishburn Sheridan & Associates Ltd. (London) for Council's consideration.

Moved by: Councillor Giguère
Seconded by: Councillor Hentz

RESOLVED THAT the report titled “Administration Building Exterior Renovation – Options Presentation” from the Director of Engineering Services dated February 25, 2025 be received and filed; and

THAT staff be directed to proceed with the Administration Building Exterior Renovation project and incorporating the recommended construction material options as recommended in the report presentation.

Motion Carried.

6.4 Director of Financial Services/Treasurer - 2025 Proposed County Budget

Council recessed at 10:20 a.m. for a break and reconvened at 10:33 a.m.

Councillor Sloan requested that Notice of Motion 8.2.1 be considered prior to Item 6.4 Director of Financial Services/Treasurer - 2025 Proposed County Budget. Notice of Motion 8.2.1 was moved, seconded, and voted on before Item 6.4

The Director of Financial Services/Treasurer presented the proposed 2025 Business Plan & Budget with a final tax rate increase of 1.49% for Council's approval. The Director of Financial Services/Treasurer presented additional information regarding the 2025 Budget as requested at the February 11, 2025 Finance Committee Meeting including a summary of public comments received during the public consultation period from February 12, 2025 to February 20, 2025.

Moved by: Councillor Hentz
Seconded by: Councillor Couckuyt

RESOLVED THAT the 2025 budget as summarized in the “2025 Proposed Business Plan & Budget” in Appendix "A" be approved with a tax rate increase of 1.49%; and

THAT Council directs that a By-Law, generally in the form of Appendix "B", be added to the March 11, 2025 agenda to adopt the 2025 budget; and

THAT this resolution constitutes notice for the purposes of By-Law 24-15 that Council intends to consider a By-Law to adopt the 2025 budget at its March 11, 2025 meeting; and

THAT the Borrowing By-Law (25-08) as outlined in Appendix "C" be approved as presented; and

THAT the Treasurer and Warden be authorized to carry out Option #2 related to Debt financing for Terrace Lodge in the amount of \$6M for 10 Years; and

THAT the County of Elgin will undertake an analysis of shared services with their Local Municipal Partners in 2025 and report back; and

THAT, in response to the letter from the Municipality of Central Elgin, staff be directed to reach out to Hospice (Elgin) to advise them of the process for the County's newly established Grants program and ask that they fill out an application for consideration under this program.

Yes (7): Warden Jones, Deputy Warden Ketchabaw, Councillor Giguère, Councillor Widner, Councillor Couckuyt, Councillor Hentz, Councillor Leatham

No (2): Councillor Sloan, and Councillor Noble

Motion Carried. (7 to 2)

7. Council Correspondence

7.1 Items for Consideration

7.1.1 Appointment of Brent Clutterbuck to Thames-Sydenham and Region Drinking Water Source Protection Committee for the 2025-2029 Term

Councillor Sloan left the meeting at 12:02 p.m. prior to Item 7.1.1 Appointment of Brent Clutterbuck to Thames-Sydenham and Region Drinking Water Source Protection Committee for the 2025-2029 Term.

Moved by: Councillor Hentz

Seconded by: Deputy Warden Ketchabaw

RESOLVED THAT Brent Clutterbuck from the Township of Southwold be nominated to the Thames-Sydenham & Region Source Protection Committee as the representative from Elgin, Essex and Chatham-Kent for the term of June 1, 2025 to June 1, 2029.

Motion Carried.

7.2 Items for Information (Consent Agenda)

Moved by: Councillor Widner

Seconded by: Councillor Noble

RESOLVED THAT Correspondence Items 7.2.1 - 7.2.3 be received and filed.

Motion Carried.

7.2.1 Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus Media Release, February 11, 2025 - Statement from the Vice Chair of the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus on Tariffs

7.2.2 Western Ontario Warden's Caucus Media Release, February 12, 2025 - Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus Releases Regional Priorities for Provincial Election Candidates

7.2.3 Resolution from the Council of Peterborough County re Proposed U.S. tariffs on Canadian Goods

8. Other Business

8.1 Statements/Inquiries by Members

None.

8.2 Notice of Motion

8.2.1 Councillor Sloan - Notice of Motion

8.2.1 Notice of Motion was moved, seconded, and voted on before Item 6.4 Director of Financial Services/Treasurer - 2025 Proposed County Budget.

Moved by: Councillor Sloan
Seconded by: Councillor Noble

Whereas the County of Elgin is proposing a 2025 County Levy to its lower tier municipalities in the amount of 49.8 Million amounting to a tax rate increase of 1.49%;

Whereas the County of Elgin provided the proposed 2025 Budget information to the Finance Committee on January 28, 2025 including detailed departmental information without a clear consolidated financial picture of the County's finances;

Whereas the reserve balances contained within the 2025 proposed budget documents are for the 2023 year and does not contain forecasted 2024 projections;

Now therefore be it resolved that staff be requested to provide the overall forecasted surplus or deficit for 2024 year and updated reserve balances to Council before making a final decision regarding the 2025 proposed budget.

Defeated.

8.3 Matters of Urgency

None.

9. Closed Meeting Items

None.

9.1 Closed Meeting Minutes - February 11, 2025

10. Motion to Rise and Report

None.

11. Motion to Adopt Recommendations from the Committee of the Whole

Moved by: Deputy Warden Ketchabaw
Seconded by: Councillor Giguère

RESOLVED THAT we do now adopt recommendations of the Committee of the Whole.

Motion Carried.

12. Consideration of By-Laws

12.1 By-Law No. 25-08 Borrowing By-Law

Being a By-Law to Authorize the Warden and Treasurer to Borrow from Time to Time to Meet Current Expenditures During the Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2025.

Moved by: Councillor Leatham
Seconded by: Councillor Noble

RESOLVED THAT By-Law No. 25-08 be now read a first, second, and third time and finally passed.

Motion Carried.

12.2 By-Law No. 25-09 Confirmation

Being a By-Law to Confirm Proceedings of the Municipal Council of the Corporation of the County of Elgin at the February 25, 2025 Meeting.

Moved by: Councillor Couckuyt
Seconded by: Deputy Warden Ketchabaw

RESOLVED THAT By-Law No. 25-09 be now read a first, second and third time and finally passed.

Motion Carried.

13. Adjournment

Moved by: Councillor Widner
Seconded by: Councillor Hentz

RESOLVED THAT we do now adjourn at 12:07 p.m. to meet again on March 11, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.

Motion Carried.

Blaine Parkin,

Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk.

Grant Jones,

Warden.