

TOWN OF LUNENBURG
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

March 25, 2025 | 6 pm

Lunenburg Town Hall – Council Chamber and virtually through Zoom



- Present Mayor Jamie Myra, Deputy Mayor Rachel Bailey, Councillors Renea Babineau, Debbie Dauphinee, Gale Fullerton, Alex Greek and Alison Strachan
- Also present Marvin Macdonald, Interim CAO
Kathleen Rafuse, Accountant
Kayla Byrne, Legislative & Policy Manager
Ellen Johnson, Regional Accessibility Coordinator
Gem Roberts, Regional Anti-Racism and Diversity Coordinator
- Call to Order The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m.
- Land acknowledgment It was acknowledged that Lunenburg is located in the unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people.
- Approval of Agenda Moved and seconded that Council approve the agenda for the March 25, 2025 meeting as presented.
Motion carried unanimously
- Approval of Minutes Moved and seconded that Council approve the March 11, 2025 meeting minutes with the following amendment: That the amended motion for the LBOT Lease Renewal should read a "10-year lease" rather than a five-year lease.
Motion carried unanimously
- Presentations Council received a presentation from the Lunenburg Community Garden Steering Committee, who provided an update on the garden's activities and vision. The presenters highlighted the garden's inclusive and sustainable mission, its longstanding community partnerships, and ongoing engagement with local residents, including programming in collaboration with the library.
- Council received a presentation from We Feed Lunenburg, who provided an overview of the volunteer-led charity's work supporting food security in the community. The group runs the Lunenburg Community Food Pantry, supplies pre-cooked meals, and delivers holiday food boxes. They are now fundraising for a new modular Community Food Hub to

expand access to fresh, frozen, and bulk goods.

Public Input

Teresa Quilty expressed support for the Town to stop using X (formerly Twitter) and encouraged Council to also reconsider the use of Facebook for official communications. She raised concerns about accessibility and equity, noting that important information should be available outside of social media platforms to ensure all residents have equal access.

It was noted that the Town will be deactivating its X account.

Jesse Ward raised concerns about the proposed electric rate increases. He questioned the Town's communication practices, the status of recommendations from the 2023 CEMA report, and the absence of updates on major decisions and expenses. He urged Council to delay the vote on rate increases and commit to clearer communication and public reporting on the utility's future.

Martin Ruiz Salvador expressed concern about the proposed 21% rate increase for businesses and the limited communication surrounding it, particularly for those not on social media. They emphasized the need for clearer information on why the increase is necessary and whether it addresses past issues or future needs, while also expressing openness to supporting it with better understanding.

Correspondence

With respect to a request from Lunenburg County Wheels, Council made the following motion:

Lunenburg County
Wheels Request

Moved and seconded that Council refer the request from Lunenburg County Wheels, requesting \$10,000 for the 2025/26 fiscal year, to the 2025/26 budget deliberations.

Motion carried unanimously

X/Twitter Use

Council received a letter inquiring whether the Town would consider alternative methods of social media and consider deactivating its X account.

Old Firehall

Council received a letter inquiring about the future use of the Old Firehall, suggesting that it should be utilized as an arts resource.

Regional
Committee
Appointments

With respect to a request from the Regional Accessibility Coordinator and the Regional Anti-Racism and Diversity Coordinator, Council made the following motions:

Moved and seconded that Council appoint Lora Church to the Lunenburg County Accessibility Advisory Committee for a three-year term ending September 30, 2027, and to appoint Amy Chrysler to the Lunenburg County Accessibility Advisory Committee for a term ending December 31, 2026.

Motion carried unanimously

Moved and seconded that Council appoint Astrid Seidel and Darlene Higgins to the Lunenburg County Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination Advisory Committee for three-year terms; Vernon Simms and Caleb Paul Wheeldon for two-year terms; and Violet Cai and Meagan MacDonald for one-year terms.

Motion carried unanimously

Moved and seconded that Council appoint Councillor Babineau as the Town of Lunenburg Council representative for the Lunenburg County Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination Advisory Committee.

Motion carried unanimously

2025/26 REMO
Operating Budget

With respect to a request on the 2025/26 REMO Operating Budget, Council made the following motion:

Moved and seconded that Council approve the Town of Lunenburg's 2025/26 Regional Emergency Management Organization (REMO) contribution in the amount of \$21,633.80, as part of the total REMO budget of \$405,417.06 recommended by the Regional Emergency Management Advisory Committee.

Motion carried unanimously

DFA Claims

Council received a general provincial update on Municipal Disaster Financial Assistance Claims.

Code of Conduct
Training

Council received a general provincial update on upcoming mandatory Code of Conduct training.

Lunenburg County
Accessibility Plan

Moved and seconded that Council approve the Lunenburg County Accessibility Plan 2025-2028 as presented.

Motion carried unanimously

Anti-Racism and
Diversity Plan

Moved and seconded that Council approve the submission of the Draft Anti-Racism & Diversity Plan to the Province of Nova Scotia, with the

understanding that the final Plan will be further developed and presented to Council at a future meeting.

Motion carried unanimously

Electric Rate Study

Paula Zarnett and Trent Winstone of BDR gave a presentation on the Town's proposed general rate increase for the Electric Utility. Following the presentation, Council asked questions of clarification and made the following motion:

Moved and seconded that Council approve and direct the Town of Lunenburg's Electric Utility to submit a rate application to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (UARB) requesting an overall electricity rate increase of 16.7%, including an 11.3% increase for Domestic rates. Additionally, for General Service customer classes, a total rate increase of 21% is to be proposed, to be phased in as follows: an immediate 15% increase upon UARB approval, with the remaining 6% deferred and recovered at a time and over a period to be determined by a subsequent application to the UARB.

Motion carried unanimously

Temporary Borrowing Resolution

Moved and seconded that Council approve a Temporary Borrowing Resolution of \$210,735 for the financing of the Public Works Salt Truck #2 for the Spring 2025 Debenture Issue application, per Schedule 1.

Motion carried unanimously

Moved and seconded that Council authorize the Mayor and Municipal Clerk to sign the Resolution for Pre-Approval of Debenture Issuance, subject to interest rate confirmation not to exceed 6.5%, to enable the Town of Lunenburg to secure a debenture of \$210,735, per Schedule 2.

Motion carried unanimously

2024/25 Budget Variance Report

For information, Council received the 2024/25 Budget Variance (Capital & Operating) to Jan. 31, 2025.

Community Garden Licence Renewal

Moved and seconded that Council approve the five-year Community Garden Licence Agreement between the Town of Lunenburg and the Lunenburg Community Network, effective from April 30, 2024, to April 29, 2029, and authorize the Mayor and Chief Administrative Officer to

sign the agreement on behalf of the Town.

Motion carried unanimously

Notices of
Motion,
Information
Requests and
Councillor Report

Councillor Strachan provided a notice of motion to direct staff to review and report back to Council on the UNESCO World Heritage context for development within the Old Town Buffer Zone, including a comparison of the 2017 UNESCO-related document and the original 1994 nomination documents. The motion also seeks an analysis of how these documents have influenced the Town's interpretation of appropriate development in the Buffer Zone. Following receipt of the report, it is suggested that Council reconsider its November 28, 2023 decision to declare certain lands on Upper King Street as surplus.

Councillor Dauphinee shared that the Lunenburg Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary will be hosting a community breakfast at the Fire Hall on Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. She also addressed ongoing issues with dog waste in public areas, urging residents to pick up after their pets and dispose of waste bags properly.

Closed Session

Moved and seconded that Council move in closed session at 8:06 p.m. to discuss agenda items 14.1 and 14.2 per the Municipal Government Act.

Motion carried unanimously

Adjournment

Council reverted to public session at 8:50 p.m.

There being no further business, the March 25, 2025 meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

The minutes were read and approved.