

MIDDLESEX COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES

Tuesday, December 10, 2024, 1:00 PM
Middlesex County Building
399 Ridout Street North, London

Members Present Warden Ropp
 Councillor Burghardt-Jesson
 Councillor Brennan
 Councillor Clarke
 Councillor DeViet
 Councillor Grantham
 Councillor Mayhew
 Councillor McMillan
 Councillor McGuire
 Councillor Smibert

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND WARDEN'S REMARKS**

Warden Ropp called the meeting to order at 1:00pm.

Councillor DeViet read the Land Acknowledgement as follows:

We acknowledge that the land we stand upon today is the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (Add-a-won-da-run), Anishinabeg (Ah-nish-in-a-beg), Haudenosaunee (Hoden-oh-show-nee), and Lunaapeewak (Len-ahpay-wuk) peoples who have long standing relationships to the land, water and region of Southwestern Ontario. The local First Nation communities of this area include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames First Nation, and Munsee-Delaware Nation.

We acknowledge the treaties that are specific to this area: Treaty 2 (McKee Purchase), Treaty 3 (Between the Lakes Purchase), Treaty 6 (London Township Purchase), Treaty 21 (Long Woods Purchase) and Treaty 29 (Huron Tract Purchase). We value the significant contributions, both in the past and the present of local and regional first nations of Turtle Island.

We acknowledge historic and ongoing injustices that indigenous peoples endure in Canada and we affirm our commitment to honouring indigenous voices,

nations and cultures, and to moving forward in the spirit of reconciliation and respect.

2. PROVISION FOR DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST AND GENERAL NATURE THEREOF

None.

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Moved by Councillor Grantham
Seconded by Councillor Mayhew

THAT the Agenda be approved as presented.

Carried

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

4.a Minutes of the November 26, 2024 Meeting of County Council

4.b Closed Session Minutes of the November 26, 2024 Meeting of County Council

4.c Minutes of the December 3, 2024 Special Meeting of County Council

4.d Closed Session Minutes of the December 3, 2024 Special Meeting of County Council

Moved by Councillor Mayhew
Seconded by Councillor Smibert

THAT the Minutes of the November 26, 2024 Meeting, the Closed Session Minutes of the November 26, 2024 Meeting, the Minutes of the December 3, 2024 Special Meeting and the Closed Session Minutes of the December 3, 2024 Special Meeting be approved as presented; and

THAT the recommendations made by Committee of the Whole as set out in the Minutes of the November 26, 2024 Meeting be adopted.

Carried

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.a ACTION ITEMS

5.a.1 Appointment to the Budget Committee

Report from Marci Ivanic, Legislative Services Manager/County Clerk

Moved by Councillor Burghardt-Jesson
Seconded by Councillor McMillan

THAT the necessary by-law be introduced at the December 10, 2024 meeting of Council to appoint Councillor Smibert to the Budget Committee.

Carried

6. INQUIRIES

None.

7. NOTICES OF MOTION

None.

8. COUNCILLOR'S COMMENTS AND OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor Grantham noted that the Detroit Lions are playing the Buffalo Bills on Sunday, December 15, 2024.

Councillor Clarke thanked the Economic Development Department for their support in the opening of a new business in the Township of Adelaide Metcalfe.

9. COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Moved by Councillor Smibert
Seconded by Councillor Brennan

THAT Committee of the Whole convene at 1:04pm.

Carried

9.a DELEGATIONS

None.

9.b REPORTS FROM COUNTY OFFICERS

None.

9.c ACTION ITEMS

9.c.1 Woodlands Conservation By-law Update – Draft By-Law

Report from Mark Brown, Woodlands Conservation Officer/Weed Inspector & Tim Williams, Manager of Planning

Moved by Councillor DeViet

Seconded by Councillor Grantham

THAT the Woodlands Conservation By-law Report be received for information;

AND THAT staff be directed to provide notice of Council intention to pass a Woodlands Conservation By-law in accordance with the provisions of the Notice By-law;

AND THAT staff be directed to bring forward a Woodlands Conservation By-law for Council consideration.

Carried

9.c.2 Municipal Elections Act

Report from Marcia Ivanic, Manager of Legislative Services/County Clerk & Paul Shipway, General Manager of Strategic Initiatives & Innovation

Moved by Councillor Smibert

Seconded by Councillor Burghardt-Jesson

WHEREAS elections rules need to be clear, supporting candidates and voters in their electoral participation and election administrators in running elections.

AND WHEREAS legislation needs to strike the right balance between providing clear rules and frameworks to ensure the integrity of the electoral process,

AND WHEREAS the legislation must also reduce administrative and operational burden for municipal staff ensuring that local election administrators can run elections in a way that responds to the unique circumstances of their local communities.

AND WHEREAS the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* (MEA) will be 30 years old by the next municipal and school board elections in 2026.

AND WHEREAS the MEA sets out the rules for local elections, the *Assessment Act, 1990* and the *Education Act, 1990* also contain provisions impacting local elections adding more places for voters, candidates, and administrators to look for the rules that bind the local democratic process in Ontario.

AND WHEREAS with rules across three pieces of legislation, and the *MEA* containing a patchwork of clauses, there are interpretation challenges, inconsistencies, and gaps to fill.

AND WHEREAS the Act can pose difficulties for voters, candidates, contributors and third-party advertisers to read, to interpret, to comply with and for election administrators to enforce.

AND WHEREAS while local elections are run as efficiently and effectively as can be within the current legislative framework, modernization and continuous improvement is needed to ensure the Act is responsive to today's needs and tomorrow's challenges.

AND WHEREAS to keep public trust and improve safeguards the Act should be reviewed considering the ever-changing landscape which impacts elections administration including privacy, the threats of foreign interference, increased spread of mis/disinformation and the increased use of technologies like artificial intelligence and use of digital identities.

AND WHEREAS the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks, and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) reviewed the Act and has provided several recommendations including modernizing the legislation, harmonizing rules, and streamlining and simplifying administration.

AND WHEREAS AMCTO put forward recommendations for amendments ahead of the 2026 elections and longer-term recommendations for amendments ahead of the 2030 elections.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Middlesex County calls for the Province to update the MEA with priority amendments as outlined by AMCTO before Summer 2025 and commence work to review and re-write the MEA with longer-term recommendations ahead of the 2030 elections.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution will be forwarded to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (minister.mah@ontario.ca), the Minister of Education (minister.edu@ontario.ca), the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery (todd.mccarthy@ontario.ca), Minister of Finance (Minister.fin@ontario.ca) the Premier of Ontario (premier@ontario.ca), and AMCTO (advocacy@amcto.com).

Carried

9.c.3 2024 Joint Annual Accessibility Status Report

Report from Rebecca Glavin, Deputy Clerk

Moved by Councillor Brennan

Seconded by Councillor DeViet

THAT the 2024 Joint Annual Accessibility Status Report be received for information;

AND THAT the 2024 Joint Annual Accessibility Status Report be approved and posted on the Middlesex County website.

Carried

9.c.4 Middlesex County Warden's Activity Report

Report from Aina DeViet, Deputy Warden

Moved by Councillor McMillan

Seconded by Councillor Clarke

THAT the Middlesex County Warden's Activity Report be received for information.

Carried

9.d CORRESPONDENCE AND INFORMATION ITEMS

9.d.1 Electronic Payments - November 2024

9.d.2 County Official Plan Update – Section 26 Meeting Background

Report from Abby Heddle-Jacobs, Planner, Policy Focus

- 9.d.3 Minutes of the November 20, 2024 Meeting of the Middlesex Accessibility Advisory Committee
- 9.d.4 Minutes of the November 26, 2024 Meeting of the Library Board
- 9.d.5 Correspondence from Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing regarding Additional Residential Units (ARU's) dated November 28, 2024
- 9.d.6 Board of Health Update - November 2024
- 9.d.7 Correspondence from the Western Fair District regarding Suspension of the Western Fair Association Programming Council, dated November 26, 2024
- 9.d.8 Correspondence from Ministry of Natural Resources regarding Decision on Discussion Paper dated November 25, 2024
- 9.d.9 OBCM SolveTheCrisis Campaign - Council Motion in Support of Solve the Crisis Campaign

Moved by Councillor Burghardt-Jesson
Seconded by Councillor Clarke

Whereas there is a humanitarian crisis unfolding on the streets in our municipalities, large and small, urban and rural, across Ontario. The time for words is over, we need immediate action at all levels of government, starting with the Province of Ontario

Whereas the homelessness, mental health and addictions crisis continues to grow with 3432 drug related deaths in Ontario in 2023 and over 1400 homeless encampments across Ontario communities in 2023; and

Whereas the province has provided additional funding and supports, such as the recent investment of \$378 million for HART Hubs that includes funding for approximately 375 beds with wraparound supports, it does not adequately address the growing crisis and the financial and social impact on municipalities and regions across the province; and

Whereas municipalities and regions are stepping up and working with community partners to put in place community-specific solutions to address this crisis, but municipalities and regions lack the expertise, capacity, or resources to address these increasingly complex health care and housing issues alone; and

Whereas this is primarily a health issue that falls under provincial jurisdiction and municipalities and regions should not be using the property tax base to fund these programs; and

Whereas there is no provincial lead focused on this crisis leading to unanswered questions that span over a dozen ministries, and a lack of support to manage the increasing needs of those who are unhoused.

Therefore, be it resolved that the County of Middlesex supports Ontario's Big City Mayors (OBCM) SolvethetheCrisis.ca Campaign;

AND calls on the provincial and federal governments to commit to immediate action to solve the humanitarian crisis that Ontario is facing as the numbers of unhoused individuals and those suffering with mental health & addictions grows exponentially;

AND that the province officially makes Homelessness a Health Priority;

AND that the province appoints a responsible Minister and Ministry with the appropriate funding and powers as the single point of contact to address the full spectrum of housing needs and equally as important, the mental health, addictions and wrap around supports that must be put resourced and put in place;

AND that the provincial government strike a task force with broad sector representatives including municipalities, regions, healthcare, first responders, community services, the business community and the tourism industry to develop a *Made in Ontario Action Plan*;

AND that this provincial task force reviews the current programs and policies developed by municipalities, regions and community partners that have proven successful in our communities, as well as programs and policies proposed by various stakeholders, to evaluate their effectiveness, ability to be scaled up, and to ensure that a variety of solutions are available, as there is no one-size-fits-all answer, and can be implemented quickly and effectively to tackle this crisis;

AND that the federal government is included in these conversations;

AND that both levels of government provide adequate, sufficient and sustainable funding to ensure that municipalities have the tools

and resources to support individuals suffering with mental health and addictions, including unhoused people and those from vulnerable populations that may be disproportionately impacted;

And that this Council calls on the residents of the County of Middlesex to join us in appealing to the provincial and federal governments for support by visiting SolvetheCrisis.ca and showing your support;

AND further that a copy of this motion be sent to:

- The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada
- The Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities of Canada
- The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
- The Honourable Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health
- The Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
- The Honourable Michael Parsa, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
- The Honourable Michael Tibollo, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions
- Local MPs
- Local MPPs and
- Ontario's Big City Mayors (solvethecrisis@obcm.ca and info@obcm.ca)

Carried

Moved by Councillor McMillan

Seconded by Councillor Grantham

THAT items 9.d.1 to 9.d.9 be received for information.

Carried

9.e CLOSED SESSION

Moved by Councillor McMillan
Seconded by Councillor Clarke

THAT the next portion of the meeting be closed at 1:22pm in order to consider the following:

9.e.1 - Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) Agreements. A position, plan, procedure, criteria or instruction to be applied to any negotiations carried on or to be carried on by or on behalf of the municipality or local board, in accordance with subsection 239(2)(k) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, as amended; and

9.e.2 - Human Resources Matter. A personal matter pertaining to identifiable individuals, including municipal employees, and advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege, including communications necessary for that purpose, pursuant to subsections 239(2)(b) and (f) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.

Carried

9.e.1 Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) Agreements

9.e.2 Human Resources Matter

Moved by Councillor Mayhew
Seconded by Councillor Smibert

THAT Committee of Whole rise from Closed Session at 2:47pm.

Carried

9.f RISE AND REPORT FROM CLOSED SESSION

Moved by Councillor Mayhew
Seconded by Councillor Smibert

THAT Committee of the Whole rise at 2:48pm.

Carried

10. BY-LAWS

10.a #7312 - A BY-LAW to Amend By-Law #7203 to Appoint Members to Committees and Boards

10.b #7313 - A BY-LAW to Confirm the Proceedings of the December 10, 2024 Meeting of Council

Moved by Councillor DeViet
Seconded by Councillor Grantham

THAT the by-laws be given a first and second reading.

Carried

Moved by Councillor McMillan
Seconded by Councillor Burghardt-Jesson

THAT the by-laws be given a third and final reading.

Carried

11. ANNOUNCEMENTS

11.a Next Meetings

- Tuesday, January 14, 2025
- Tuesday, February 11, 2025
- Tuesday, March 11, 2025

12. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Councillor Smibert
Seconded by Councillor McMillan

That the meeting adjourn at 2:49pm.

Carried

Marci Ivanic, County Clerk

Brian Ropp, Warden

