

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

Minutes of a Special Meeting of Municipal Council

Held in Council Chamber, 10 Allée Champlain Drive, Cookville, N.S.
Thursday, February 27, 2025 – 6:00 p.m.

Attendance

Mayor Elspeth McLean-Wile
Deputy Mayor Chasidy Veinotte, District 10
Councillor Morgen Reinhardt, District 1
Councillor Martin Bell, District 2
Councillor Wendy Oickle, District 3
Councillor Pam Hubley, District 4
Councillor Cathy Moore, District 5
Councillor Alison Smith, District 6
Councillor Edgar Burns, District 7
Councillor Kacy DeLong, District 8
Councillor Ben Brooks, District 9

Staff

Tom MacEwan, Chief Administrative Officer
Alex Dumaresq, Deputy CAO (Via Teams)
Tina Robichaud-Bond, Acting Municipal Clerk
Sandra Challis, Administrative Assistant

1. Call to Order

Mayor McLean-Wile called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and began by acknowledging that the meeting was held in Mi'kma'ki, the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

2. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Councillor Burns, seconded by Councillor Oickle that the Agenda be approved as circulated. Carried unanimously.

3. Municipal Operating Budget

Elana Wentzell, Director of Finance began the presentation of the draft Operating Budget noting that the same presentation was given at the February 25, 2025, Council meeting, with the addition of details on reserves and staff recommendations. A copy of the presentation is attached to the Minutes.

Ms. Wentzell explained the process, parameters and fundamentals of the operating budget, and expectations of Council.

3.1 Staff Presentation on Budget

Alex Dumaresq, Deputy CAO, gave a presentation on the proposed operating budget for the Administration department. Discussions followed and clarifications were provided on details of the proposed budget. Staff were directed as follows:

- Staff was requested to provide a couple of years' data for comparative data regarding Council Contingency.
- Staff were requested to provide jurisdictional information regarding the importance of creating a physical version of Municipal Matters.
- Staff were requested to provide details of the funding provided for the level of service received from the Safety Coordinator. Suggested could be beneficial for Council to hear from the Safety Coordinator.

Stephen Pace, Director of Engineering & Public Works, gave a presentation on the proposed operating budget for the Engineering & Public Works department. Discussions followed and clarifications were provided on details of the proposed budget.

Jeff Merrill, Director of Planning & Development Services, gave a presentation on the proposed operating budget for the Planning and Development departments. Discussions followed and clarifications were provided on details of the proposed budget.

Council recessed at 7:55 p.m. and resumed at 8:05 p.m.

Dave Waters, Director of Economic Development, gave a presentation on the proposed operating budget for the Economic Development department. Discussions followed and clarifications were provided on details of the proposed budget.

Trudy Payne, Director of Recreation, Parks & Tourism, gave a presentation on the proposed operating budget for the Recreation, Parks & Tourism department. Discussions followed and clarifications were provided on details of the proposed budget.

- It was noted that the LCLC budget had not yet been presented or accepted by Council and that the amount in the draft budget was an estimate.

Elana Wentzell, Director of Finance, gave a presentation on the proposed operating budget for the Finance department. Discussions followed and clarifications were provided on details of the proposed budget.

It was noted that the draft operating budget presented at the regular session of council on February 25, 2025, showed a deficit of \$238,000. Council presented recommendations on how to balance the budget showing a possible surplus of \$34,000.

3.2 Expanded Public Input

Andrew Himmelmann, of Newcombville, commented on the Community Hub project, paved shoulders on Highway 325 between Victoria Ridge to the Town of Bridgewater, connectivity to Osprey Village for off highway vehicles, and questioned the Blue Route designation to Highway 332.

Andy Veinotte, of West Northfield, commented on the discussion had around controlling well-drilling/digging through the building permit process, and urged Council to not move forward with that route. He also expressed concerns regarding residents being refused acceptance in the Household Water Supply Financing Program

3.3 Council Deliberation and Direction to Staff

Council deliberated and provided direction to staff during the discussion of each topic.

4. In Camera

4.1 Contract Negotiations under Section 22(2)(e) of the MGA

It was agreed that the In Camera item would be deferred to the next meeting.

5. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:42 p.m.

Draft Operating Budget Staff Recommended Reductions

	Amount
Staff Training, Travel & Conferences (Standardization across Departments)	(31,700)
Administration:	
Representative market research on Municipal matters and engagement	(13,000)
Enhanced Municipal Matters	(16,900)
Engineering & Public Works: CES Reserve Transfer	(50,000)
Waste Cleanup Ads (MJSB now does this)	(5,000)
Economic Development: Legal Costs	(12,000)
Regional Economic Development Platform Evaluation	(10,000)
Recreation & Tourism: Town of Lunenburg Grant	(20,000)
AT Programming & Promotions	(5,000)
Financial Services: Staff Ergonomics	(4,000)
LCLC Budget Adjustment	(75,000)



Draft Operating Budget Staff Recommended Reductions

	Amount
Planning & Development: Regional Bldg Service Branding	(5,000)
LCCAP Projects (Reduce Project List)	
EV Education & Promotion	(1,000)
Waste Management Awareness	(3,000)
Community Climate Capacity Grant	(500)
MODL Environmental & Resilience Champion Award	(1,900)
Let it Grow May (\$3,700) & Community Pledges (\$300)	(4,000)
Sustainability Student	(14,000)
Housing Market Data Study carry-over (Council approved Nov 26/24)	30,000
Reserve Transfer for Housing Market Data Study	(30,000)
TOTAL Reductions	(272,000)
<i>2025-26 Draft Budget deficit (\$238,000) + reductions = Budget Surplus</i>	<i>34,000</i>



Draft Operating Budget Reserve Transfer Summary

Transfers to Reserves from Operating Revenues – Mandatory

- Interest on specific reserves \$75K
- Expired Tax Sale Surplus Funds \$62K
- Open Space (MGA) from development revenue \$50K
- These transfers come from revenue collected
 - They are transferred to reserves per legislative requirements
 - Net effect \$0



Draft Operating Budget Reserve Transfer Summary

Transfers to Reserves from Operating Revenues – Optional

- \$50,000 for 2028 election (expenditure smoothing)
- \$100,000 future Regional Fire Training Facility
- \$25,000 Municipal Roads Reserve
- \$60,000 Open Space Strategy (Council policy)
- \$175,000 for Municipal Sewer Reserve
- \$2.5M Depreciation & Future Capital
- \$165,000 LCLC Capital Reserve

- A decrease in these transfers would increase Operating Surplus



Draft Operating Budget Reserve Transfer Summary

Transfers from Reserves to Support Operating Expenditures – Net Effect \$0

- \$50,000 for hospital donation
- Up to \$521K for Water financing program
- \$30,000 Housing Market Data Study
 - Approved by Council Nov 26/24
 - Project to be completed in 2025-26 Budget year



Draft Operating Budget Reserve Transfer Summary

Transfers from Reserves to Support Operating Expenditures – Net Effect \$0

- \$350,000 Canada Community Building Fund (CCBF) for paving partnerships with the Province to pave J-Class roads
- \$500,000 PACE Program
- \$9,200 Plotter
- \$90,000 Housing Strategy
- \$2M Community HUB fit-up (lease agreement)
- \$82,300 Canada Community Building Fund for Trail Groups

