

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg Minutes of a Meeting of Municipal Council

Virtual Meeting held via Microsoft TEAMS

Tuesday, February 24, 2026 – 9:00 a.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 Ben Brooks, District 9

Regrets

Councillor Kacy DeLong, District 8

Staff

Tom MacEwan, Chief Administrative Officer

Alex Dumaresq, Deputy CAO

April Whynot-Lohnes, Municipal Clerk

Tina Robichaud-Bond, Executive Assistant

1. Call to Order

Mayor McLean-Wile called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and began by acknowledging that the meeting was held in Mi'kma'ki, the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

2. Announcements/Acknowledgements/Recognition - Nil

3. Public Input

Due to inclement weather, the meeting was held virtually through Microsoft TEAMS. Public input was not possible.

4. Approval of Agenda

Tom MacEwan, CAO, requested that Item 11.4.1 Pre-budget Approval of Privacy & Data Protection Shared Service be removed from the agenda.

Moved by Councillor Brooks, seconded by Councillor Hubley that the Agenda be approved as amended with the removal of Item 14.1 Pre-budget Approval of Privacy & Data Protection Shared Service. Carried unanimously.

5. Approval of Minutes – Regular Council Feb 10, 2026 & Special Council Feb 12, 2026

The Minutes of the February 10, 2026 Council meeting were approved as circulated.

The Minutes of the February 12, 2026 Special Council meeting were approved as circulated.

6. Business Arising from Minutes - Nil

7. Awarding of Tenders/RFPs - Nil

8. Presentations/Scheduled Times

8.1 Lunenburg County Wheels 2025 Update

Eric Hustvedt, Board Secretary, and Daron Lantz, Operations Manager, with Lunenburg County Wheels, were in attendance to provide an update on Lunenburg County Wheels, including details on operations, growth and future plans.

The presentation highlighted the following key points:

- Approximately 29% of trips are for shopping/errands.
- 16.7% of trips are work-related (increasing demand).
- 15.7% of trips are for medical appointments.
- Capacity constraints limit ability to meet all ride requests, particularly in rural areas.
- Approximately \$50,000 annually required to deploy a sixth vehicle.
- Exploring commercial licensing to permit charter services as a revenue stream.
- Provincial operating funding increases are uncertain.

Mr. Hustvedt and Mr. Lantz left the meeting.

9. Consideration of Correspondence - Nil

10. Recommendations from Committees & Boards - Nil

11. Staff Reports

11.2 Administration Department

11.2.1 Approval of Amendments to Policy 036 Fire & Emergency Services

Alex Dumaresq, Deputy CAO, reviewed the report, “Approval of Proposed Amendments to Policy 036 Fire and Emergency Services” (circulated with the agenda), and gave an explanation of the following key amendments:

- Code of Conduct for Chief Fire Officers
- Establishment of third-party independent investigation process

- Review by Fire and Emergency Services Committee panel
- Final determination by Council
- Developed in collaboration with local fire services

2026-024 Moved by Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor Burns that Municipal Council approve the proposed amendments to Policy 036 Fire & Emergency Services, as presented. Carried unanimously.

11.3 Recreation, Parks & Tourism

11.3.1 Purchase of Parasport Wheelchairs

Tissy Bolivar, Program Coordinator, reviewed the report, “Parasport Wheelchairs” (circulated with the agenda), and explained that full funding had been received for the purchase of six wheelchairs.

2026-025 Moved by Councillor Reinhardt, seconded by Councillor Burns that Municipal Council approves the purchase of six (6) parasport wheelchairs, funded in full by a grant from Sport Nova Scotia. Carried unanimously.

11.3.2 Parks Evaluation Criteria Framework

Trudy Payne, Director of Recreation, Parks & Tourism, reviewed the report, “Park Evaluation Criteria Framework” (circulated with the agenda), explaining that the revised framework incorporated feedback from the January 20, 2026 Policy and Strategy Committee meeting. The updates included the:

- removal of weighted scoring system;
- revised definition of park equity;
- addition of prompt questions related to accessibility, strategic alignment and financial planning;
- clarification regarding evaluation of new versus existing parks.

Discussions followed regarding formalizing “previous commitments” as a specific evaluation criterion. It was noted that doing so could limit future councils’ flexibility and conflict with the intent of using broader, balanced criteria to guide decisions.

It was suggested that the framework more clearly distinguish between criteria for evaluating existing parks and those for assessing new park development.

2026-026 Moved by Councillor Burns, seconded by Deputy Mayor Veinotte that Municipal Council adopt the Parks Evaluation Criteria and Framework, as presented. Carried unanimously.

12. Mayor's/Deputy Mayor's/Councillors' Matters

12.1 Evening Council Meetings

Councillor Oickle raised concerns regarding the continuation of evening Council meetings, noting:

- lack of public attendance;
- limited evening presentations; and
- possible staffing cost implications.

It was clarified that presentations were generally scheduled during daytime hours to manage meeting length, but groups may request evening presentations.

Council supported the continuation of one evening Council meeting per month.

8.2 Housing Market Study

Colin Rennie, Senior Consultant, with Turner Drake & Partners Ltd., gave a presentation on "Project Recap: Housing Market Study" (circulated with the agenda), highlighting the following:

- Review of regional housing trends within Lunenburg County.
- Population growth patterns and demographic shifts.
- Increasing demand for rental and entry-level ownership housing.
- Escalation of housing prices relative to income levels.
- Vacancy rates remaining below healthy market thresholds.
- Projected housing demand over the next 5–10 years.
- Need for a mix of housing types.

Mr. Rennie outlined policy tools and municipal levers available, including:

- Planning and zoning adjustments
- Development incentives
- Partnerships with non-profit and private developers
- Infrastructure readiness considerations

Mayor McLean-Wile advised that there were Mayors, Wardens, Councillors and staff from neighbouring municipal units joining the meeting and invited their questions and comments.

Discussions followed regarding:

- Rural versus urban growth pressures.
- Infrastructure capacity constraints (water, wastewater).
- Alignment with the Municipality's Housing Action Plan.
- Opportunities for collaboration with neighbouring municipalities and the Province.

11.1 Planning & Development

11.1.1 Residential Rental Market Survey & Housing Needs Assessment Update

Reid Shepherd, Deputy Director of Planning and Development Services, reviewed the report, “2025 Residential Rental Market Survey and Housing Needs Assessment Updates Report”, circulated with the agenda, explaining that the intent of the study was to address gaps in regional housing data that had created funding challenges and impeded both private and non-market housing projects.

Mr. Shepherd advised that the report recommended that housing market studies be conducted every two years to ensure data remains current and useful for project planning, funding applications, and policy development.

2026-027 Moved by Councillor Bell, seconded by Councillor Hubley that Municipal Council commit to future housing market studies with a frequency of every two years, in accordance with the recommendations outlined in the 2025 Residential Rental Market Survey and Housing Needs Assessment Updates report prepared by Turner Drake and Partners Ltd.; and further, that the study continue to be done in collaboration with municipal partners in Lunenburg County for the purposes of data and cost-sharing. Carried unanimously.

11.4 Finance Department

11.4.1 Pre-budget Approval of Privacy & Data Protection Shared Services

This matter was removed from the agenda and referred to a future meeting or may be brought forward as part of the budget process.

12. Mayor’s/Deputy Mayor’s/Councillors’ Matters

12.2 LCLC Update

Councillor Hubley’s update on the matters of the Lunenburg County Multi-purpose Lifestyle Community Centre is attached to the Minutes.

12.3 Deputy Mayor’s Update

Deputy Mayor Veinotte advised that she attended to cheque signings, agenda briefing meetings, and committee meetings as assigned.

12.4 Mayor’s Update

Mayor McLean-Wile’s update is attached to the Minutes.

It was clarified that Bill 158 received first reading on October 25, 2025, and had since been introduced for second reading. Companion legislation, the **Support for Fire Protection Services Act**, was also introduced and was expected to proceed through the legislative process. Mr. MacEwan explained that the two pieces of legislation were intended to work together: one

would establish the overall framework arising from the fire services review, while the other would provide support mechanisms for fire protection services, including reference to the Fire Commissioner position.

13. Added Items – Nil

14. In Camera

At 11:36 a.m., it was moved by Councillor Burns, seconded by Deputy Mayor Veinotte that Municipal Council go In Camera to discuss Item 14.1 Land Negotiations under Section 22(2)(a) of the MGA. Carried.

Municipal Council In Camera in session.

At 12:11 p.m., Municipal Council came out of In Camera and returned to open session.

Municipal Council in session.

15. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:11 p.m.

LCLC Meeting Update – February 19, 2026

Andrew Tanner presented the 55+ Games Legacy Fund recommendations. which include the pickleball court, a bursary fund for future Lunenburg County participants, a branded water fill station at the LCLC, donation to the HB Studio turf and a fund for 55+ “try it” activities. A motion was passed to accept the recommendation of the 55+ Games committee.

The strategic plan was reviewed, we focused on 5 Strategic pillars, governance, organizational excellence, EDIA (equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility), Partnerships and health & wellness actions. This will be a 4-year strategic plan. We have given directions for a few more changes and hope to be able to accept the strategic plan at our next meeting. You can expect another update.

The second draft of the Donation & sponsorship request policy was reviewed. We are in the process of fine tuning the policy and will review it again at the next LCLCL meeting.

I am happy to report a motion was passed to accept the concession service policy.

We had an in-depth review of the 2026/2027 operating and Capital budgets. As Elana Wentzell will touch on in her review, the municipal operating grants are slightly more than 2025/2026 but within our budgeted reserve. 2026/2027 Operating grant is \$988,470. The 2025/2026 operating grant was \$958,750. A difference of \$29,720. A motion was passed to accept the operating budget.

The capital budget includes aquatic tile replacement, a much-needed compressor for the arena as we are operating on one and should be operating on two, a play pool pump replacement, a therapy pool filter, parking lot upgrades (painting, sealing and signs), video surveillance upgrades and IT equipment. A motion was passed to accept the Capital budget not to exceed \$911,000 less grants and any residual.

Mayor's Report

February 24, 2026

Together with Tom MacEwan, we participated in a Round Table discussion on the Economy of our area hosted by Dalhousie University. The morning session included municipal leaders, business owners and executives as well as government staff working in the field of economic development. This was the second year for Dalhousie to reach out to rural communities to build and enhance relationships and seek ways to connect with opportunities outside of the Halifax area for students and researchers.

I participated in the Fire Services Governance on-line meeting with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and his staff reporting on the plans of the government to revise legislation governing fire services throughout the province and the implications of the direction proposed in the legislation. Since then, as a municipality, we have made an effort to connect directly with our community fire departments and regional fire committees to discuss the proposal. Thank you to the councillors who have organized conversations and attended meetings on this matter. As you all know, this has very serious implications for us as a municipality as it would see the fire service transition to a municipally led service rather than a community based one. We will continue to work with our fire departments and with the provincial government to find the best way forward that recognizes the need for changes to ensure adequate standards for service are adopted, volunteers have easy access to training, compensation is provided for medical calls and improvements are made to the dispatch service.

I participated in a ZOOM call with the local Community Health Board directed to elected municipal representatives outlining their work. I provided feedback on a number of projects we were working on including public transportation and housing that aligned with their concerns and priorities.

I had good visits with a number of residents at the New Germany Café and the Riverport Breakfast. I find both of these events are great opportunities to visit and hear what is of concern to residents.

I attended an African Heritage Month event hosted by the Multicultural Association at the Desbrisay Museum in Bridgewater. The event highlighted the 10 African nations that are now represented in the population of TOB – Cameroon, Sudan, Tanzania, Nigeria, Kenya, Liberia, Ghana, Republic of the Congo, Monrovia. It was a beautiful event which included music, storytelling, poetry, lots of kids participating and a very colorful fashion show featuring the tribal costumes of the countries. The event ended with a feast of traditional foods representing the different countries.

Finally, I took part in a ZOOM call that addressed the issue of integrating Climate Decision Making in Council Processes. This was much more relevant for cities and featured the work being done in Halifax (now has a 3% climate action tax built into their property tax rate) and St. John's Newfoundland.