



## **Stratford City Council Regular Council Open Session MINUTES**

Meeting #: 4765th  
Date: Monday, February 24, 2025  
Time: 7:00 P.M.  
Location: Council Chamber, City Hall

Council Present: Mayor Ritsma - Chair Presiding, Councillor Beatty, Councillor Biehn, Councillor Burbach, Councillor Hunter, Councillor Nijjar, Councillor Wordofa

Regrets: Councillor Briscoe, Councillor Henderson, Councillor McCabe, and Councillor Sebben

Staff Present: Joan Thomson - Chief Administrative Officer, Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services, Tim Wolfe - Director of Community Services, Taylor Crinklaw - Director of Infrastructure Services, Karmen Krueger - Director of Corporate Services, Adam Betteridge - Director of Building and Planning Services, Neil Anderson - Director of Emergency Services/Fire Chief, Victoria Trotter, Audrey Pascual - Deputy Clerk, Alexander Burnett – Intermediate Planner, Joani Gerber - Chief Executive Officer, SEEDCo./investStratford, Krista Robinson - Chief Executive Officer, Stratford Public Library

Also Present: Members of the Public and Media

### **1. Call to Order:**

Mayor Ritsma, Chair presiding, called the Council meeting to order.

Councillors McCabe, Henderson, Sebben and Briscoe provided regrets for this meeting.

Land Acknowledgment

Moment of Silent Reflection

Singing of O Canada

Respectful Workplace Policy Statement

**2. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof:**

The *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* requires any member of Council declaring a pecuniary interest and the general nature thereof, where the interest of a member of Council has not been disclosed by reason of the member's absence from the meeting, to disclose the interest at the first open meeting attended by the member of Council and to otherwise comply with the *Act*.

Name, Item and General Nature of Pecuniary Interest

No declarations of pecuniary interest were made by a member at the February 24, 2025 Regular Council meeting.

**3. Adoption of the Minutes:**

R2025-79

**Motion by** Councillor Nijjar

**Seconded by** Councillor Burbach

**THAT the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of Council of The Corporation of the City of Stratford dated February 10, 2025, be adopted as printed.**

**Carried**

**4. Adoption of the Addenda to the Agenda:**

R2025-80

**Motion by** Councillor Biehn

**Seconded by** Councillor Wordofa

**THAT the Addenda to the Regular Agenda of Council and Standing Committees dated February 24, 2025, be added to the Agenda as printed.**

**Carried**

**5. Report of the Committee of the Whole In-Camera Session:**

**5.1 At the February 24, 2025, Committee of the Whole In-camera Session, under the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended, a matter concerning the following item was considered:**

4.1 Appointment of a Director to the Stratford Economic Enterprise Development Corporation – Personal matters about an identifiable individual(s) including municipal employees or local board employees (section 239.(2)(b)).

At the In-camera session, personal information relating to the appointee was considered by Council.

**6. Hearings of Deputations and Presentations:**

**6.1 Added - Requests for Delegation regarding Item 7.2 The Grand Trunk Renewal Project Key Recommendations (COU25-019)**

R2025-81

**Motion by** Councillor Burbach

**Seconded by** Councillor Nijjar

**THAT Mike Ennis and Jay Colquhoun of the YMCA Three Rivers, Krista Robinson of the Stratford Public Library, Robert Ritz, Jane Marie Mitchell and Mike Sullivan be heard.**

**Carried**

Mike Ennis and Jay Colquhoun of the YMCA Three Rivers presented to Council regarding the Grand Trunk Renewal Project Key Recommendations. Highlights of the presentation included:

- the YMCA Three Rivers having signed an MOU with the City two years ago;
- the recommendations regarding the project being a good reflection of what is possible;
- Mr. Ennis noting that they believe a partnership is the best avenue for this project;
- there being a need to look at what the community needs and how it can be best served;
- current YMCA building being 60 years old and in need of a refresh or rebuild;

- it being noted that the YMCA is the largest provider of childcare in the region; and,
- there being almost 2,000 members and more than 500 visits per day at the facility.

Krista Robinson, Director of the Stratford Public Library presented to Council regarding the Grand Trunk Renewal Project Key Recommendations. Highlights of the presentation included:

- the Library's current facility having accessibility and safety concerns;
- it being noted that the better path forward is through partnership;
- the shared spaces allowing for a 15-20% reduction in the required space needs;
- the community engagement having showed a clear desire for a shared community space; and,
- there being a 7% increase in foot traffic in 2024 at the Library.

Robert Ritz presented to Council regarding the Grand Trunk Renewal Project Key Recommendations. Highlights of the presentation included:

- the five-point intersection at St. David, McKenzie, Downie, Falstaff and St. Patrick being requested to be reviewed;
- a proposal to extend Stratford Street to St. Patrick Street;
- a proposal to simplify the intersections at Waterloo and Douro Streets and Downie and St. Patrick Streets;
- a proposal to distribute parking throughout the site; and,
- a recommendation to retain a traffic consultant to assess ways to enhance nearby intersections and seamlessly connect to the site with local streets and pathways.

Jane Marie Mitchell presented to Council regarding the Grand Trunk Renewal Project Key Recommendations. Highlights of the presentation included:

- there being a need to include alternatives to fossil fuels for building and operations;

- sustainability being noted as a key community need and should be included in all plans and designs;
- it being vitally important for this project to include alternatives such as heat pumps and green materials; and,
- flexible spaces being important as needs change.

Mike Sullivan presented to Council regarding the Grand Trunk Renewal Project Key Recommendations. Highlights of the presentation included:

- there being a need to avoid fossil fuel use in the operation and construction of future uses;
- there being need for affordable housing and how the project can support this; and,
- it being noted that there is a need for indigenous consultation for the project.

## **7. Orders of the Day:**

### **7.1 Resolution - Plan of Condominium Application and Exemption from Draft Approval Process 31CDM24-001 - 4117 Perth Line 36 (COU25-015)**

R2025-82

**Motion by** Councillor Hunter

**Seconded by** Councillor Nijjar

**THAT the City of Stratford approve the application for exemption from the Draft Plan of Condominium approval process submitted by Quinlan Road Developments GP Inc., prepared by Deanna Rowe, certified by James M. Laws, OLS, Project No. 31090-22, dated November 13, 2024. The plan contains a total of 133 residential units and 6 parking spaces, located at 4117 Perth Line 36;**

**AND THAT the above is recommended for the following reasons:**

- **the request is consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement; and**
- **the request conforms with the goals, objectives and policies of the Official Plan.**

**Carried**

## **7.2 Resolution - Grand Trunk Renewal Project Key Recommendations (COU25-019)**

Joani Gerber, CEO, investStratford, Emily Robson, Corporate Initiatives Lead, Dan Mathieson, Chair of the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee, John Kastner, Co-Chair of the Communications, Advocacy and Civic Engagement Working Group of the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee and Melanie Hare, Chair of the Vision, Planning & Architecture Working Group and Member of the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee presented an overview of the report.

Members of Council and staff held a discussion regarding the following:

- the potential loss of value in only looking at pieces of the land rather than the entire site;
- the possibility of having a developer take on the entire project;
- the importance of an MOU with the Stratford Public Library;
- the 2014 Parking Study not providing an accurate picture of current parking needs;
- the potential of funding from the Federal and Provincial levels of government following the upcoming election;
- the importance of creating partnerships;
- the importance of use of a community facility by all members of the community;
- the difficulty of an evaluation of the land due to various levels of contamination;
- the benefits of the information the EOI's will bring.

R2025-83

**THAT Council direct staff to conduct background research on temporary and interim uses for the GTR site, including associated next steps and cost estimates, and report these findings back to Council for consideration;**

**THAT Council direct staff to pursue the shared community facility option as outlined in this report, which includes investment from**

**the City in addition to funding from external sources and operational partners;**

**THAT Council direct staff to proceed with the exploration of the design, development, and operations of a shared community facility, and report back with a detailed plan outlining the project scope, a range of potential costs, and funding options for Council's consideration;**

**THAT Council direct staff to develop an Expression of Interest to solicit proposals for housing development on the GTR site, with a focus on the parcel known as 2D;**

**AND THAT Council direct staff to develop an Expression of Interest to solicit proposals for the development and operation of a parking and mobility solution on the GTR site.**

**7.3 Resolution - Group Benefits Program Renewal 2025 (COU25-017)**

In response to an enquiry, the Director of Corporate Services confirmed that the recommendation was not the lowest bid, however an additional incentive provides a credit towards the program to decrease the cost.

R2025-84

**Motion by** Councillor Biehn

**Seconded by** Councillor Burbach

**THAT Council authorize retaining Manulife Financial as the Group Benefits provider for the City of Stratford.**

**AND THAT any surpluses relating to the savings be placed in the Human Resources Contingency Reserve.**

**Carried**

**7.4 Resolution - Community Transportation – Partnership Agreements between the City of Stratford, Town of St. Marys, and Municipality of North Perth (COU25-018)**

A member noted the program is very well used by members of the public.

R2025-85

**Motion by** Councillor Burbach

**Seconded by** Councillor Wordofa

**THAT the Council of The Corporation of the City of Stratford approve the entering into of a further Local Partnership**

**Agreement with the Town of St. Marys and the Municipality of North Perth for the Intercommunity Transportation Project (PC Connect) to December 31, 2025;**

**THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to sign the further Local Partnership Agreement;**

**AND THAT City staff be authorized to prepare a plan for Council's consideration regarding the future of PC Connect.**

**Carried**

**7.5 Resolution - Community Transportation Pilot Project – Service Agreement Extension (COU25-016)**

R2025-86

**Motion by** Councillor Burbach

**Seconded by** Councillor Nijjar

**THAT The Corporation of the City of Stratford enter into a Community Transportation Service Agreement Extension with 947465 Ontario Ltd. o/a Voyago until December 31, 2025;**

**THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to sign the Community Transportation Service Agreement Extension with 947465 Ontario Ltd. o/a Voyago for the Community Transportation Project;**

**AND THAT the City and partners commence investigation of service delivery for 2026 and beyond with options to be presented to Council later in 2025.**

**Carried unanimously**

**7.6 Resolution - Drinking Water Source Protection - Proposed Updates to the Thames-Sydenham Source Protection Plan and Assessment Report**

The Director of Infrastructure confirm the proposed updates are housekeeping amendments with no impact to the City.

R2025-87

**Motion by** Councillor Burbach

**Seconded by** Councillor Beatty



**THAT pursuant to Section 34(3) of the Clean Water Act, 2006, the Council of the City of Stratford endorse the proposed updates to the Thames-Sydenham Source Protection Plan;**

**AND THAT Provision of this resolution meets requirements of Section 34(3) of the Clean Water Act, 2006.**

**Carried**

**7.7 Resolution - Appointment to the Stratford Economic Enterprise Development Corporation Board of Directors (COU25-020)**

R2025-88

**Motion by** Councillor Wordofa

**Seconded by** Councillor Biehn

**THAT Sarah Hamza, representing the Digital Media/Creative Economy sector, be appointed to the Stratford Economic Enterprise Development Corporation Board of Directors for the remainder of the three-year term to June 2027 or until a successor is appointed by Council.**

**Carried**

**7.8 Resolution - Stratford Live Music and Food**

A member noted a number of noise concerns were received from residents in the downtown core during the event in 2024. The Director of Community Services noted concerns should be forwarded to the Special Events Coordinator to be reviewed during consideration of the Noise By-law Exemption request.

R2025-89

**Motion by** Councillor Hunter

**Seconded by** Councillor Burbach

**THAT City Council hereby designates the 2025 Stratford Live Music & Food event to be held June 20, 21 and 22, 2025, around the Veterans Drive Band Shell and in the York Street parking lot as municipally significant for the purpose of obtaining liquor licenses from the AGCO, subject to compliance with the City's Municipal Alcohol Risk Policy and required certificates of insurance being provided.**

**Carried**

**7.9 Correspondence - CN Rail Safety Ambassador Certificate**

Mayor Ritsma presented the certificate to CAO Joan Thomson.

R2025-90

**Motion by** Councillor Burbach

**Seconded by** Councillor Hunter

**THAT the correspondence and Rail Safety Ambassador Certificate received from the Canadian National Police North America dated January 22, 2025, be received.**

**Carried**

**8. Business for Which Previous Notice Has Been Given:**

None scheduled.

**9. Reports of the Standing Committees:**

**9.1 Report of the Infrastructure, Transportation and Safety Committee:**

R2025-91

**Motion by** Councillor Burbach

**Seconded by** Councillor Nijjar

**THAT the Report of the Infrastructure, Transportation and Safety Committee dated February 24, 2025, be adopted as printed.**

**Carried**

**9.1.1 Update on Recycling Services and Options for Non-Eligible Sources (NES) Starting January 2026 (ITS25-002)**

THAT Council approve the Change in Scope to Contract T2019-18 Waste Collections Contract with Canada Waste Management to provide Recycling Services to Non-eligible Sources (NES) for the period from January 1, 2026, to October 31, 2026, for a cost of up to \$355,000, including HST.

**9.1.2 Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) Pilot Project (ITS25-003)**

THAT the Report titled, "Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) Pilot Project" (ITS25-003) , be received;

THAT Council authorize Staff to negotiate and finalize the terms and enter into an agreement with Global Traffic Group as the ASE

service provider and the corresponding partnering processing centre municipality for a 24-month pilot program;

THAT Council authorize the Chief Administrative Officer to execute the finalized agreement with Global Traffic Group as the ASE service provider and the corresponding partnering processing centre municipality for a 24-month pilot program;

THAT outcomes from the pilot will be reported to Council;

AND THAT any subsequent agreement will be subject to Council approval and executed by the Mayor and Clerk.

### **9.1.3 Albert Street Reconstruction Phase 2 – Open House and Recommendations (ITS25-001)**

THAT Council receive the report titled, "Albert Street Reconstruction Phase 2 – Open House and Recommendations" (ITS25-001);

THAT Council approve the design as presented at the Public Open House on Engage Stratford;

AND THAT Council authorize staff to proceed with construction tendering.

## **9.2 Report of the Planning and Heritage Committee:**

R2025-92

**Motion by** Councillor Biehn

**Seconded by** Councillor Burbach

**THAT the Report of the Planning and Heritage Committee dated February 24, 2025, be adopted as printed.**

**Carried**

### **9.2.1 Proposed Exemption from Sign By-law #159-2004 for the Canadian Dairy Expo (PLA25-001)**

THAT the Canadian Dairy Expo Sign Variance Application to Sign By-law #159-2004 be approved as follows:

- The nine (9) temporary sidewalk signs and one (1) cow statue be permitted for the temporary period of March 28, 2025 to April 7, 2025, on City property at the following locations:

- Mornington Street at the City's northerly limits;
  - McCarthy Road West at Mornington Street (2 signs);
  - McCarthy Road East at Romeo Street;
  - Ontario Street at the City's easterly limits (2 signs);
  - Huron Street at the City's westerly limits;
  - Downie Street (Road 112) at the City's southerly limits;
  - Erie Street at Line 32; and
  - Northeast corner of McCarthy Road West and Mornington Avenue (Cow Statue).
- The two (2) banner signs, one (1) cow statue and five (5) directional signs be permitted for the temporary period of April 1, 2025 to April 4, 2025 on the City's Rotary Complex property (353 McCarthy Road West);

AND THAT the sponsorship signs be limited to the two (2) banner signs.

**10. Notice of Intent:**

None scheduled.

**11. Reading of the By-laws:**

The following By-laws required First and Second Readings and Third and Final Readings and were taken collectively upon unanimous vote of Council present:

R2025-93

**Motion by** Councillor Hunter

**Seconded by** Councillor Nijjar

**THAT By-laws 22-2025 to 24-2025 be taken collectively.**

**Carried unanimously**

R2025-94

**Motion by** Councillor Burbach

**Seconded by** Councillor Biehn

**THAT By-laws 22-2025 to 24-2025 be read a First and Second Time.**

**Carried two thirds support**

R2025-95

**Motion by** Councillor Biehn

**Seconded by** Councillor Nijjar

**THAT By-laws 22-2025 to 24-2025 be read a Third Time and Finally Passed.**

**Carried**

**11.1 Agreement - Optimism Place Outreach Worker Services - By-law 21-2025**

To authorize the entering into and execution of an Outreach Worker Service Agreement / Purchase of Service Agreement with Optimism Place Women's Shelter and Support Services for the provision of services defined in the Agreement.

**11.2 Appointments - investStratford Board - By-law 22-2025**

To amend By-law 4-2023, as amended, to make an appointment to the Stratford Economic Enterprise Development Corporation Board of Directors.

**11.3 Extension Agreement - Intercommunity Transportation Project with St. Mary's and North Perth - By-law 23-2025**

To authorize the entering into and execution of an Extension Agreement to the Local Partnership Agreement with The Corporation of the Town of St. Marys and The Corporation of the Municipality of North Perth for the Intercommunity Transportation Project (PC Connect) to December 31, 2025.

**11.4 Voyago Agreement - By-law 24-2025**

To authorize the entering into and execution of a Community Transportation Service Agreement Extension with 947465 Ontario Ltd. o/a Voyago for the provision of an inter-regional community bus transportation service until the end of December 31, 2025.

**12. Consent Agenda: CA-2025-010 to CA-2025-024**

Council did not advise of any items to be considered on the Consent Agenda.

### **13. New Business:**

#### **13.1 Snow Clearing Operations**

Councillor Biehn thanked City staff for their work clearing snow and noted they have done a fantastic job.

#### **13.2 Homecare Symposium**

Councillor Burbach stated she received correspondence from Mr. Brown regarding a primary home care symposium being hosted on April 16, 2025 to bring attention to furthering home care in our community. He is requesting a funding allocation of \$5,000 from the City to co-sponsor the symposium. The funds would be used for advertising and food.

The Director of Corporate Services noted there are several options for funding including the residual funding from Committees of Council.

The CAO stated Council may consider attaching a clause to the motion that funding be subject to confirmation of matching sponsorship contributions.

R2025-96

**Motion by** Councillor Burbach

**Seconded by** Councillor Nijjar

**THAT Council approve the funding request of \$5,000.00 for a Primary Care / Homecare Symposium to be held in Stratford on April 16, 2025;**

**THAT the request be funded from the Local Boards and Committee Reserve G-R18-BRDS-0000;**

**AND THAT the funding be subject to confirmation of matching sponsorship contributions.**

**Carried**

#### **13.3 Chief Administrative Officer Recruitment**

Members of Council and staff held a discussion regarding the following:

- the striking of a Selection Committee including the Mayor, Chair of Finance and Labour Relations Committee and three members of Council;

- the selection of three Council members would need to come back to Council for approval;
- the importance of having the posting completed at the earliest possible time; and,
- the CAO and Mayor's Office completing the posting in light of the Human Resources Department not currently having a director.

R2025-97

**Motion by** Councillor Beatty

**Seconded by** Councillor Burbach

**THAT a Selection Committee comprised of the Mayor, Chair of Finance and Labour Relations Committee, and three other members of Council be established to assist Council in the CAO recruitment process;**

**AND THAT the Clerk be directed to reach out to all members of Council to solicit expressions of interest for participation on the Selection Committee, to circulate the previous job posting to Council, and to provide a report to Council with a list of nominations at the next regular Council meeting.**

**Carried**

R2025-98

**Motion by** Councillor Beatty

**Seconded by** Councillor Hunter

**THAT staff be directed to advertise for the Interim Chief Administrative Officer position at the earliest opportunity.**

**Carried**

#### **13.4 Coldest Night of the Year**

Mayor Ritsma congratulated the organizers of the Coldest Night of the Year event. More than \$220,000 was raised which placed our community 5th in the nation.

#### **14. Adjournment to Standing Committees:**

The next Regular Council meeting is March 24, 2025 in the Council Chamber, City Hall.

R2025-99

**Motion by** Councillor Burbach

**Seconded by** Councillor Nijjar

**THAT the Council meeting adjourn to convene into Standing Committees as follows:**

- **Social Services Committee [7:05 or thereafter following the Regular Council meeting]; and**
- **Community Services Committee [7:10 or thereafter following the Regular Council meeting]**

**and to Committee of the Whole if necessary, and to reconvene into Council.**

**Carried**

**15. Council Reconvene:**

**15.1 Declarations of Pecuniary Interest made at Standing Committees**

The Municipal Conflict of Interest Act requires any member of Council declaring a pecuniary interest and the general nature thereof, where the interest of a member of Council has not been disclosed by reason of the member's absence from the meeting, to disclose the interest at the first open meeting attended by the member of Council and otherwise comply with the Act.

Declarations of Pecuniary Interest made at Standing Committee meetings held on February 24, 2025, with respect to the following Items and re-stated at the reconvene portion of the Council meeting:

Name, Item and General Nature of Pecuniary Interest

No disclosures of pecuniary interest were made by a member at the February 24, 2025 Council Reconvene meeting.

**15.2 Committee Reports**

**15.2.1 Community Services Committee**

R2025-100

**Motion by** Councillor Beatty

**Seconded by** Councillor Burbach

**THAT Item 5.1 of the Community Services Committee meeting dated February 24, 2025, be adopted as follows:**



**5.1 Stratford and District Agricultural Society Use of City Facilities (COM25-001)**

**THAT City Council approve the five-year [2025 to 2029] Memorandum of Understanding with the Stratford and District Agricultural Society to support the use and rental of city facilities;**

**AND THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to sign the Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of the municipal corporation.**

**Carried**

**15.3 Reading of the By-laws (reconvene):**

The following By-laws required First and Second Readings and Third and Final Readings and were taken collectively upon unanimous vote of Council present:

**By-law 11.5 Memorandum of Understanding - Stratford and District Agricultural Society - By-law 25-2025**

To authorize the entering into and execution of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Stratford & District Agricultural Society to support the use and rental of City facilities.

**By-law 11.6 Confirmatory By-law - By-law 26-2025**

To confirm the proceedings of Council of The Corporation of the City of Stratford at its meeting held on February 24, 2025.

R2025-101

**Motion by** Councillor Burbach

**Seconded by** Councillor Nijjar

**THAT By-laws 25-2025 to 26-2025 be taken collectively.**

**Carried unanimously**

R2025-102

**Motion by** Councillor Hunter

**Seconded by** Councillor Biehn

**THAT By-laws 25-2025 to 26-2025 be read a First and Second Time.**

**Carried two thirds support**

R2025-103

**Motion by** Councillor Nijjar

**Seconded by** Councillor Beatty

**THAT By-laws 25-2025 to 26-2025 be read a Third Time and Finally Passed.**

**Carried**

#### **15.4 Adjournment of Council Meeting**

R2025-104

**Motion by** Councillor Burbach

**Seconded by** Councillor Wordofa

**THAT the February 24, 2025, Regular Council meeting adjourn.**

**Carried**

Meeting Start Time: 7:00 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 9:13 P.M.

Council Reconvene Meeting Start Time: 9:19 P.M.

Council Reconvene Meeting End Time: 9:21 P.M.

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Mayor - Martin Ritsma

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Deputy Clerk - Audrey Pascual