



Essex County Council, Regular Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 7, 2025

6:00 PM

Council Chambers, 2nd Floor

360 Fairview Avenue West

Essex, Ontario N8M 1Y6

<https://video.isilive.ca/countyofessex/live.html>

Council: Michael Akpata, Councillor
Joe Bachetti, Deputy Warden
Tracey Bailey, Councillor
Sherry Bondy, Councillor
Chris Gibb, Councillor
Hilda MacDonald, Warden
Gary McNamara, Councillor
Crystal Meloche, Councillor
Michael Prue, Councillor
Dennis Rogers, Councillor
Rob Shepley, Councillor
Larry Verbeke, Councillor
Kirk Walstedt, Councillor

Absent: Kimberly DeYong, Councillor

Administration: Allan Botham, Director, Infrastructure & Planning Services
Katherine Hebert, County Clerk
Justin Lammers, Chief, Essex-Windsor EMS
Darrel Laurendeau, Director, Information Technology
Melissa Ryan, Director, Financial Services / Treasurer
David Sundin, Director, Legislative and Legal Services / County Solicitor
Sandra Zwiers, Chief Administrative Officer
Brady Boghean, Manager, Corporate Health and Safety
Jeanie Diamond Francis, Manager, Community Services
Gary Filiatrault, Human Resources Business Partner
Kaitlyn Baggio, Administrative Assistant - Legislative and Legal Services

1. Closed Meeting

A Closed Meeting was scheduled for and held at 5:30PM, pursuant to Section 239 (2)(b), (d), and (f), of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, as amended, for the following reasons:

- (b) personal matters about an identifiable individual, including municipal or local board employees;
- (d) labour relations or employee negotiations;
- (f) advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege, including communications necessary for that purpose.

2. Moment of Reflection

3. Singing of 'O Canada'

4. Land Acknowledgement Statement

We acknowledge the land on which the County of Essex is located is the traditional territory of the Three Fires Confederacy of First Nations, comprised of the Ojibway, Odawa and Potawatomie Peoples.

We specifically recognize Caldwell First Nation and other First Nations which have provided significant historical and contemporary contributions to this region.

We also value the contributions of all Original Peoples of Turtle Island, who have been living and working on this land from time immemorial.

5. Recording of Attendance

Warden MacDonald and members of Council attended the meeting at the Essex County Administration Building, in Council Chambers, with the exception of Kimberly DeYong who was absent.

6. County Warden's Welcome and Remarks

Warden MacDonald acknowledged the 80th anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands and the end of the Second World War. She paid tribute to local veteran Charles Davis, who served in the Royal Canadian Artillery and landed in Normandy in 1944. Mr. Davis had planned to attend anniversary ceremonies overseas but passed away on April 10, 2025 at the age of 102. The Warden recognized his lifelong commitment to honouring fellow soldiers and offered condolences to his family and friends.

Warden MacDonald also welcomed the summer and co-op students who recently joined the County of Essex and reminded residents to attend upcoming public meetings on the County's Development Charges Initiative.

7. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest raised.

8. Adoption of Regular Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the Essex County Council, Regular Meeting, dated April 16, 2025.

129-2025

Moved By Crystal Meloche

Seconded By Larry Verbeke

That the minutes of the April 16, 2025 Regular Meeting of Essex County Council be adopted as presented.

Carried

9. Delegations and Presentations

9.1 Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee

Dennis Sanson, Chair, Debbie Alexander, Vice Chair, along with other members of the Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee attended make a presentation regarding ECAAC activities and upcoming events.

ECAAC Dennis Sanson, Chair, Debbie Alexander, Vice Chair and Members Diana Kirkbride, Julie Miles, Rachel Jewell and Sherri Currie provided an update on the upcoming initiatives of the ECAAC for the year. They reflected on their 2024 presentation encouraging businesses to enhance accessibility and highlighted recent improvements to the Essex County Administration Building, including the installation of the accessibility lift and electronic hands-free door openers.

They also outlined events planned for National AccessAbility week, such as the Accessibility Flag Raising ceremony, Red Shirt Day, and an awareness campaign via social media promoting the good work of the County in relation to accessibility.

It was announced that the 2025 Accessibility Fest-for-All will take place at the Libro Centre, located in the Town of Amherstburg on September 12, 2025. The County has issued a request for

expressions of interest and will be accepting submissions from interested parties over the coming weeks. The REOI has been published on the County website for those who wish to be part of this event. The ECAAC also provided updates on ongoing legislative reviews of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA).

The ECAAC thanked Council for their ongoing support and for promoting accessibility awareness and accessible spaces in our region.

9.2 Invest Windsor Essex

Joe Goncalves, Vice President Investment Attraction & Strategic Initiatives, Wendy Stark, Director, Business Retention & Expansion and Keith Andrews, COO & Strategic Advisor to the Board of Directors attended to provide a presentation regarding Invest Windsor Essex (IWE) Q1 Updates and its Strategic Planning Update.

Joe Goncalves, Vice President of Investment Attraction & Strategic Initiatives, Wendy Stark, Director, Business Retention & Expansion and Keith Andrews, COO & Strategic Advisor to the Board of Directors of Invest Windsor-Essex provided Council with a first quarter update and summary of progress regarding the IWE Strategic Plan, which is on-schedule and it is expected that a draft report will be ready for Council by the end of June.

It was noted that despite national economic uncertainty, IWE remains focused on regional growth, with four business expansion projects anticipated. They addressed tariff concerns, announced the Windsor-Essex Economic Trade Task Force in partnership with the Windsor Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce, and highlighted key initiatives including the Start Ventures Program for new County businesses, increased local enterprise funding, and a new online Data Centre Tool offering regional economic and workforce data.

Discussion took place with regard to the importance of supporting small businesses, addressing national productivity challenges, and advocating for increased government investment. Questions were raised about project delays, strategic plan transparency, and available programs to support local businesses. Council emphasized the importance of collaboration and staying connected to the realities facing businesses in the region.

10. Communications

10.1 Correspondence

130-2025

Moved By Crystal Meloche

Seconded By Larry Verbeke

That the correspondence listed on the Regular Agenda for May 7, 2025, be received and any noted action approved.

Carried

10.1.1 Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island (TWEPI)

WE Keep You Informed - [Newsletter](#)

- June 12, 2025 [Join Us At Our 2025 Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island Annual General Meeting!](#)
- [Destination Ontario - Survey Results](#)
- [Ontario Bike Summit - Share the Road Cycling Coalition](#), May 27, 2025 - May 29, 2025

10.1.2 Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)

- [Municipal Trade and Tariff Forum: Toronto, ON June 6, 2025 - Registration Open](#)
- [AMO Watchfile Newsletter](#)
- [AMO Policy Updates](#)
- [AMO Calendar - Education Events](#)

10.1.3 Hydro One

Longwood to Lakeshore Project Update Spring 2025

- April 22, 2025 Email Notification
- Project Website - [Longwood to Lakeshore Project](#)

10.1.4 County Road 42 - Notice to Residents

NOTICE - [County Road 42 and County Road 19 Improvements.](#)

The completion of Phase 3 & 4 work will include:

- The construction of a roundabout at the intersection of CR 42 and CR 19.
- Widening of CR 42 between the new CR 43 roundabout and the new CR 19 roundabout.

- The addition of new sidewalks, curbs, landscaping and boulevard restoration.

10.2 Resolutions

10.2.1 Town of Kingsville

April 16, 2025 Letter RE Opposition to Strong Mayor Powers – Proposed Amendments to O. Reg. 530/22

131-2025

Moved By Dennis Rogers

Seconded By Chris Gibb

That Essex County Council receive and file, the correspondence from the Town of Kingsville, dated April 16, 2025.

Carried

10.2.2 Town of Amherstburg

April 15, 2025 Letter RE Resolution 20250414-006 – Traffic Safety Measures in Amherstburg

132-2025

Moved By Chris Gibb

Seconded By Tracey Bailey

That Essex County Council receive and that County Administration review and respond to the correspondence from the Town of Amherstburg, dated April 15, 2025.

Carried

10.2.3 Town of Tecumseh

April 25, 2025 Letter RE Opposition to Strong Mayor Powers

133-2025

Moved By Joe Bachetti

Seconded By Sherry Bondy

That Essex County Council receive and file the correspondence from the Town of Tecumseh, dated April 25, 2025.

Carried

11. Consent Agenda

134-2025

Moved By Chris Gibb

Seconded By Michael Prue

That the recommendations in the Administrative Reports listed as items 11.1 and 11.2, on the Consent Agenda for May 7, 2025, be approved.

Carried

11.1 Summary of Outstanding Reports for May 7, 2025

Report number 2025-0507-LLS-R21-KH, Summary of Outstanding Reports, dated May 7, 2025 from Katherine Hebert, County Clerk

11.2 County Road 42 and Renaud Line Road Traffic Review

Report number 2025-0507-IPS-R11-JB, County Road 42 and Renaud Line Road Traffic Review, dated May 7, 2025 from Jerry Behl, Manager, Transportation Planning and Development

12. Reports and Questions

12.1 Indemnification of Members of Council and Supporting By-law

Report number 2025-0507-LLS-R22-DS, Indemnification of Members of Council and Supporting By-law, dated May 7, 2025, from David Sundin, Director, Legislative and Legal Services/County Solicitor

David Sundin provided some background on the report before Council, noting that it had been Council who requested that this report be brought back for consideration. Should the County adopt the proposed policy, Council and Committee Members, members of Administration, employees and volunteers, both present and past, will be covered by the provisions of the said indemnification policy, whilst acting in their role for the County of Essex, with certain limitations as set out in the report. As society has become more litigious it has become more important that representatives of the County, acting in good faith and within the scope of their duties, be protected.

135-2025

Moved By Joe Bachetti

Seconded By Chris Gibb

That Essex County Council receive this Report 2025-0507-LLS-R21-DMS – Indemnification Policy for information and approve the Indemnification Policy substantially in the form appended to this Report.

In Favour (10): Michael Akpata, Joe Bachetti, Sherry Bondy, Chris Gibb, Hilda MacDonald, Gary McNamara, Crystal Meloche, Michael Prue, Dennis Rogers, and Larry Verbeke

Opposed (3): Tracey Bailey, Rob Shepley, and Kirk Walstedt

Carried

12.2 Annexation of the Land known as Monroe Island by the Town of Tecumseh from the Municipality of Lakeshore

Report number 2025-0507-LLS-R18-DS, Annexation of the Land known as Monroe Island by the Town of Tecumseh from the Municipality of Lakeshore, dated May 7, 2025 from David Sundin, Director, Legislative and Legal Services/County Solicitor

David Sundin outlined the proposed geographic boundary adjustment to annex Monroe Island brought forward by the Town of Tecumseh and the Municipality of Lakeshore. It was noted that although the island is geographically located within the Municipality of Lakeshore, recent development on the island has left the only land access point within the Town of Tecumseh. Both local municipalities favour the boundary adjustment to annex the property of Monroe Island to the Town of Tecumseh, and is there no impact on the County in endorsing the annexation.

136-2025

Moved By Tracey Bailey

Seconded By Kirk Walstedt

That Essex County Council approve report number 2025-0507-LLS-R19-DMS, Annexation of Land by the Town of Tecumseh from the Municipality of Lakeshore; and,

That Essex County Council approve a By-law in support of the annexation of Monroe Island at the appropriate time, and authorize the Clerk and the Warden to execute such agreements and documents as may be required to effect the said annexation; and ,

That Essex County Council direct Administration to communicate the County's support for the annexation to the Town of Tecumseh,

the Municipality of Lakeshore, and to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

In Favour (13): Michael Akpata, Joe Bachetti, Tracey Bailey, Sherry Bondy, Chris Gibb, Hilda MacDonald, Gary McNamara, Crystal Meloche, Michael Prue, Dennis Rogers, Rob Shepley, Larry Verbeke, and Kirk Walstedt

Carried

12.3 Human Resources Annual Service Report - 2024

Report number 2025-0507-HR-R01-GF, Human Resources Annual Service Report - 2024, dated May 7, 2025 from Gary Filiatrault, HR Business Partner

Gary Filiatrault provided Council with a summary of Human Resources statistics for the County throughout 2024. Goals for 2025 and 2026 include further efforts toward stabilizing the workforce with employee retention and recruitment activities, workforce planning, and career development. The implementation of a new Human Resource Information System (HRIS) which is a software application that helps organizations manage and streamline their human resources functions, remains on schedule for a Q3 launch.

Brady Boghean provided Council with an update regarding workplace health and safety priorities, emphasizing compliance with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, sharing training statistics, and outlining leadership-focused programs aimed at strengthening a culture of safety for the County.

137-2025

Moved By Crystal Meloche

Seconded By Michael Akpata

That Essex County Council receive report number 2025-0507-HR-R01-GF, Human Resources Annual Service Report 2024 as information.

In Favour (13): Michael Akpata, Joe Bachetti, Tracey Bailey, Sherry Bondy, Chris Gibb, Hilda MacDonald, Gary McNamara, Crystal Meloche, Michael Prue, Dennis Rogers, Rob Shepley, Larry Verbeke, and Kirk Walstedt

Carried

12.4 Canada First Strategy-County Procurement

Report number 2025-0507-FIN-R12-MR, Canada First Strategy-County Procurement, dated May 7, 2025, from Melissa Ryan, Director, Financial Services/Treasurer

Melissa Ryan provided Council with a detailed outline of the proposed Canada First Strategy, proposed amendments to the Procurement Policy, and focused on administrative recommendations aimed at supporting local businesses within legal boundaries. It was noted that the proposed amendments to the Procurement Policy will provide the County with further latitude to make procurement decisions based on the best interest of the County and community, accounting for the region of origin of the products, equipment, and services required to carry out its operations.

Discussion took place with regard to contract approval thresholds, cost-benefit analysis of certain vendors in geographic areas where added tariffs are a factor in pricing, and the eligibility criteria for the tax deferral program which would require businesses to apply and first explore provincial and federal supports. It was further reinforced that the County of Essex would not proceed with any procurements outside of the parameters of what is legal and lawful both Provincially and Federally, and solely within the permitted context and scope of the Procurement Policy

138-2025

Moved By Dennis Rogers

Seconded By Chris Gibb

That Essex County Council receive and approve report number 2025-0507-FIN-R12-MR, Canadian First Strategy; and,

That Administration be directed to make the required amendments to the County's Procurement Policy, reflecting the approved wording as outlined in the report regarding the implementation of a Canada First Procurement Strategy and a tariff escalation clause; and

That, at the appropriate time, the required amending By-law 2025-22, being a by-law to amend by-law 2024-08, which adopted the County's Procurement Policy, be forthwith given three readings, and be adopted.

In Favour (13): Michael Akpata, Joe Bachetti, Tracey Bailey, Sherry Bondy, Chris Gibb, Hilda MacDonald, Gary McNamara, Crystal Meloche, Michael Prue, Dennis Rogers, Rob Shepley, Larry Verbeke, and Kirk Walstedt

Carried

139-2025

Moved By Dennis Rogers

Seconded By Gary McNamara

That the County Treasurer discuss targeted municipal property tax relief with the Treasurers of the local lower-tier municipalities, in order to make suggestions to provide relief to businesses impacted by recently imposed tariffs, and report back to County Council regarding same.

In Favour (13): Michael Akpata, Joe Bachetti, Tracey Bailey, Sherry Bondy, Chris Gibb, Hilda MacDonald, Gary McNamara, Crystal Meloche, Michael Prue, Dennis Rogers, Rob Shepley, Larry Verbeke, and Kirk Walstedt

Carried

12.5 Sun Parlor Home - Strategic Initiatives Update

Report number 2025-0507-CAO-R04-SZ, Sun Parlor Home - Strategic Initiatives Update, dated May 7, 2025 from Sandra Zwiers, Chief Administrative Officer

Sandra Zwiers provided an update on strategic initiatives for Sun Parlor Home, highlighting the need for a comprehensive review of the facility's future. A consultant is proposed to assess and evaluate options for on-site redevelopment or new development of the facility, the cost which would be covered by in-year budget savings and the balance taken from the Rate Stabilization Reserve. Additionally, a fulsome Service Delivery Review for Sun Parlor Home operations is proposed, which would also be covered as part of the consultant's work. It was noted that the same vendor could perform both analyses, which would realize some savings.

140-2025

Moved By Sherry Bondy

Seconded By Joe Bachetti

That Essex County Council approve report number 2025-0507-CAO-R04-SZ, SPH Strategic Initiatives Update as information; and

That County Council authorize Administration to proceed with an expanded scope of work for the Sun Parlor Home Comprehensive

Analysis and Feasibility Study to include a Service Delivery Review to be performed by Bessant Pelech Associates Inc.; and

That the additional funding of up to \$140,000 be approved, with funding from the Rate Stabilization Reserve, if necessary.

In Favour (10): Michael Akpata, Joe Bachetti, Sherry Bondy, Chris Gibb, Hilda MacDonald, Gary McNamara, Crystal Meloche, Michael Prue, Dennis Rogers, and Larry Verbeke

Opposed (3): Tracey Bailey, Rob Shepley, and Kirk Walstedt

Carried

12.6 Sun Parlor Home – Declaration of Compliance for 2024

Report number 2025-0507-CAO-R05-SZ, Sun Parlor Home – Declaration of Compliance for 2024, dated May 7, 2025 from Sandra Zwiers, Chief Administrative Officer

Sandra Zwiers provided notice to Council, which confirm the completion of the annual attestation of compliance for Sun Parlor Home under the Long-Term Care Home Service Accountability Agreement.

141-2025

Moved By Larry Verbeke

Seconded By Crystal Meloche

That Essex County Council receive report Sun Parlor Home – Declaration of Compliance for 2024 as information.

In Favour (13): Michael Akpata, Joe Bachetti, Tracey Bailey, Sherry Bondy, Chris Gibb, Hilda MacDonald, Gary McNamara, Crystal Meloche, Michael Prue, Dennis Rogers, Rob Shepley, Larry Verbeke, and Kirk Walstedt

Carried

13. Unfinished Business

There were no matters of Unfinished Business for May 7, 2025.

14. New Business

14.1 Public Reporting of Closed Meeting

Council met in a Closed Meeting at 5:30 PM this evening, to consider report number 2025-0507-LLS-R20-DMS, Indemnification

Policy and Insurance Policy Considerations, under the Open Meetings exception Section 239 (2) (b) and (f) of the Municipal Act, 2001, as follows:

(b) personal matters about an identifiable individual, including municipal or local board employees;

(f) advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege, including communications necessary for that purpose;

Council provided direction to Administration with regard to the matter.

Council also met in a Closed Meeting as permitted, and pursuant to Section 239 (2) (d) of the Municipal Act, 2001, to receive information related to report number 2025-0507-HR-R04-KP.

Council approved the tentative agreement between the Corporation of the County of Essex and CUPE Local 860, subject to ratification by the CUPE Local 860 membership.

Further, under Open Meetings Exception 239 (f) advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege, including communications necessary for that purpose, Council received legal advice in relation to procurement.

The Closed Meeting concluded at 5:47PM.

15. Adoption of By-Laws

142-2025

Moved By Gary McNamara

Seconded By Rob Shepley

That By-laws 2025-20 through 2025-23, be given three readings, and having been read a first, second and third time, be finally passed and enacted.

In Favour (13): Michael Akpata, Joe Bachetti, Tracey Bailey, Sherry Bondy, Chris Gibb, Hilda MacDonald, Gary McNamara, Crystal Meloche, Michael Prue, Dennis Rogers, Rob Shepley, Larry Verbeke, and Kirk Walstedt

Carried

15.1 By-law Number 2025-20

Being a By-law to approve and adopt an Indemnification Policy, which provides for the indemnification for current and former

members of Council and its Local Boards and the current and former employees of the County with respect to certain actions or proceedings arising from their duties while acting on behalf of the County of Essex

15.2 By-law Number 2025-21

Being a By-law to endorse the proposed annexation by Tecumseh of the lands known as Monroe Island from the Municipality of Lakeshore

15.3 By-law Number 2025-22

Being a By-law to Amend By-law 2024-08, being a by-law to adopt a Procurement Policy for the Corporation of the County of Essex (To Include Provisions for a Buy Canadian Strategy).

15.4 By-law Number 2025-23

Being a By-law to confirm the proceedings of the Council of the Corporation of the County of Essex, Regular and Closed meetings, held on May 7, 2025

16. Notice of Motion

16.1 Hiring a Consultant for County Road Rationalization Study

Crystal Meloche brought forward the following Notice of Motion regarding Fresh Water:

Whereas, the County of Essex's road system is an essential component of the region's transportation infrastructure, and a well-structured understanding of the road network is critical to future planning, funding, and sustainable development;

And whereas, a thorough road rationalization study is required to assess and determine which roads should be classified as county roads, identify the criteria and factors that influence such determinations, examine funding responsibilities, and provide a framework for planning and managing a future road network that best serves residents and businesses;

And whereas, an unbiased, objective review of the current system is essential to ensure that the study's findings and recommendations are impartial, accurate, and reflect the best interests of the County of Essex and its stakeholders;

And whereas, a consultant with expertise in transportation infrastructure, road network planning, and public sector funding models is best positioned to undertake this study and provide an

independent, evidence-based evaluation of the county road network;

And whereas, the County of Essex is currently undertaking a Transportation Master Plan, and current technologies are available to support the identification and analysis of regional versus local travel patterns;

Now therefore it be resolved that, the Council of the County of Essex authorize the hiring of a qualified, independent consultant to conduct a comprehensive road rationalization study that will assess the current county road system, define appropriate classification criteria, provide funding recommendations, and propose a future road network plan for the County;

And be it further resolved that, the study include a full evaluation of current road classifications, funding mechanisms, and future transportation needs, with the goal of ensuring that the County's road system is efficient, sustainable, and aligned with the needs of residents, businesses, and anticipated growth;

And be it further resolved that, the consultant be required to undertake the study with a focus on impartiality, transparency, and evidence-based analysis to ensure that recommendations are realistic, balanced, and in the best interest of the County of Essex;

And be it further resolved that, the consultant be required to actively engage with all lower-tier municipalities throughout the study to understand and incorporate local transportation needs and priorities;

And be it further resolved that, should the study recommend the addition or removal of transportation corridors from the county road network—transferring responsibility between the upper-tier County and lower-tier municipalities—an appropriate transfer mechanism be developed and recommended by the consultant;

And be it finally resolved that, the consultant be required to review the current Connecting Link Agreement and, through consultation with relevant stakeholders, provide recommendations on updating and improving the agreement to better reflect current and future transportation planning objectives.

17. Adjournment

143-2025

Moved By Sherry Bondy

Seconded By Tracey Bailey

That the Essex County Council meeting for May 7, 2025 be adjourned at 7:55 PM.

Carried

Hilda MacDonald,
Warden, County of Essex

Katherine J. Hebert,
County Clerk