

County Council Highlights for Feb. 18, 2026

Did you miss Wednesday night's Council meeting? Check out the highlights!

By County of Essex [\(/news/authors/county-of-essex/\)](#) - Feb 19, 2026

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[\(/media/twwjl0uy/essex-county-council-meeting.jpg\)](#)

County Council chambers

Warden highlights County election information session

Warden Hilda MacDonald in her opening remarks to Council Wednesday night encouraged anyone thinking of running for office in October's municipal election to attend an information session at the County of Essex Administration Building.

“Serving as an elected official can be challenging at times but it is also deeply rewarding, and you truly can make a positive and lasting difference in your community,” said MacDonald. “Win or lose, it takes courage to put your name on the ballot. And the County wants to assist anyone thinking about doing so by providing information from the experts and our local municipal partners.”

The event will be held in person at the County of Essex Administration Building from 6 to 9 p.m. on Wednesday, April 8, and attendees can also participate remotely via Zoom. The meeting is free to attend though registration is required due to seating capacity limits. Anyone interested in attending can register on the County's website at countyofessex.ca/election2026 [\(/election2026\)](#) .

MacDonald also highlighted County of Essex employees who were the yearly winners of the Cheers for Peers program, where colleagues nominate each other for their outstanding efforts.

Jennifer Mee, a registered nurse at Sun Parlour Home, won the grand prize for “always going above and beyond, providing an exceptional and empathetic ear to all who need it and for making a difference every day.”

Tyler Driedger and Seth Wray with the Facilities team won second place for going out of their way to help a colleague in the parking lot with a flat tire. And Dustin Anderson, a Paramedic with Essex-Windsor EMS, took home third place for his exceptional service.

“In all, more than 120 employees were celebrated by their peers in 2025,” said MacDonald. “Thank you to all the nominees for everything you do to make the County of Essex such a fantastic place to work!”

Council defers vote on 2026 user fees, requests report on options to subsidize Green Bin program from reserves

County Council approved a motion to defer discussing the proposed Fees and Charges By-law for 2026 pending a report from Administration outlining options to subsidize, from reserve funds, user fees associated with the Green Bin program. Council is expected to discuss the issue at its meeting on March 4.

Council had previously voted to charge eligible residential households user fees to cover the costs of the new organics collection service. For 2026, that would include eligible residential households in Essex, Lakeshore, LaSalle and Tecumseh. Residents in the Phase 2 municipalities of Amherstburg, Kingsville and Leamington would not be charged a user fee until 2027, after organics collection begins for them in the autumn of 2026. A number of properties, including institutional, commercial and industrial properties, are not being offered the service at this time, and, as such, are not subject to the initially proposed user fee.

“The Green Bin user fee is not a tax and does not form part of the County levy. It is a service-specific charge intended to recover the cost of providing the Green Bin program from eligible households,” said a report to Council. [_ \(https://coe-pub.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=28309\)](https://coe-pub.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=28309) “(This approach supports) the user pay-principle by ensuring that services used by a limited number of individuals are appropriately funded while minimizing reliance on the general tax base.”

Green Bin program user fees would vary by municipality, according to a report to Council, and are based on actual program costs, including tonnage collected and fixed operational expenses. This would help ensure the user fee is tied as closely as possible to the cost of service delivery within each municipality, consistent with the user-pay principle.

Proposed details, including the estimated household costs by Phase 1 municipality for all of 2026 and three months of 2025, are shown in the table below:

Municipality	Number of eligible households	2025 budgeted costs to be recovered	2026 budgeted costs to be recovered	Total to be recovered (2026 tax bill)	Green Bin user fee per household
Essex	8,478	\$254,231	\$1,323,577	\$1,577,808	\$186.11
Lakeshore	15,168	\$459,421	\$2,389,693	\$2,849,114	\$187.84

LaSalle	11,307	\$342,176	\$1,782,097	\$2,124,273	\$187.87
Tecumseh	8,410	\$248,772	\$1,295,642	\$1,544,414	\$183.64

Municipalities are authorized under Section 391 of the Municipal Act, 2001, to impose fees or charges for services provided, including solid waste services, on a cost-recovery basis. Council voted in June of 2024 to endorse the user-fee funding model that would see the charge appear on local tax bills, with the revenue collected on behalf of the County and paid to the Essex-Windsor Solid Waste Authority, which operates the Green Bin program.

For more information about the Green Bin program, please visit the County's FAQ page at www.countyofessex.ca/greenbin (<http://www.countyofessex.ca/greenbin>).

Also included in the proposed User Fees and Charges By-law for 2026 is a proposed increase in the fee for commissioning documents, from \$20 to \$25, and a proposed increase in the fee for Ambulance Call Report (ACR) Requests, from \$75 to \$100. There is no fee charged when an individual submits an ACR request related to their own care.

Read the proposed Fees and Charges By-law! (<https://coe-pub.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=28303>)

Read the proposed list of Fees and Charges! (<https://coe-pub.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=28304>)

County to consult with boards including EWSWA, ECL on video-recording meetings

Council voted to amend Councillor Sherry Bondy's Notice of Motion, that would have directed Administration to request that boards and committees on which members of County Council serve, such as the Essex County Library and the Essex-Windsor Solid Waste Authority, consider video-recording and then posting meetings online, so that members of the public can become more engaged and educated on issues important to them. The amended version, approved by Council, directs Administration to "consult with any Boards and Committees on which members of County Council serve and return a report regarding their willingness and ability to record and post meetings online."

By-law establishes 2026 tax policy

Council approved a By-law to establish tax policy and levy property taxes for the year 2026.

Read the report (<https://coe-pub.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=28309>) and 2026 Levy By-law Schedules (<https://coe-pub.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=28310>) !

Councillors' 2025 remuneration

Council voted to receive as information a report on Councillors' 2025 remuneration. Section 284 of the Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c.25, as amended, requires the Treasurer of a municipality to present annually to Council an itemized statement of remuneration and expenses paid to each Council member for their services.

Read the report [_\(https://coe-pub.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=28300\)_](https://coe-pub.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=28300) and appendix [_\(https://coe-pub.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=28301\)_](https://coe-pub.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=28301) !

Council approves contract for South Dales Drain Culvert rehab project

Council voted to award a contract for the rehabilitation of the South Dales Drain Culvert – on County Road 34 in the Town of Leamington – to lowest compliant bidder Front Construction Industries Inc. for \$1,507,700, plus applicable taxes.

The County's approved 2026 State of Good Repair Program included a budget of \$1,210,000 for this project. Including contract administration costs, the total anticipated project cost is \$1,680,000, which exceeds the original project estimate by more than ten per cent and exceeds \$500,000. As a result, Council approval was required, in accordance with the County's Procurement Policy.

The scope of work for this project includes a complete replacement of the existing concrete box culvert, temporary re-routing of watermain, installation of concrete block wingwalls, improvements to roadside safety and replacement of the asphalt wearing surface.

A full closure of County Road 34 is required to complete the proposed works safely and efficiently. The closure is anticipated to be approximately ten weeks, depending on weather and field conditions. A full road detour will be implemented for the duration of the closure.

Read the report [_\(https://coe-pub.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=28305\)_](https://coe-pub.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=28305) !

Notice of Motion to direct County to enhance social media and digital presence

Councillor Sherry Bondy introduced a Notice of Motion to direct Administration to (1) track and report quarterly on social media analytics, (2) develop key performance indicators (KPIs) related to digital enhancement and community outreach, (3) present a strategy to enhance the County's digital presence to ensure it is more proactive, accessible and forward-facing to residents, and (4) report back to Council with findings and recommendations.

The Notice of Motion will be debated at a future meeting of Council.

Notice of Motion to fund Green Bin program from reserves

Councillor Tracey Bailey introduced a Notice of Motion directing that user fees for the Green Bin program be funded 100% from Reserves for the 2026 Budget Year, and that Administration present plans for various alternative cost-recovery options for the Budget Years 2027, 2028 and 2029.

The Notice of Motion will be debated at a future meeting of Council.

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