



ARNPRIOR

**Town of Arnprior
Regular Meeting of Council: February 9th, 2026
Correspondence Package No. I-26-FEB-03**

Recommendation:

That the Correspondence Package No. I-26-FEB-03 be received as information and filed accordingly.

General Information Items:

1. Correspondence from the Government of Ontario

- a) Letter from Minister Crawford re: ServiceOntario
- b) Ontario Opens Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment Hub in Renfrew County
- c) Ontario Releases 2025-26 Third Quarter Finances
- d) Ontario Investing \$20 Million to Protect Species at Risk
- e) Ontario Expanding Support for Road Safety Initiatives
- f) Ontario Investing \$1.5 million to Support 2026 Wheelchair Basketball World Championships

2. Correspondence from the County of Renfrew

- a) Enterprise Renfrew County – January eNews
- b) Council and Committee Monthly Summary
- c) 2026 County of Renfrew Budget Overview
- d) Sport 4 All Fund accepting applications for 2026
- e) Starter Company Plus 2026 – Intake Open
- f) County of Renfrew marks official opening of the Renfrew County Mesa HART Hub

3. Correspondence from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario

- a) Watchfile – February 5, 2026
- b) Free Workshop: Insights & Strategies for 2026 Municipal Candidates from Underrepresented Communities
- c) Navigating Conflict as an Elected Official: 2-part Virtual Workshop
- d) Watchfile – February 12, 2026
- e) Policy Update – Submission on Municipal Environmental Assessments, Advocacy on Municipal Case Law, New Funding for Postsecondary Education
- f) Leading with Respect Handguides

4. Correspondence from the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan

- a) Newsletter – February 6, 2026
- b) Newsletter – February 13, 2026

5. Correspondence from Other Municipalities

- a) Town of Plympton-Wyoming – Supporting Enhanced School Bus Safety
- b) Municipality of North Perth – Support Resolution Regarding Sustainable Funding for Police
- c) Municipality of North Perth – Support Resolution Regarding Enhanced School Bus Safety
- d) Township of Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglan – Support for the Steel and Lumber Sectors
- e) Township of Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglan – Call for Reform and Publication of the Ontario Sex Offender Registry
- f) Township of Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglan – Call to Action for Justice and Protection of Canada's Children
- g) Town of Whitby – Remove the GST/HST from all New Homes Purchased as Primary Residences in Ontario
- h) Township of Nipigon – Conservation Authorities
- i) Municipality of Magnetawan – Broadband Funding
- j) Town of Bracebridge – Elect Respect

6. Correspondence from Ontario Small Urban Municipalities

- a) 2026 OSUM Annual Conference and Trade Show

**Ministry of Public and
Business Service Delivery
and Procurement**

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996-2026-183

February 11, 2026

Her Worship Lisa McGee
Mayor
Town of Arnprior
lmcgee@arnprior.ca

Dear Mayor McGee:

I am pleased to share that residents of Arnprior will soon benefit from a new ServiceOntario centre at 74 River Road, opening in late February 2026.

The centre will operate Monday to Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., with two service counters to assist customers. An accessibility ramp will be installed in the spring, as weather conditions currently do not allow for installation.

Many ServiceOntario transactions can also be completed online, 24/7, from the convenience of home. Constituents can visit [Ontario.ca/Services](https://www.ontario.ca/Services) for more information or call ServiceOntario toll-free at 1-800-267-8097 (TTY: 1-800-268-7095).

My ministry and I recognize how important reliable, local access to government services is for individuals, families and businesses. The opening of this new ServiceOntario centre reflects our ongoing commitment to ensuring people and businesses across Ontario have access to the services they rely on.

Please accept my best wishes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Crawford".

The Honourable Stephen Crawford
Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement

Ontario Opens Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment Hub in Renfrew County

Province supporting community safety and addiction recovery with 28 HART Hubs delivering care across Ontario

February 05, 2026

[Health](#)

PEMBROKE — The Ontario government is expanding access to high-quality mental health and addictions care with the launch of a new Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hub in Renfrew County. This is part of the province's almost \$550 million investment to open 28 HART Hubs across Ontario to protect the safety of children and families, while improving access to recovery and treatment services for people facing housing instability, mental health and substance use challenges.

"We are building a stronger, more connected system of mental health and addictions care that better reflects the needs of communities and focuses on lasting recovery," said Vijay Thanigasalam, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. "The opening of this new HART Hub will ensure that people struggling with mental health and addictions challenges in Renfrew County can get the care they need on their path to recovery."

HART Hubs connect people to a range of comprehensive treatment and recovery services, including primary care, mental health services, addictions care, social services and employment supports. The County of Renfrew MESA HART Hub is now operational and delivering services in collaboration with partners including the Renfrew Pembroke Regional Hospital and the Ontario Addiction Treatment Centre, working together to connect people with the supports they need, when they need them.

The Hub brings together a collaborative network of clinical, social service and care providers working to deliver services tailored to local needs, including:

- Primary care
- Mental health services
- Addictions services

- Case management for mental health and addictions
- Supportive housing
- Indigenous services
- Basic Needs (food, showers, and clothing.)
- Life skills and employment counselling

Through [Your Health: A Plan for Connected and Convenient Care](#) and building on the [Roadmap to Wellness](#), the province is connecting individuals to integrated mental health and addictions services, where and when they need it.

Quick Facts

- The Renfrew County MESA HART Hub is located in Pembroke at the Carefor Mackay Centre (700 Mackay St).
- The HART Hub delivers services in partnership with the Pembroke Regional Hospital, the County of Renfrew, Carefor, the City of Pembroke, the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan, MacKay Manor, Addictions Treatment Service, the Phoenix Centre for Children and Families, Ontario Addiction Treatment Centre (OATC) – Pembroke, Pathways Alcohol and Drug Treatment Services, the Renfrew County Youth Wellness Hub, The Grind Pembroke, Renfrew County and District Health Unit, local municipalities, the Upper Ottawa Valley OPP detachment, first responders and other community organizations.
- The Hub offers a unique network-based model of support, connecting a 24/7 intake centre with existing community access points so people can move easily between services based on their needs.
- As of April 1, 2025, [nine Consumption and Treatment Services sites successfully transitioned to HART Hubs](#), delivering expanded recovery and treatment services to ensure timely, high-quality care for vulnerable individuals while keeping communities safe. More HART Hubs are now opening across Ontario.
- HART Hubs will also add close to 900 supportive housing units across the province. This is over 300 more than originally planned, helping people transition to stable, long-term housing.
- In March 2025, [the government announced](#) an investment of almost \$550 million to open a total of 28 HART Hubs across the province, nine more HART Hubs than initially planned.
- This includes two Indigenous-led Hubs in Kenora and Sault Ste. Marie/Blind River/Sagamok Anishnawbek, delivering culturally relevant care in partnership with Indigenous service organizations.
- With a focus on treatment and recovery, HART Hubs will not offer safer supply, supervised drug consumption or needle exchange programs.

- Through the [Roadmap to Wellness](#), Ontario is investing \$3.8 billion over 10 years to close gaps in mental health and addictions care and build a world-class system. This investment is helping create new services and expand programs across the province.
- As part of Budget 2025, Ontario is investing \$303 million over the next three years to support community-led and delivered mental health programs.

Quotes

"The MESA HART Hub is a welcome addition to health services in the County of Renfrew. The HART Hub will bring together mental and primary health services, transitional housing, social supports and employment counselling, all under one roof. It will provide a safe and welcoming space for those who need immediate support, so they can have positive long-term results."

- John Jordan

**Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Health and MPP for Lanark—
Frontenac—Kingston**

"The opening of the HART Hub reflects the province's commitment to expanding integrated, community-based supports that connect people to care, reduce pressure on emergency services and improve safety and well-being across Ontario. This is about coordinated, accountable solutions that deliver better outcomes for communities. We thank the province for its annual investment in delivering these essential services closer to home."

- Billy Denault

MPP for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke

"The opening of this HART Hub represents a shift in how we respond to complex needs in our community: from fragmented supports to a coordinated system of care. Through strong partnerships across health, social services and community agencies, Renfrew County is building a model rooted in compassion, accountability, and results. The HART Hub brings together the right partners, in the right place, to connect people with support when it matters most. This is a community led solution, made possible through the Mesa initiative, collaboration and an unwavering belief that everyone deserves the chance to be well."

- Jennifer Murphy
Warden, County of Renfrew

"As a county-wide provider of mental health services and a leading partner in this initiative, we couldn't be more proud of the work that has already been done to address the needs of those in the vulnerable sectors of our communities. Now, more than ever, there is great value in being able to draw on collective expertise by working closely with others. Ontario's investment in this work is reflective of that and we are very pleased to be part of this and the outcomes that will be achieved."

- Sabine Mersman
President and CEO, Pembroke Regional Hospital and Co-lead, Renfrew
County HART Hub

Additional Resources

- [Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment Hubs \(HART Hubs\) locations](#)
- [Ontario Approves Transition of Nine Drug Injection Sites into Treatment Hubs | Ontario Newsroom](#)
- [Ontario Protecting Communities and Supporting Addiction Recovery with New Treatment Hubs | Ontario Newsroom](#)
- [Your Health: A Plan for Connected and Convenient Care](#)
- [Roadmap to Wellness: A Plan to Build Ontario's Mental Health and Addictions System](#)
- [Find out how you can access mental health support](#)

Related Topics

Government

Learn about the government services available to you and how government works.

[Learn more](#)

Health and wellness

Get help navigating Ontario's health care system and connecting with the programs or services you're looking for. [Learn more](#)

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Ontario Releases 2025–26 Third Quarter Finances

Government remains focused on protecting Ontario by building a more competitive, resilient and self-reliant economy

February 10, 2026

[Finance](#)

TORONTO — Today, the Ontario government released the 2025–26 [Third Quarter Finances](#), to provide an update on the province's economic and fiscal outlook since the release of the [2025 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review: A Plan to Protect Ontario](#) also referred to as *Fall Economic Statement* or FES.

Despite global economic uncertainty, the results reflect the government's responsible path to balance while continuing to make strategic investments to protect workers, support growth and keep costs down for families.

"Our government's prudent fiscal plan is more important than ever, and it's working. Ontario's finances are in the strongest position they have been in over a decade," said Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance. "Having a strong balance sheet will allow us to act quickly to protect our workers and communities while making investments in strategic priorities to unleash our economy and make Ontario the most competitive place in the G7 to invest, create jobs and do business".

Ontario's real gross domestic product (GDP) increased by 0.5 per cent in the third calendar quarter, supported by gains in net trade. Ontario's real GDP rose by an estimated 1.2 per cent in 2025, and net debt-to-GDP is now projected to be 36.9 per cent, a decrease of 0.8 percentage points. Both of which are stronger than expected at the time of the *2025 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review* showing Ontario's economic resilience in the face of U.S. tariffs.

As of the *2025–26 Third Quarter Finances*, the province's 2025–26 deficit is now projected to be \$13.4 billion, while revenues are also projected to improve to \$223.7 billion, \$0.6 billion higher than expected in the *2025 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review*.

The government will provide its next update by March 31, 2026 as part of the *2026 Budget*.

Quick Facts

- Revenues in 2025–26 are projected to be \$223.7 billion, \$3.8 billion higher than forecasted in the *2025 Ontario Budget* and \$0.6 billion higher than expected in the *2025 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review*.
- Program expense in 2025–26 is projected to be \$219.9 billion, \$3.6 billion higher than forecast in the *2025 Budget* and \$1.5 billion higher than the forecast in the *2025 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review*.
- Interest and debt servicing charges are projected to be \$16.2 billion, consistent with the forecast in the *2025 Budget* and *2025 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review*. Ontario's cost of borrowing for 2025–26 remains unchanged at 4.0 per cent.
- The *2025 Ontario Budget* included a \$2.0 billion reserve in 2025–26 to protect the fiscal outlook against any unforeseen changes in the province's revenue and expense forecasts, which has been drawn down to \$1.0 billion as part of the current fiscal outlook.
- Ontario's real GDP rose by an estimated 1.2 per cent in 2025, which is higher than expected at the time of the *2025 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review*.

Additional Resources

[2025–26 Third Quarter Finances](#)

[2025 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review: A Plan to Protect Ontario](#)

[2025 Ontario Budget: A Plan to Protect Ontario](#)

[Ontario's annual financial cycle](#)

[Quarterly Finances from previous years](#)

Related Topics

Business and economy

Information about Ontario's economy and how to do business here. Includes economic development opportunities, research funding, tax credits for business and the Ontario Budget. [Learn more](#)

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Ontario Investing \$20 Million to Protect Species at Risk

New funding supports community-led conservation efforts across the province

February 12, 2026

[Environment, Conservation and Parks](#)

WOODBIDGE — As part of its plan to protect Ontario’s environment and preserve biodiversity for future generations, the Ontario government is investing \$20 million through the Species Conservation Program to help protect species at risk and their habitats across the province. This year’s funding will support 46 community-led conservation projects, protecting a wide range of at-risk species such as Monarch butterflies, Blanding’s turtles and butternut trees.

“Under the new Species Conservation Program, Ontario has quadrupled its investment in species conservation, expanding the impact of community-driven projects in every corner of the province,” said Todd McCarthy, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. “By making strategic investments to support experienced conservation leaders, we are taking action to restore habitat, support species recovery efforts and protect Ontario’s rich biodiversity for generations to come.”

The Species Conservation Program replaces and improves on the former Species at Risk Stewardship Program (SARSP) with four times more funding to boost the valuable work that species experts and community-based protection and conservation projects are doing province-wide. The program was created to encourage people and organizations to get involved in conserving species at risk and their habitats through stewardship activities.

Minister McCarthy was joined today by conservation partners, including Earth Rangers, which is receiving \$500,000 in funding to develop seven new bilingual “missions.” Delivered through the Earth Rangers app and website, these interactive, real-world environmental activities will help children and families learn about native at-risk species in Ontario and the simple, everyday actions they can take to help protect them.

Funding through the Species Conservation Program will support 15 new projects and 31 multi-year initiatives, including:

- ALUS Canada restoring more than 4,700 acres of farmland to create new habitat for a wide range of at-risk species across the province
- Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre rehabilitating injured turtles and releasing hatchlings, supported by research and education
- Ducks Unlimited Canada restoring and enhancing wetlands to support at-risk wildlife in key wetlands areas, including turtles and birds like the Least Bittern
- Land Care Niagara improving habitat for Monarch butterflies through restoration and stewardship work in the Niagara region
- Georgian Bay Forever removing invasive Phragmites to improve wetland habitat used by several at-risk turtle species
- Forest Gene Conservation Association conserving disease-resistant butternut trees to support the recovery of this threatened native tree
- Ontario Land Trust Alliance supporting land trusts across the province to secure and manage high-value conservation lands and protect priority species

The Species Conservation Program is part of Ontario's plan to protect the rich biodiversity of the province for future generations and support healthy, more resilient communities.

Quick Facts

- Since 2018, Ontario has invested \$33 million in over 220 conservation and stewardship projects, creating more than 2,355 jobs and restoring nearly 50,000 acres of habitat for species at risk.
 - The new Species Conservation Program allows funding for land securement for the first time, helping protect ecologically significant areas that support species at risk.
 - In 2024, children and their families completed 99,534 Earth Rangers missions through the app — actions like planting pollinator gardens and leading litter cleanups.
-

Quotes

"Here in Vaughan–Woodbridge, residents care deeply about protecting our local environment and the natural spaces that make our community such a great place to live. This investment will help ensure our community and communities across Ontario continue to play a role in safeguarding our province's incredible biodiversity for future generations."

**- Michael Tibollo
MPP for Vaughan–Woodbridge**

"Earth Rangers is thrilled to see the Government of Ontario making such a substantial investment in the important and innovative work taking place across the province to protect species at risk and for recognizing the importance of engaging kids and families in these efforts. Our project will lead to meaningful actions like removing invasive species, contributing to habitat connectivity, and participating in citizen science by thousands of young Ontarians."

**- Tovah Barocas
President, Earth Rangers**

"Through this investment, we are empowering Ontario's communities to take part in conservation. Our government is proud to support organizations like Earth Rangers as they launch bilingual programming to engage and educate learners from every corner of the province."

**- Caroline Mulroney
Minister of Francophone Affairs**

"This investment recognizes the essential role that farmers and local communities play in protecting species at risk across Ontario. By supporting community-led, farmer-delivered conservation on farmland, Ontario is enabling on-the-ground habitat restoration that strengthens biodiversity while sustaining the working landscapes we all rely on. "

**- Bryan Gilvesy
Chief Strategy Officer, ALUS Canada**

"This important investment from the Government of Ontario will enable the Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre to continue our unique approach to turtle conservation for years to come. Our dedicated staff, and hundreds of incredible volunteers, use investments like this to rehabilitate injured turtles and return them safely to their home wetlands. Support from MECP's Species Conservation Program enables us to work with volunteers of all ages to protect Ontario's turtle populations for future generations."

- Colin Cassin
Vice-Chair, Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre

"Ducks Unlimited Canada is grateful for the Government of Ontario's commitment to protecting species at risk and their habitats across the province. Wetlands are biodiversity hotspots, providing essential habitat for many at-risk amphibians, birds, reptiles and plants. This funding will support the creation of new wetlands and help secure existing ones through restoration, monitoring and invasive species management. Ducks Unlimited Canada looks forward to continuing its collaboration with conservation organizations, First Nations, landowners and the Ontario government to deliver impactful, science-based conservation on the ground."

- Marie-Paule Godin
Manager of Provincial Operations, Ontario, Ducks Unlimited Canada

"Monarch conservation is a shared responsibility, and this multi-year funding recognizes the importance of collaboration and long-term commitment. It will support large-scale habitat restoration in areas critical to the monarch's life cycle, helping secure their future along this vital migration corridor. We're grateful for this support and eager to work with partners and communities to fill knowledge gaps, engage citizen scientists and strengthen monarch conservation efforts."

- Michelle Karam
Executive Director, Land Care Niagara

"Georgian Bay Forever is grateful for this investment in community-driven conservation across Ontario. Restoring wetlands and removing invasive Phragmites helps protect at-risk species while safeguarding clean drinking water, resilient shorelines and safe places for recreation. We look forward to working with partners and communities to protect the biodiversity and water quality that sustain us all."

- David Sweetnam
Executive Director, Georgian Bay Forever

"Investment in this work at this time is critical to ensuring healthy, genetically diverse forests for future generations."

- Kerry McLaven
CEO, Forest Gene Conservation Association

"We congratulate the Government of Ontario on this substantial investment in supporting biodiversity through the Species Conservation Program. The program changes that allow for land securement are especially notable for protecting the ecologically significant areas that species at risk rely on. The goal of conserving Ontario's biodiverse landscapes lies at the heart of the land trust movement in the province. We celebrate our collaboration with the Government of Ontario, delivering results through this and other successful programs, such as the Greenlands Conservation Partnership Program. "

- Alison Howson
Executive Director, Ontario Land Trust Alliance

Additional Resources

[Learn more about the Species Conservation Program](#)

[Read about species at risk in Ontario](#)

Related Topics

Environment and energy

Learn more about how Ontario protects and restores wildlife and the environment. Includes information on conservation and the electricity system. [Learn more](#)

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Ontario Expanding Support for Road Safety Initiatives

Applications opening for remaining funding to support proven traffic-calming measures that do not raise costs for drivers

February 13, 2026

[Transportation](#)

TORONTO — As part of its plan to protect Ontario, the government is launching the next round of the [Road Safety Initiatives Fund \(RSIF\)](#). Starting February 19, 2026, eligible municipalities can apply for additional funding through the \$210 million program to support increased road safety measures in school zones and community safety zones without using speed cameras that make life more expensive for drivers and taxpayers.

“Our government is protecting Ontario by keeping costs down for drivers while ensuring our roads remain among the safest in North America,” said Prabmeet Sarkaria, Minister of Transportation. “This additional funding through the Road Safety Initiatives Fund will give municipalities the tools they need to invest in infrastructure that reduces speeding in real time, rather than issuing speeding tickets weeks after violations occur.”

Last fall, the province launched the RSIF to help municipalities transition to proven traffic-calming measures that do not raise costs for drivers, including traffic-calming infrastructure like speed bumps, raised crosswalks and roundabouts, as well as high-visibility signage and increased targeted police enforcement in school zones and community safety zones where municipal speed cameras were previously deployed.

In response to public concerns over the increased use of municipal speed cameras as a revenue-raising tool, the *Building a More Competitive Economy Act*, which received Royal Assent on November 3, 2025, prohibits the use of municipal speed cameras as of November 14, 2025.

Quick Facts

- Ontario launched the \$210-million Road Safety Initiatives Fund in November 2025, providing \$42 million in immediate funding to eligible municipalities. All

municipalities that previously used municipal speed cameras are eligible to apply for funding.

- More than 40 municipalities across Ontario had automated speed enforcement camera programs before the provincial ban took effect on November 14, 2025.
- As a result of the speed camera program, Ontarians were charged millions of dollars in fines, including a single camera in the City of Toronto that issued more than 65,000 tickets and took in nearly \$7 million in fines prior to 2025.
- The City of Vaughan issued 30,000 tickets over a three-week period through its speed camera program. The city scrapped the program in September 2025.
- The Region of Waterloo issued 55,000 tickets during the first six months of its speed camera program.
- For 25 years, Ontario's roads have ranked among the safest in North America, with one of the lowest fatality rates per 10,000 licensed drivers.

Additional Resources

[Ontario Launching Road Safety Initiatives Fund](#)

[Ontario Protecting Taxpayers by Banning Municipal Speed Cameras](#)

Related Topics

Driving and road safety

Information about road conditions and safety, driver's licences, vehicle registration, commercial vehicles, transit and transportation infrastructure. [Learn more](#)

Jobs and employment

Find resources and supports for job seekers and employers. [Learn more](#)

Recreation and tourism

Learn about hunting and fishing, provincial parks, festivals and events, and visiting Ontario. [Learn more](#)

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Ontario Investing \$1.5 million to Support 2026 Wheelchair Basketball World Championships

Eleven-day event in Ottawa is expected to see more than 100,000 total visits and generate \$25 million in economic activity

February 13, 2026

[Sport](#)

OTTAWA — The Ontario government is investing \$1.5 million to support the 2026 International Wheelchair Basketball Federation (IWBF) World Championships. Hosted in Ottawa, the championship event will run from September 9th to September 19th, 2026, and is expected to attract more than 100,000 total visits, generating \$25 million in economic activity for the region. This investment is one more way the government is delivering on its plan to protect Ontario by attracting visitors, creating jobs and strengthening local economies through sport tourism.

“Ontario is proud to host the 2026 IWBF Wheelchair Basketball Championships – one of the premier inclusive sporting events in the world, and a true global showcase of athletic talent and competition,” said Neil Lumsden, Minister of Sport. “We look forward to welcoming teams, fans and visitors from across the globe to see firsthand why Ontario is where the world comes to compete.”

The IWBF Championships is held every four years and is the largest international wheelchair basketball competition featuring the best men’s and women’s teams from around the world. The upcoming event will showcase 28 national teams, with 336 elite athletes competing in nearly 100 games over 11 days. The government’s \$1.5 million investment will help Wheelchair Basketball Canada deliver a world-class experience that supports inclusion, accessibility and high-performance sport, while creating economic benefits and reinforcing Ontario’s reputation as a premier destination for major sporting events.

“We are grateful to the province of Ontario for their leadership and investment in the 2026 IWBF Wheelchair Basketball World Championships,” said Wendy Gittens, Wheelchair Basketball Canada CEO. “Their support not only brings a world-class sporting event to our communities, but also strengthens our shared commitment

to advancing inclusive sport and celebrating athletic excellence. This investment will fuel meaningful impact by growing access to sport, inspiring new participants and strengthening wheelchair basketball for future generations."

In 2024, the government invested over \$54 million in Ontario's sport and recreation industry to support grassroots participation, high-performance sport, promote healthy and active lifestyles and strengthen local economies.

Quick Facts

- The tournament is hosted by Wheelchair Basketball Canada, with The Arena at TD Place and Carleton University serving as the venues for the games.
 - Teams earn their place in the championship by qualifying through zonal tournaments, held across the IWBF's four Zones—Americas, Africa, Europe and Asia Oceania.
 - Applications will open later this year for Intake II of the 2026-27 [Ontario Sport Hosting Program](#), which provides project-based support for national and international amateur sporting events that drive local tourism, give Ontario athletes elite competition experience and showcase the province's world-class facilities and hospitality.
 - The government's investments through Ontario's \$200 million [Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Fund](#) are helping communities unlock more hosting opportunities and building more accessible facilities like [Canada's first purpose-built goalball court](#).
 - Ontario invests over \$6 million annually through the [Quest for Gold program](#), helping Ontario athletes train and compete at the highest levels. At the 2024 Summer Paralympics, Ontario athletes made up 38% of Team Canada, with 92% supported by Quest for Gold during their careers.
-

Quotes

"This event is another marvelous example of how inclusive events can draw top-notch global athletes and help drive sports tourism across our province. Accessibility is helping to unlock the economic potential of Ontario."

- Raymond Cho
Ontario Minister for Seniors and Accessibility

"It is motivating to have the support of family, friends and so many fellow Canadians leading into Ottawa 2026. We're excited to show off the incredible sport of wheelchair basketball to the Canadian crowd and thankful to partners like the Government of Ontario, whose support will allow us to experience this incredible event with the added energy of being on home soil."

- Lee Melymick

Two-time Paralympian and 2025 IWBF 3x3 Open World Championships gold-medal squad team member, Team Canada

Additional Resources

[Ontario Sport Hosting Program](#)

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Kaitlyn Wendland

Subject: FW: January eNews

From: Enterprise Renfrew County <economicdevelopment@countyofrenfrew.ccsend.com>

Sent: February 5, 2026 2:43 PM

To: Robin Paquette <rpaquette@arnprior.ca>

Subject: January eNews



ENTERPRISE RENFREW COUNTY
ENTREPRISE COMTÉ DE RENFREW

Celebrating Business!

As we turn the page on 2025, we're taking a moment to celebrate a year full of growth, collaboration, and dynamic entrepreneurship. From helping local business owners launch and grow through our Starter Company Plus and Summer Company programs to hosting four successful Small Business Month events with the support of our amazing partners and sponsors, it's been a year to be proud of.

In this edition, you'll find program highlights, helpful tips for entrepreneurs, and a look ahead at what's coming up next—we're excited to have you along for the journey!

Small Business Spotlights



Celebrating Our 2025 Fall Starter Company Plus Grant Recipients!

Enterprise Renfrew County, in partnership with program sponsor Renfrew County Community Futures Development Corporation, is proud to welcome these outstanding businesses to the Starter Company Plus alumni network. Through this program, a total of \$30,000 in grant funding was awarded to support the growth and success of these dedicated local entrepreneurs. We congratulate each recipient on this achievement and look forward to seeing their businesses continue to thrive and contribute to our regional economy.

- Steve Benoit of [Benoit Anishinaabe Ventures](#) (Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation)

- Laura Galenkamp of [Lulo Gardens Inc.](#) (Township of Bonnechere Valley)
- Tania Leclerc of [Lost Loon Groundskeeping](#) (Township of Admaston Bromley)
- Sydney Montgomery of [Flock'n Fleet Repair Inc.](#) (Township of Whitewater Region)
- Matthew O'Leary of [Remind Media Inc.](#) (Township of Laurentian Valley)
- Kelsea Shore of [Wool Witch Tattoo](#) (Township of Horton)

The Starter Company Plus program provides entrepreneurs with mentoring and training over three months supporting business plan and cash flow projection development. At the end of the program there is an opportunity for participants to compete, by pitching their business plan, for a grant of up to \$5,000 to be applied to their business operations.

Please support these businesses and shop local!

Nella Rosendic
Nellart Commissions

Paige Hodgson
Paiges Projex

Noah Obrien
Wisdom By Words

Emmanuel Young
Manny's Mowing

Minnah Rehan
NoorHenna

Jazmin Clark
Sprout Wings

Hunter Prince
Moose 3D Designs

Generously sponsored by:
TOWNSHIP OF McNab/Braeside
Where nature awaits.

ENTERPRISE RENFREW COUNTY
ENTREPRISE COMTÉ DE RENFREW

Ontario

Proudly Recognizing Our Summer Company 2025 Entrepreneurs!

Over the summer months, seven driven students stepped up to turn their entrepreneurial ideas into working businesses, marking a very successful Summer Company season. The Summer Company Program running from June through September, wrapped up with outstanding success! We're thrilled to celebrate these emerging entrepreneurs for their creativity, dedication, and the bright futures they're building for themselves.

Congratulations to:

- Paige Hodgson of **Paiges Projex** (Town of Arnprior)
- Noah Obrien of **Wisdom By Words** (Township of Madawaska Valley)

- Minnah Rehan of **NoorHenna** (Town of Arnprior)
- Hunter Prince of **Moose 3D Designs** (Township of Horton)
- Jazmin Clark of **Sprout Wings** (City of Pembroke)
- Emmanuel Young of **Manny's Mowing** (Town of Arnprior)
- Nella Rosendic of **Nellart Commissions** (Township of Killaloe, Hagarty and Richards)

Ready to launch your business this summer? The [2026 intake](#) is now open!

Small Business Month 2025 - Thank you to Our Partners and Sponsors !

Bridges to Business Growth: Linking Passion, Purpose, & Profit brought together small business owners and expert speakers at four events across the region. Connections were made, ideas were shared, and we hope all attendees left feeling nourished and inspired!

A special thank-you to our partners – [Renfrew County Community Futures Development Corporation](#), and our municipal sponsors including [City of Pembroke](#), [Town of Petawawa](#), [Township of Laurentian Valley](#), [Whitewater Region](#), [Madawaska Valley](#), [Township of McNab/ Braeside](#). Delivered in partnership with the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario) and the Government of Ontario Your support makes it possible for us to provide valuable resources, networking events, and skill-building opportunities for our entrepreneurs across Renfrew County.



Township of Whitewater Region



Township of McNab/Braeside



Township of Madawaska Valley



Township of Laurentian Valley

Program Intake Dates

Starter Company Plus 2026

Intake Coming Soon!

We are excited to launch another session of our signature intensive business development training program and grant pitch competition!

Starter Company Plus Enhancements:

Starter Company Plus will offer a **single 2026 intake for spring/summer**, extending the program training length by several weeks, and enhancing participant learning by taking a deeper dive into key topics such as marketing and finance. We are excited to implement these changes in 2026!

For program guidelines, eligibility requirements, and to register for an info session scheduled for April 7th (11am - 12pm) & April 9th (1-2pm) Visit: **[Starter Company Plus](#)**





Summer Company 2026

Intake Open January 15th

Do you know a student aged 15 to 29 returning to school in September 2026? Do they dream of being their own boss? If so, the Summer Company program could be the perfect opportunity!

This program offers valuable business training, mentorship, and a \$1,500 grant to help cover startup costs. Successfully complete the program and students could receive an additional award of up to \$1,500!

Visit [Summer Company](#) to read program guidelines, check eligibility, and book an intake call with the Program Coordinator. **Don't miss the May 15th deadline to apply!**

Sponsorship Opportunities!

Ready to support regional entrepreneurs by becoming a Champion, Premier, or Community Sponsor? Would you like to bring a small business month event to your municipality in 2026?

Sponsorship maximizes municipal and partner organization visibility on social media, email lists, radio, print, and web. Sponsorship highlights your commitment to small business growth by supporting networking and learning events across the Renfrew County region not only for small business month but throughout the year based on level of sponsorship!

To view recent sponsors

and access the information package for 2026-2027 Visit:

[Enterprise Renfrew County/About-Sponsorship](#)

Upcoming Webinars & Events...



For more information and to register for a webinar or event, visit:
<https://www.entrepriserenfrewcounty.com/workshops-events>



Renfrew County Community Futures Development Corporation

● Francophone Business Networking Breakfast – March 10, 2026

Join Renfrew County's Francophone business community for a dynamic morning of networking, practical workshops, and the presentation of the Francophone Entrepreneur Award.

📅 Tuesday, March 10, 2026

📍 Centre culturel francophone de Pembroke

What to expect:

- Bernard Charlebois (Boum Strategies) – Understanding marketing in a changing environment

- **FGA – Financing solutions to accelerate your business growth**
- Meaningful networking and a celebration of Francophone entrepreneurship

👉 **Reserve your spot:** <https://bit.ly/3KGiHt6>

Please note: workshops will be delivered in French.

☕ **Petit-déjeuner réseautage des entreprises francophones – 10 mars 2026**

Joignez-vous à la communauté d'affaires francophone du comté de Renfrew pour une matinée de réseautage, d'ateliers pratiques et de célébration du Prix de l'entrepreneur·e francophone.

📅 **Mardi 10 mars 2026**

📍 **Centre culturel francophone de Pembroke**

Au programme :

- **Bernard Charlebois (Boum Strategies) – Redécouvrir le marketing qui fonctionne**
- **FGA – Solutions de financement pour accélérer la croissance de votre entreprise**
- Réseautage et célébration de l'entrepreneuriat francophone

👉 **Réservez votre place :** <https://bit.ly/3KGiHt6>

Le marketing par courriel comme moteur de croissance pour les PME

Jeudi 19 février, 10 h à 11 h

Trop de PME misent presque exclusivement sur les réseaux sociaux sans contrôler la relation avec leur clientèle. Ce webinaire gratuit vous montrera comment le marketing par courriel peut devenir un canal direct, durable et mesurable pour soutenir la croissance, la fidélisation et les ventes. Webinaire gratuit, **présenté en français** Animé par Geoffrey Blanc, directeur général de Cyberimpact.

👉 Réservez votre place : <https://bit.ly/4brveLR>



Qui sera notre prochaine entreprise francophone inspirante?

Proposez une entreprise francophone qui vous inspire pour le Prix 2026 !

Et **notez la date : mardi 10 mars 2026 pour notre Petit-déjeuner réseautage des entreprises francophones** au Centre culturel Francophone de Pembroke

Faites briller une entreprise – proposez-la dès aujourd’hui ! **proposez-la**

Who will be our next inspiring Francophone business?

Nominate a francophone business that inspires you for the 2026 Award!

And **save the date: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 for our Francophone Business Networking Breakfast** at the Centre Culturel francophone de Pembroke.

Shine a spotlight on a business – nominate today! **Nominate**



Exciting updates from our partners...



Ottawa Valley Tourist Association

Calling all tourism, hospitality, retail & culinary businesses in the Ottawa Valley!

Did you know you can join the Ottawa Valley Tourist Association (OVTA) for *free*? Membership is open to businesses within Renfrew County, the City of Pembroke and Indigenous-owned businesses within the Ottawa Valley, and comes with some great perks—like exclusive advertising rates, free promotion through a listing on OttawaValley.travel, and regular industry updates to keep you in the loop. If you're looking for more visibility, connections, and support for your business, OVTA membership is an easy win. [Click here](#) to get started!



Upper Ottawa Valley Chamber of Commerce

Don't wait- Become a member of the Chamber today!

Our professional support services are just a call or click away, giving you direct access to trusted experts in legal, accounting, human resources, marketing, and other critical areas of business. Through our member portal, you'll find quality resources and timely advice tailored to your needs. Whether you're looking for local expertise or global insights, the Chamber's professional network is here to help you strengthen your business and grow your success. If you are interested in becoming a member, click [here](#) to learn more.



Renfrew & Area Chamber of Commerce

Call for Directors: Join Our Board of Directors!

The Renfrew & Area Chamber of Commerce is looking for passionate, community-minded leaders to fill vacancies on our Board of Directors. This is your opportunity to help guide the voice of business, strengthen our local economy, and make a meaningful impact right here at home.

Are you passionate about supporting local business and shaping the future of our community? Join the Renfrew & Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and help guide the voice of business in

our region. This is your opportunity to make a meaningful impact, build connections, and contribute to a stronger local economy

How to Apply:

This opportunity is open to all current Renfrew & Area Chamber of Commerce members. To apply, contact the Chamber office at **613-432-4848 ext. 181** or email info@renfrewareachamber.ca. The deadline for applications is **February 13, 2026**.



JOIN OUR CHAMBER BOARD OF DIRECTORS!

Help us lead the way to a better future and shape the future success of our business community and the way we do business. Make a real impact in your community!

The Renfrew & Area Chamber of Commerce stands as “The Voice of Business” - working together to drive positive change for our local economy and beyond.

We need you to fill our vacancies.

Interested Renfrew & Area Chamber of Commerce Members can contact the Chamber office at 613-432-4848 ext. 181 or email info@renfrewareachamber.ca on or before February 13, 2026.



Workplace Safety & Prevention Services

Make Your Service Workplace Safer – At No Cost to You.

Register for Free WSPS eCourses!

From December 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026, WSPS is offering select health and safety eCourses completely free to Ontario employers, supervisors, and workers in the service sector.

Whether you're looking to meet OHS requirements, refresh your team's knowledge, or upskill before the busy season, now's the perfect time to take advantage of this limited-time offer.

Why enroll in WSPS eCourses?

- No cost – expert-developed training, free until March 31, 2026.
- Flexible, mobile-friendly online learning.
- Technical support and reminders included.
- Help your team stay safe, informed, and compliant without impacting your budget.

Topics include:

- WHMIS
- Violence & Harassment Prevention
- Supervisor Responsibilities & Due Diligence
- Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSD) Prevention Awareness
- And much more

To Register for eCourses click [here](#).



[PARO Centre- Women's Enterprise](#)

You have a big dream for your business, and we're here to help make it happen!

We're thrilled to announce our role as the Title Sponsor of the upcoming Self-Made Breakfast Tour, the first national event series empowering women entrepreneurs with expert insights, funding opportunities, and social capital – all in a show-stopping experience.

Upcoming Tour Dates

- Calgary – November 24, 2025
- Ottawa – February 26, 2026
- Vancouver – March 31, 2026

Trust us, this is an opportunity you will not want to miss!

It's your chance to connect, learn, and be part of a movement that's making real change. And the best part? You could receive a sponsored ticket! Join our waitlist for your chance to be part of an unforgettable experience. [Sign up](#) to join the waitlist



With gratitude...

We are deeply grateful to our valued partners for their commitment to supporting economic growth throughout Renfrew County. Your collaboration helps create lasting impact and a stronger, more prosperous community. Thank you for your continued support.

As we head into the new year, we're excited to unveil what 2026 has in store—stay tuned for exciting updates ahead!

We recognize that the land on which Enterprise Renfrew County is situated is the traditional, unceded, and unsundered territory of the Omàmiwininì (Algonquin) People. We also recognize the enduring presence of all First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples on the land on which we gather. We express our gratitude to have the opportunity to be present in this territory here today to learn, thrive, and grow together.

We are called to treat this land, its waterways, plants, animals, stories and Peoples with honour and respect. We are committed to reconciliation and incorporate the Seven Grandfather Teachings of love, respect, bravery, truth, honesty, humility and wisdom into our daily lives.



ENTERPRISE RENFREW COUNTY
ENTREPRISE COMTÉ DE RENFREW

Starting or Growing a Business in Renfrew County?

Enterprise Renfrew County (ERC) is here to support you! Whether you're a new or existing entrepreneur, we offer free, confidential business coaching, monthly webinars, and training programs to help you succeed. Network, learn, and grow with us!

Melissa Marquardt

Manager of Enterprise Renfrew County

MMarquardt@countyofrenfrew.on.ca

Heather Inwood-Montrose

Small Business Advisor

HInwoodMontrose@countyofrenfrew.on.ca

Hillary Panke

Program Coordinator

HPanke@countyofrenfrew.on.ca

Office Locations:

9 International Drive,
Pembroke, ON K8A6W5

&

127 Raglan Street South,
Renfrew, ON K7V1P8

www.EnterpriseRenfrewCounty.com



County of Renfrew | 9 International Drive | Pembroke, ON K8A6W5 CA

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Council and Committee Monthly Summary

January 2026

Below you will find highlights of the County of Renfrew County Council and Committee meetings held January 14 and January 28, 2026 and the Budget Workshop on January 29.

Please note that this summary does not constitute the official record of the meetings and approved minutes should be consulted for that purpose.

The full [Council and Committee packages](#) can be found online.

The [January 14, 2026](#), [January 28, 2026](#) and [January 29, 2026](#) meetings are on YouTube.

Warden's Address

Key highlights

- Warden Jennifer Murphy highlighted her return to the Eastern Ontario Warden's Caucus, which she called a driving force for regional advocacy, infrastructure investment, and sustainable growth across Eastern Ontario. She congratulated Bonnie Clark (County of Peterborough) on her acclamation as Chair of the EOWC and Warden Nathan Townend from Lennox & Addington on his election as Vice-Chair.
- She also reflected on the County of Renfrew's participation in the [2026 Rural Ontario Municipal Association \(ROMA\) Conference](#), noting the group contributed to the largest number of delegations ever hosted by ROMA. She noted the efforts at ROMA positioned the County of Renfrew for several promising opportunities, including potential funding announcements and enhancements to County programs and services. She believes the delegations truly resonated.
- The Warden highlighted her attendance at the Renfrew County Agriculture Wall of Fame induction dinner, which honours the extraordinary individuals and organizations who have shaped the heritage, innovation, and future of agriculture in our region. She thanked Councillor Neil Nicholson for presenting the awards to Wall inductees Tony Ruyter, Alex and Betty Briscoe, and the Renfrew North & South District Women's Institutes.

Delegations

- On January 14, Angela Rintoul, Dean, and Jodi Bucholtz, Manager of Community and Student Affairs, provided an update about the [Algonquin College Pembroke Campus](#). They highlighted strong local enrolment; a growing student population, including a diverse student body; program expansions; hands-on community partnerships and the regional impact of campus programs and partnerships that are strengthening Renfrew County's talent pipeline in healthcare, forestry, skilled trades, and environmental/technical fields.
- At the January 28 meeting, Dennis Carr, President & CEO and John Osborne, Vice-President and Chief Nuclear Officer, Canadian Nuclear Laboratories, provided an annual update about the Chalk River Laboratories, highlighting major projects, accomplishments and plans for the future. CNL employs 3,468 staff at Chalk River, contributing more than \$300 million in local salaries each year; it works with over 300 local suppliers, representing about \$75 million in regional spending and the organization supports over 125 student placements annually and contributes more than \$300,000 to community initiatives each year.

Throughout each Committee of the Whole meeting, members were provided with departmental updates highlighting strategic priorities and emerging pressures. These briefings served as a critical foundation for the decisions taken later in the month at the annual budget session.

Development & Property Committee

Presented by: James Brose, Chair

- Development and Property Committee approved the award to T.S. General Contracting, Pembroke, Ontario, for the conversion of the building at 224 Vimy Boulevard, Renfrew, Ontario, into a two-bedroom housing unit, in the amount of \$61,985.95, plus applicable taxes to be funded through the 2026 Capital Budget.
- County Council supported a resolution from the Town of Deep River, endorsing the Canadians for CANDU movement and advocating for the future use and deployment of Canadian nuclear energy, including Canadian-designed CANDU Reactors, associated medical isotopes, and Small Modular Reactors (SMRs).
- Late last year, the Manager of Economic Development met with staff from the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan Limited Partnership to review the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the County of Renfrew and the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation. The Limited Partnership is the economic development agency for the First Nation. The MOU outlines areas of collaboration, including work related to the CP Rail Trail (Algonquin Trail), Highway 17 extension, promoting Algonquin training opportunities through Enterprise Renfrew County, supporting Algonquin business and economic development and other agreed-upon priorities. Because the MOU was originally signed in 2016, staff is reviewing it to ensure it still reflects current collaborative goals. Any recommended updates will be brought back to Committee and Council at a future meeting.
- Ottawa Valley Tourist Association (OVTA) membership grew by 5.2% in 2025, with 17 new tourism businesses joining, bringing the total to 342 members. OVTA membership continues to be free for tourism businesses, organizations, and communities within Renfrew County, the City of Pembroke, and for Indigenous tourism operators in the Ottawa Valley. Businesses located outside these areas pay an annual fee. The OVTA currently has 10 paid members, contributing about \$1,600 per year in membership revenue.

Operations Committee

Presented by: Glenn Doncaster, Chair

- The Transportation Master Plan Report has been deferred until the first quarter of 2026 to allow for a more thorough review and discussion with local municipalities.
- County Council adopted a new by-law authorizing a speed-limit reduction on County Road 9 (Bulger Road) from 80 km/hr to 70km/hr between Highway 41 and civic address 2009. This is in the vicinity of Shaw Woods Outdoor Education Centre where there is already a Community Safety Zone in place.
- The approved contracts/tenders were as follows:
 - For White Water Road Patrol Radiant Tube Heaters as submitted by Brendon MacKay Plumbing & Heating Inc., Pembroke in the amount of \$34,380.00.
 - For the Supply and Delivery of Inhibited Calcium Chloride as submitted by Da-Lee Dust Control Ltd., Stoney Creek, Ontario in the amount of \$60,965.00.

- For a Four-Wheel Drive Front End Loader as submitted by J. R. Brisson Ltee. of Vars, Ontario in the amount of \$351,479.45 excluding applicable taxes.
- For the replacement of County Structure B103 (O'Grady Bridge), located on O'Grady Settlement Road, a distance of approximately 4.5 km west of County Road 512, in the Township of Killaloe, Hagarty and Richards, as submitted by Kehoe Marine Construction Ltd., Landsdowne, Ontario, in the amount of \$432,880.00, plus applicable taxes.
- For the replacement of County Structure B091 (Danny Constant Bridge), located on Constant Lake Road, a distance of approximately 1.8 km west of Highway 41, in the Township of Bonnechere Valley, as submitted by Kehoe Marine Construction Ltd., Landsdowne, Ontario, in the amount of \$458,830.00, plus applicable taxes.

Corporate Services Committee

Presented by: Peter Emon, Chair

- County Council approved a resolution which clarified the roles and duties of the Deputy Warden. The Deputy Warden's role is to support the Warden when needed. This includes representing the Warden at meetings or community events when the Warden is unavailable and helping with advocacy efforts at all levels of government. The Deputy Warden meets with the Warden regularly to stay informed about County matters. The role does not include automatic membership on committees or boards, and it does not give any extra authority beyond the responsibilities of a County Councillor. The Deputy Warden's role is not expected to result in additional costs.
- County Council adopted the revised by-law for the Remuneration of Members of the Council of the County of Renfrew effective January 1, 2026. The Council base remuneration includes the final of the four-year annual phase-in of \$1,573 to the base salary and the budgeted 2.0% Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) increase, adjusting the Council base remuneration to \$21,065. All resolution approved 2027 adjustments will be returned next year.

Health and Corporate Services Committees

The January meetings of these committees focused primarily on administrative updates and statutory requirements, with no significant strategic or policy matters brought forward for decision.

BUDGET MEETING

The annual budget meeting represented the culmination of several weeks of [detailed departmental presentations](#), financial analysis, and careful deliberation. This was one of the most challenging budgets the County has faced in recent years, as Council worked to balance significant cost pressures with the responsibility to maintain the essential services our residents rely upon. After thoughtful and, at times, difficult conversations, Council approved a [6.68% levy increase](#). The decision reflects a disciplined effort to protect core services, address infrastructure and service demands, and ensure the long-term financial stability of the County, while remaining mindful of the affordability concerns facing our community.

Additional Information

Craig Kelley, Chief Administrative Officer/Deputy Clerk

613-735-7288



2026 County of Renfrew BUDGET OVERVIEW

The Overview

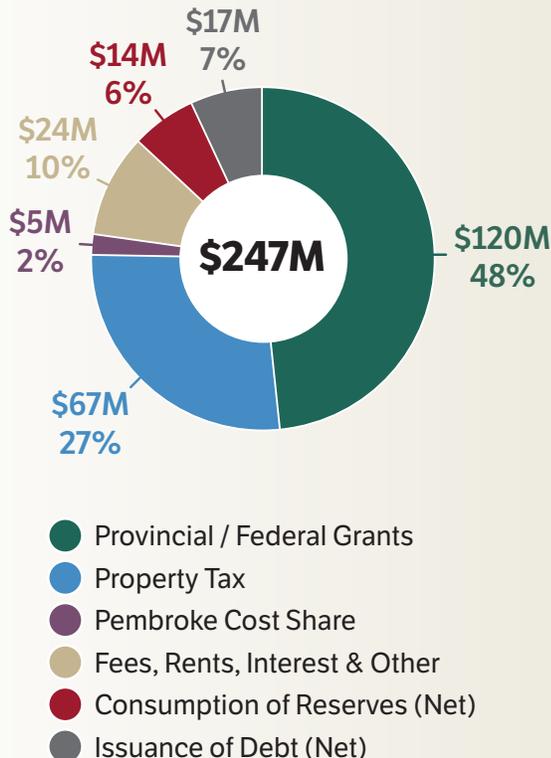
The County of Renfrew approved the 2026 operating budget following several months of presentations from the leadership team and detailed discussion by County Council.

The County of Renfrew remains focused on today and the future. With the 2026 budget approved, the County will continue delivering the programs and services residents rely on every day, while also advancing priorities that respond to increasing community needs and evolving expectations of local government.

In 2026, the County will continue to invest in:

- Frontline and community-based health and wellness responses, including coordinated supports related to mental health and addictions.
- Housing stability and homelessness response, including partnerships that strengthen local capacity.
- Paramedic services and system coordination that improve response times and strengthen supports for vulnerable residents.
- Ongoing capital renewal and infrastructure stewardship to protect public assets and maintain reliable service.
- Regional economic development, planning and growth management initiatives that support long-term prosperity.

**County of Renfrew
Source of Revenue**
(in Millions - \$247M)



What shaped the 2026 budget?

- Continued affordability pressures for households
- Increased service demand and complexity
- Maintaining core services while advancing key initiatives
- Ongoing commitment to long-term sustainability

The approved County levy for 2026 will rise by 6.68%.

The approved levy reflects the combined impact of inflationary pressures, increased service demand, and the need to protect core services and long-term organizational capacity.

Council reached this decision after extensive deliberation and careful consideration of affordability pressures, service demands, and the County's responsibility to maintain core programs and long-term sustainability.



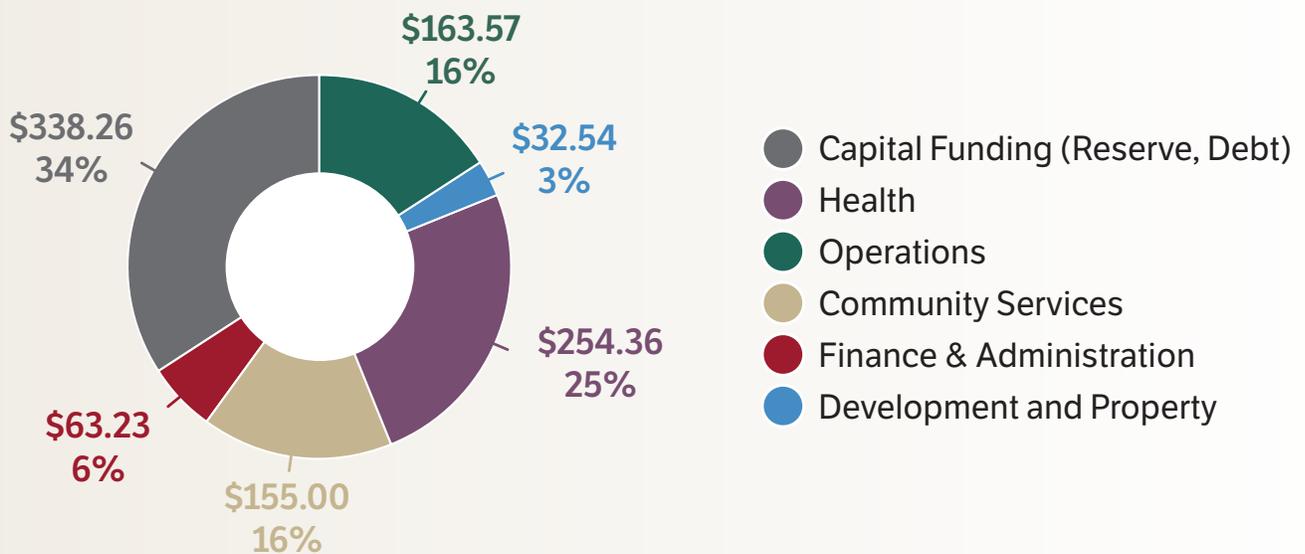
2026 County of Renfrew BUDGET OVERVIEW

With these tax dollars, the County of Renfrew delivers and coordinates essential services across the region, including:

- **Long-term Care:** Operation of Bonnechere Manor (Renfrew) and Miramichi Lodge (Pembroke), supporting residents and families with quality care.
- **Paramedic Services:** 911 response, transfers, community paramedicine, and mobile response supports, including enhanced coordination for mental health and addictions.
- **Housing and Homelessness Supports:** Community housing, homelessness prevention and system coordination, and partnerships that support housing stability.
- **Infrastructure and Asset Stewardship:** Roads, bridges, culverts, and trails, along with critical capital renewal to protect public assets.
- **Corporate and Shared Services:** Finance, HR, IT, governance, communications and administrative supports that keep services reliable, modern and accountable.

Where Your Tax Dollars Go (Median annual County property tax \$1,007)

Final amount varies by municipality due to local tax rates, assessment and tax ratios.



Important note: The County levy represents only the County portion of a resident’s total property tax bill. Local municipal and education portions are set separately.



This has been one of the most challenging budgets our County has ever faced. Balancing significant financial pressures with our responsibility to maintain the essential services our residents rely on required difficult conversations and thoughtful decision making. I want to extend my sincere thanks to Council for their perseverance and leadership throughout this process, and to our dedicated staff for their expertise, hard work, and unwavering commitment to serving our community. Together, we have charted a responsible path forward in a demanding year.”

– JENNIFER MURPHY
Warden, County of Renfrew

2026 Major Projects

- Construction of a new Whitewater Paramedic Base
- Replacement of five Ambulances
- Replacement of five Plow Trucks
- Turcotte Bridge Rehabilitation
- Calabogie Road Rehabilitation
- Round Lake Road Rehabilitation
- Petawawa Boulevard Roundabout (multi-year project)
- Trails - stone dusting north of Bissett Creek to Renfrew-Papineau-Cameron boundary
- Renfrew County Housing Corporation (RCHC) Refurbishment of various units
- Bonnechere Manor Elevator Refurbishment/Facility Upgrades for Residents
- Miramichi Lodge Facility Upgrades for Residents



Scan me



County of Renfrew 2026 PRIORITIES

1

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY & RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP

Protect long-term capacity through disciplined planning, asset management, and responsible budgeting.

2

WORKFORCE & ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Support recruitment, retention and workplace culture to deliver reliable services.

3

COMMUNITY WELLNESS & SYSTEM COORDINATION

Strengthen coordinated responses that support residents facing complex needs.

4

INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL & SHARED SERVICE REVIEW

Maintain roads, bridges, trails and facilities while investing in long-term asset renewal.

5

HOUSING STABILITY AND ATTAINABLE GROWTH

Support housing supply, homelessness response and partnerships that strengthen local capacity.

6

ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCY

Improve services through smarter tools, streamlined processes and innovation, with a climate lens.



County of
Renfrew
Ontario . Canada

Experience Our History, Share Our Future!

Contact Details

Craig Kelley, CAO/Deputy Clerk, 613-735-7288
9 International Drive, Pembroke, Ontario K8A 6W5

www.countyofrenfrew.on.ca

Sport 4 All Fund accepting applications for 2026

Posted on Tuesday, February 17, 2026



Pembroke, ON: In collaboration with the County of Renfrew, the Ottawa Valley Community Foundation (OVCF) is excited to announce that the Sport 4 All Fund is now accepting applications to support youth sport in Renfrew County and the City of Pembroke.

The Renfrew County 2023 Ontario Winter Games, hosted by the County of Renfrew, created this legacy fund to foster youth sport, athletics, and inclusion. states,

“We partnered with the Ottawa Valley Community Foundation to distribute these funds to young people, sports clubs and municipal sports facilities across Renfrew County, as they have a long and successful track record of supporting residents, community groups and charities,” states Peter Emon, County Councillor and Chair of the Ontario Winter Games Committee.

There are three streams of Sport 4 All funding. The Individual Youth Sports stream supports youth up to 21 years of age who face economic barriers to participation in sport. Sport 4 All funds can be utilized for equipment purchase, registration fees, and travel costs, to a maximum of \$1,500. The Sports Club Stream will support club improvements, renovations, and equipment repairs and purchase to a maximum of \$5,000. The Major Sports Infrastructure stream will support new construction and

infrastructure improvements to existing municipal sports facilities that will enhance accessibility, ensure increased participation, and create new options for sports activities. The maximum contribution for this stream is \$10,000.

Sport 4 All Fund applications opened on Monday, February 2, 2026, and the deadline for submitting applications is Friday, March 20, 2026, at 12 p.m. Successful applicants will be notified beginning Monday, April 20, 2026. This round of Sport 4 All funds will support sports activities and investments in the 2026 season.

“This is an exciting opportunity for the Ottawa Valley Community Foundation to collaborate with all the municipalities of Renfrew County to serve a broader and more diverse segment of our community enhancing youth participation in sports and health and wellness,” notes Matthew Bradley, OVCF Chair.

Application forms are available on the Ottawa Valley Community Foundation website: www.givingthatgrows.com/applying-for-funds/.

The Ottawa Valley Community Foundation, previously known as the Pembroke Petawawa District Community Foundation, was founded in 2008 to address vital community needs as the support from government and service clubs declined.

For more information please contact:

Jamie L. Bourgeois – Community Liaison

Email: foundation@givingthatgrows.com

Phone: 613-633-0059

© 2020 County of Renfrew, 9 International Drive, Pembroke ON K8A 6W5, Phone: [1-800-273-0183](tel:1-800-273-0183), Fax: [613-735-2081](tel:613-735-2081) | [Staff Login](#) | [Staff Email](#)

By [GHD Digital](https://www.govstack.com) (<https://www.govstack.com>).

Starter Company Plus 2026 – Intake Open

Posted on Friday, February 06, 2026



RELEASE DATE:

February 9, 2026

Pembroke, (ON): Are you an entrepreneur ready to start a new business, expand or purchase an existing business in the County of Renfrew or City of Pembroke? Enterprise Renfrew County (ERC) is seeking applicants motivated to participate in the 2026 Starter Company Plus program.

Starter Company Plus provides three months of business coaching, business plan and cash flow projection development, mentoring and instruction from staff and professional trainers. This intensive training program has proven to be transformative for entrepreneurs with new business ideas and owners of businesses that have been operating for five years or less. At the end of the program there is an opportunity for participants to compete, by pitching their business plan, for a non-repayable grant of up to \$5,000 to be applied to their business operations. New for 2026 is an extended training period by a few weeks to expand learning opportunities and a single spring program intake (no fall intake) to accommodate program enhancements.

“When I first thought about launching Remind Media, I was focused on the vision – not the business plan or the financials,” says Matthew O’Leary, Founder of Remind Media Inc., a previous program participant. “The Starter Company Plus program forced me to think like a business owner, not just a creative. The grant funding also played a major role in reducing start-up pressure. It allowed me to invest in materials and services that I wouldn’t have been able to afford on my own, helping me launch with confidence.”

Virtual information sessions are scheduled for Tuesday, April 7, from 11 a.m.-12 p.m. and Thursday, April 9, from 1-2 p.m. Participants must attend one Information Session to be eligible to apply to the program. The deadline for applications for the 2026 intake is Friday, April 17, 2026.

Interested entrepreneurs are encouraged to email [Heather Inwood-Montrose](mailto:Heather.Inwood-Montrose@enterpriserenfrewcounty.com), Small Business Advisor, or sign-up by visiting www.enterpriserenfrewcounty.com/starter-company-plus.

Enterprise Renfrew County is a non-profit organization funded by the Government of Ontario, County of Renfrew, Town of Renfrew and the City of Pembroke. Its mandate is to encourage and contribute to the enterprising spirit and economic development of Renfrew County by assisting entrepreneurs with the development of new or existing companies.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Heather Inwood-Montrose	Small Business Advisor	613-735-8224
Tina Peplinskie 7288	Media Relations Coordinator	613-735-

© 2020 County of Renfrew, 9 International Drive, Pembroke ON K8A 6W5, Phone: [1-800-273-0183](tel:1-800-273-0183), Fax: [613-735-2081](tel:613-735-2081) | [Staff Login](#) | [Staff Email](#)

By [GHD Digital](https://www.govstack.com) (<https://www.govstack.com>).

County of Renfrew marks official opening of the Renfrew County Mesa HART Hub

Posted on Thursday, February 05, 2026



The County of Renfrew, the Pembroke Regional Hospital and other community partners gathered February 5 for the official opening of the Renfrew County Mesa HART Hub at the Carefor Mackay Centre in Pembroke. Taking part in the ribbon cutting ceremony (from left) were Deputy Chief Mathieu Grenier, County of Renfrew Paramedic Service; Sharon Maye, Director, Retirement Home Services & Wellness Carefor; Tara Edeh, HART Hub Site Manager; Sabine Mersman, President and CEO Pembroke Regional Hospital; Craig Kelley, Chief Administrative Officer County of Renfrew; MPP John Jordan, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Health; Renfrew County Warden Jennifer Murphy; MPP Billy Denault, Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke; Pembroke Mayor Ron Gervais; County Councillor Peter Emon; Lianna Sullivan, Mackay Manor; Kim Johnston, Ontario Addiction Treatment Centre – Pembroke; Kim MacLeod, Renfrew Victoria Hospital-Addictions Treatment Service and Molly Fulton, HART Hub Lead.

RELEASE DATE:

February 5, 2026

The County of Renfrew is pleased to announce the official opening of the Renfrew County Mesa HART Hub, a new service that expands access to high-quality mental health, addictions, and housing supports for residents experiencing homelessness, mental health challenges, or substance use concerns.

In January 2025, the Province of Ontario selected the partnership of the County of Renfrew and Pembroke Regional Hospital to host a Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hub in collaboration with local community organizations. The Hub is built on the Mesa model – a collaborative, multi-sector approach to providing compassionate and coordinated care.

On February 5, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held at the Carefor Mackay Centre in the City of Pembroke, the current location for the Bridge Housing portion of the Renfrew County Mesa HART Hub. Local elected officials and staff were joined by Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke MPP Billy Denault and MPP John Jordan, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Health. Following the remarks about the project the group toured the space.

“As a county-wide provider of mental health services, and a leading partner in this initiative, we couldn’t be prouder of the work that has already been done to address the needs of those in the vulnerable sectors of our communities,” said Pembroke Regional Hospital President and CEO Sabine Mersmann. “Now, more than ever, there is great value in being able to draw on collective expertise by working closely with others. Ontario’s investment in this work is reflective of that and we are very pleased to be part of this and the outcomes that will be achieved.”

Unique to rural Ontario, the Renfrew County Mesa HART Hub integrates the “hub and spoke” model, allowing clients to move seamlessly between the 24/7 Intake Centre and existing community-based access points. A three-year, \$6.3-million investment from the Ontario Government supports this coordinated system, ensuring residents can receive assistance close to home. Additional components include Bridge Housing units and supportive treatment beds. The HART Hub has partnered with more than 17 local agencies, as well as local municipalities, first responders and individuals with lived or living experience.

Renfrew County Warden Jennifer Murphy said the Hub reflects the County’s strength in developing rural, community-driven solutions.

“The opening of this HART Hub represents a shift in how we respond to complex needs in our community: from fragmented supports to a coordinated system of care. Through strong partnerships across health, social services, and community agencies, Renfrew County is building a model rooted in compassion, accountability, and results,” she said. “The HART Hub brings together the right partners, in the right place, to connect people with support when it matters most. This is a community-led solution, made possible through the Mesa initiative, collaboration, and an unwavering belief that everyone deserves the chance to be well.”

Since October 2025, the Bridge Housing program at Carefor has offered short-term stays to help individuals transition from homelessness to permanent housing. To

date, 12 clients have accessed the 12 beds available on site.

In December 2025, 10 supportive treatment beds opened at a local motel, offering wraparound care focused on goal-setting and stability.

The 2024–2025 Warming Centre at 156 John Street transitioned into the HART Hub Intake Centre on April 1, 2025. The new model includes enhanced health coaching, system navigation, and 24/7 low-barrier access for individuals seeking warmth, safety, and connection to services. Between April 1 and December 31, 2025, the Centre recorded 6,503 visits from 623 non-unique and 229 unique individuals.

Quotes:

The opening of the Renfrew County HART Hub marks a meaningful step forward in connecting people to the care they need, close to home. As part of Ontario’s network of 28 HART Hubs, this site will deliver more integrated, community-based services that support recovery, improve access to care, and enhance safety for individuals and families across the province.”

- ***Vijay Thanigasalam, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions***

“For our community, the HART Hub means our most vulnerable, can access help in one place, at the right time, and with dignity. It strengthens the supports available locally and helps ensure individuals and families aren’t falling through the cracks. We thank the province for its annual investment in delivering these essential services closer to home.”

- ***MPP Billy Denault, Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke***

“We are proud to contribute to the HART Hub program alongside the County of Renfrew and Pembroke Regional Hospital. This work aligns closely with Carefor’s mission and demonstrates the system-wide impact of stable housing – improving health outcomes, easing strain on healthcare services, and supporting stronger communities.”

- ***Steve Perry, President and CEO Carefor Health and Community Services***

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Craig Kelley	Chief Administrative Officer	613-735-7288
Tina Peplinskie	Media Relations Coordinator	613-735-7288

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By GHD Digital (<https://www.govstack.com>)

Kaitlyn Wendland

From: AMO Communications <communicate@amo.on.ca>
Sent: Thursday, February 5, 2026 10:02 AM
To: Group Arnprior
Subject: AMO Watchfile - February 5, 2026



February 05, 2026

In This Issue:

- AMO Board meeting recap from President Robin Jones.
- AMO's Public Affairs and Advertising Campaign.
- Asset Management Plan Map.
- Guidance for Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence.
- Ontario Land Tribunal Announces AI Practice Update.
- New funding: Rural Ontario Development Fund: Second intake is now open.
- Market Diversification and Trade Resiliency Initiative.
- OSUM Conference: Register Today!
- Free Information session for Youth Considering running for Municipal Office.
- AMO Regional and Single-Tier Caucus Virtual Meet-Up: 2026.
- New year, new skills: Navigating Conflict Relationships.
- Lead Where You Live - A Guide to Running for Municipal Council.
- More Dates! Free workshop series for those seeking re-election & first-time candidates.
- LAS/IPE All Risk Municipal Grant.
- Free Webinar: Why Privacy Impact Assessments Matter & How Digital Management Can Reduce Risk.
- Blog - Car Accident Guide: Safety Steps and Claim Tips.
- Webinar: Demystifying Job Order Contracting.
- Municipal Student Survey.
- Ready to Take Your Career To the Next Level?
- OPPI Employer Readiness Workshop.
- HelpSeeker Technologies Webinar Recording on Updated Homelessness Report.
- Free Intersectoral Action Training Series.
- Careers.

AMO Matters

The AMO Board met on January 30th at the AMO office in Toronto. The Board was introduced to this year's Youth Fellows and discussed AMO's continued efforts in support of your key priorities. Watch AMO President, Robin Jones's recap of key [board meeting updates here](#).

Join us on March 3, 2026, for a [free webinar](#) on how you can leverage the resources of AMO's new public affairs and advertising campaign, '[Make Your Municipal Move](#)'. Discover brand new campaign

assets and ready-made templates you can use to boost the campaign reach and drive local engagement. For more information email WGardiner@amo.on.ca.

A recent update to our [Asset Management Map](#) providing links to all asset management plans found that municipalities report in their plans owning and managing \$1 trillion (2025 CAD) of infrastructure.

Provincial Matters

The Information and Privacy Commissioner in partnership with the Ontario Human Rights Commission have [released recommendations](#) for responsible public sector use of artificial intelligence.

Effective March 30, 2026, the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) is implementing [a new Practice Direction](#) on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in OLT proceedings.

The Ministry of Rural Affairs is [accepting applications](#) for the Rural Ontario Development Fund until February 26. Register for [an information session](#) being held February 12.

Under the Market Diversification and Trade Resiliency Initiative, the governments of Canada and Ontario will be accepting applications from February 17 to March 17 for [new funding](#) to help local businesses grow international and domestic sales.

Education Opportunities

Join your Ontario Small Urban colleagues for at the OSUM 2026, April 29 – May 1 in Parry Sound. [Click here](#) for registration and hotel details. (note: link will be live this evening but you can login to view).

Many young people are inspired to run for municipal council, not everyone understands the ins and outs of doing so. Facilitated by current young municipal leaders, these sessions provide insights and strategies to build your understanding and confidence on becoming a candidate and how to run a campaign. View [full workshop details and register here](#).

You can now register for the AMO Regional and Single Tier Caucus Virtual Meet-Up meet. Scheduled for Monday, February 23 from 10am-12noon. This interactive session provides an opportunity for questions and answers on AMO's strategic policy and government relations priorities and approach. If you have top of mind questions, you can submit them in advance to events@amo.on.ca. [Register here](#).

Gain skills in building collaborative relationships and negotiating difficult ones. This 2 part, interactive workshop will explore the constructs, traps and pitfalls of conflict relationships, and how to approach, plan and execute relationships successfully. [Register here to save your spot](#).

The [Lead Where You Live Resource](#) provides key information for anyone running in the 2026 municipal election. This guide will introduce you to some of the key steps in that process. It will also give you a sense of what life is like as an elected member of a municipal council.

If you missed *AMO's Healthy Democracy Leadership Series: Stronger Leaders, Stronger Communities* workshop registration, we are offering more dates to register. It's designed to equip you with the tools, resilience, and confidence to meet the challenges of the political landscape head-on. It's offered at no charge in two streams: first time candidates, and those considering re-election in 2026. [Full details and registration information here](#).

LAS

The *All Risk Municipal Grant – Investing in Municipal Risk Resiliency* was such a success in 2025 that LAS and Intact Public Entities are offering it again to Ontario municipalities in 2026. To learn more, please [follow this link](#).

Managing privacy risk has become increasingly important for Ontario municipalities, particularly with the growing use of AI-enabled technologies. [Join a free webinar on February 11](#) hosted by LAS' Freedom of Information and Privacy Impact Assessments services partner, Vayle.

[This car accident guide](#) - contributed by Cowan Insurance - LAS' Personal Home and Auto Insurance partner, offers some practical preparation tips and outlines the details you should gather to help protect your insurance claim and yourself.

Job Order Contracting (JOC) is a new method of construction project delivery in Canada. Join the Canoe Procurement Group on February 12 at 2PM EST to learn how and why JOC works. [For more information and to register, click here.](#)

Municipal Wire*

AMO is partnering with the University of Waterloo's Work-Learn Institute to better understand how municipalities can more effectively attract and retain the next generation. If you've supervised a student in a municipal setting – or know someone who has – please forward them this short, [anonymous survey](#) to share their experiences. If you have any questions, please contact WGardiner@amo.on.ca.

OPPI is opening registration for a free in-person workshop that gives employers and managers practical tools to support newly hired planners. The course includes an Employer Handbook (supported by AMO) on management practices that promote inclusion, retention, and long-term success. [Register Here!](#)

On January 27th, HelpSeeker Technologies hosted a webinar for policymakers, public servants, and sector leaders to discuss the recently updated Municipalities Under Pressure report. [View the recorded presentation on YouTube.](#)

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and Tamarack Institute are offering public health units, governments, and others a [virtual learning series](#) on strengthening collaboration to enhance well-being in Ontario.

Join your peers in Kitchener on April 17 for a dynamic, full-day professional development event hosted by the Ontario Municipal Administrators Association to help you sharpen your skills, expand your network, and gain practical insights from. The day will feature lessons from seasoned municipal executives and help position you for long-term success. [Register Here.](#)

Careers

[Program Manager - Association of Municipalities of Ontario](#). Closing Date: February 20, 2026.

[Manager, Fleet and Transit - City of Kawartha Lakes](#). Closing Date: February 25, 2026.

[Equipment Repair Technician - Town of Oakville](#). Closing Date: February 9, 2026.

About AMO

AMO is a non-profit organization representing almost all of Ontario's 444 municipal governments. AMO supports strong and effective municipal government in Ontario and promotes the value of municipal government as a vital and essential component of Ontario's and Canada's political system. Follow [@AMOPolicy](#) on Twitter!

AMO Contacts

[AMO Watchfile](#) Tel: 416.971.9856

[Conferences/Events](#)

[Policy and Funding Programs](#)

[LAS Local Authority Services](#)

[MEPCO Municipal Employer Pension Centre of Ontario](#)

[ONE Investment](#)

[Media Inquiries](#)

[Municipal Wire, Career/Employment and Council Resolution Distributions](#)

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Kaitlyn Wendland

From: AMO Education <events@amo.on.ca>
Sent: Thursday, February 5, 2026 1:01 PM
To: Group Arnprior
Subject: Free Workshop: Insights & Strategies for 2026 Municipal Candidates from Underrepresented Communities



Are You Considering Running in the 2026 Municipal Election?

Join this Workshop to Gain Useful Insights and Strategies Focused on Underrepresented Communities

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) is offering a series of workshops for people thinking about running for municipal office in the October 2026 elections.

Focused specifically on diverse candidates, this **free** 90-minute workshop provides useful insights and strategies to support you in getting your name on the ballot. While these workshops do offer a focus on individuals from underrepresented communities, **all are welcome**.

Facilitated by former municipal Councillors Steve Anderson and Jasvinder Sandhu, you will be taken through:

- what to expect running as a diverse candidate
- critical strategies for successfully campaigning for municipal office
- understand what it takes to become a candidate
- identifying your target audience
- developing effective messaging and branding
- utilizing community engagement practices to enhance visibility and support
- And more!

[More Event Info](#)

Registration is free.

Dates:

- April 8, 2026 - 10:00am - 11:30am

Location: Virtual

[Register Here](#)

Steve Anderson

Former Deputy Mayor for the Town of Shelburne and Councillor for the County of Dufferin.

AMO Municipal Trailblazer



Steve is the former Deputy Mayor for the Town of Shelburne and Councillor for the County of Dufferin. During his time in politics, Steve was identified by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) as a “Municipal Trailblazer.”

In addition, Steve is a Senior practicing litigation lawyer with over 20 years of experience with the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) where he has received several awards for his distinguished service. Steve was recently appointed by the Federal government to serve in the role of Deputy Administrator for Ship and Rail Compensation Canada.



Jasvinder Sandhu

Former Councillor for the Town of Oakville and member of the AMO Youth Advisory Board.

Chair of Healthy Democracy project at AMO.

Jasvinder is a former Councillor for the Town of Oakville, having served from 2018-2022. During her time in politics, she was a member of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) youth engagement advisory board, and she currently serves as the Chair of the Healthy Democracy Project at AMO.

In her professional life, she is an Expert Rising Star Top 40 under 40 Finalist and a seasoned employment lawyer with 15 years of practice experience, licensed in both the United States and Canada.

AMO is offering this workshop at **no charge** and encourages you to promote it widely across your networks.

Questions? Contact events@amo.on.ca.

Inquires: events@amo.on.ca

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Kaitlyn Wendland

From: AMO Education <events@amo.on.ca>
Sent: Friday, February 6, 2026 10:01 AM
To: Group Arnprior
Subject: Navigating Conflict as an Elected Official | 2-Part Virtual Workshop



2-part Workshop: Navigating Conflict as an Elected Official

Dear AMO Member,

With the MANY relationships involved with municipal work, conflict is unavoidable and being able to navigate it successfully is critical.

With the upcoming municipal elections, now is a great time to brush up on these skills and put your best foot forward.

Join us for a 2-part, virtual, interactive workshop on March 4th & 5th from 10:00 am-12:30 pm to learn why relationships may go wrong and how to navigate relationships successfully using practical tips, tools and real-world examples.

[Register Here](#)

Together, we'll explore:

1. The typical patterns of behaviour that give rise to creating “conflict traps” and how to escape from them.
2. The secrets of neuroscience and how this knowledge can give us a heads-up on what we should do in the moment.
3. Understanding conflict styles and how these can create obstacles or pave the way toward collaboration.
4. The importance of moving from a position-based to an interest-based approach to create a win-win, value-add relationship.
5. The roles of empathy and assertiveness are relationship formation.
6. Learning effective and practical communication tools, which include:

- a. Avoiding communication blockers
 - b. First words to use
 - c. The difference between Acknowledging vs. Agreeing
7. A simple, yet powerful 4-step technique to assist in having better and more collaborative conversations

Register Here

Dates:

This is a two-day workshop running from 10:00am-12:30pm each day.

March 4 & 5, 2026

- \$330 +HST per session (Individual registration only. For group rates, contact events@amo.on.ca)
- \$75 +HST cancellation fee

Questions? Contact events@amo.on.ca.

Inquires: events@amo.on.ca

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Kaitlyn Wendland

From: AMO Communications <communicate@amo.on.ca>
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2026 10:01 AM
To: Group Arnprior
Subject: AMO Watchfile - February 12, 2026



February 12, 2026

In This Issue:

- New resources: AMO's Public Affairs and Advertising Campaign.
- Sustainable Municipal Buildings funding.
- Ontario Land Tribunal Announces AI Practice Update.
- Rural Ontario Development Fund.
- Geologic Carbon Storage Framework.
- Market Diversification and Trade Resiliency Initiative.
- Guidance for Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence.
- Supporting your Run for Municipal Office in 2026.
- Supporting your classroom visits.
- Resources for anyone running or seeking re-election.
- OSUM Conference: Register Today!
- AMO Regional and Single-Tier Caucus Virtual Meet-Up: 2026.
- New year, new skills: Navigating Conflict Relationships.
- Lead Where You Live - A Guide to Running for Municipal Council.
- Identify energy savings in your facilities.
- Book your Road & Sidewalk Surveys Today.
- Municipalities can build faster, get funded, and serve residents better.
- Apply now: AMCTO-Mitacs Municipal Innovation Internship Program.
- Municipal Student Survey.
- Careers.

AMO Matters

AMO invites you to join in on our Make Your Municipal Move Advertising campaign! [Download our newly launched campaign toolkit](#) with ready-to-use visuals, captions and guidance to help amplify the importance of local government and municipal career opportunities with minimal effort. To help you make the most of the toolkit and answer any questions you might have, join us on March 3rd for a free information session. Register [here](#).

Federal Matters

Applications are open for the Sustainable Municipal Buildings fund which supports energy upgrades to municipally owned community buildings. Learn more [here](#).

Provincial Matters

Effective March 30, 2026, the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) is implementing [a new Practice Direction](#) on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in OLT proceedings.

The Ministry of Rural Affairs is [accepting applications](#) for the Rural Ontario Development Fund until February 26. This funding can help create strong businesses, boost economic growth, protect jobs and improve infrastructure in small communities.

Regulations under the *Geologic Carbon Storage Act* came into effect of February 1 and The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) has published a [Fact Sheet for Municipalities](#) about this [new framework](#).

The governments of Canada and Ontario are accepting applications from February 17 to March 17 for [new funding](#) to help local businesses grow international and domestic sales.

The Information and Privacy Commissioner in partnership with the Ontario Human Rights Commission have [released recommendations](#) for responsible public sector use of artificial intelligence.

Education Opportunities

AMO is offering programs designed to support aspiring candidates and returning elected officials. Whether you are considering your first run for office, seeking re-election, represent an underrepresented community, or a youth, we have a program tailored for you. For more information [click here](#).

Building understanding of the importance of municipal government and your leadership roles in your communities has never been more important. AMO has developed resources to support your community engagement with students and educators. [AMO's civic education resources](#) includes conversation guides for elected officials as well as lesson plans and activities for teachers. These resources were developed in partnership with CIVIX, Canada's leaders in civic education programming, through AMO's Healthy Democracy Project.

In lead up to the 2026 municipal election, AMO has developed supports for candidates running for municipal office. Resources range from helping you make the decision to run or run again, to building your team, crafting your message, and getting out the vote. [Visit the candidate resource catalogue](#) in AMO's Local Democracy Solutions Bank developed through the Healthy Democracy Solutions Bank.

Join your Ontario Small Urban colleagues for at the OSUM 2026, April 29 – May 1 in Parry Sound. [Click here](#) for registration and hotel details.

Register for the AMO Regional and Single Tier Caucus Virtual Meet-Up, Monday, February 23 from 10am-12noon. This interactive session provides an opportunity for questions and answers on AMO's strategic policy and government relations priorities and approach. If you have top of mind questions, you can submit them in advance to events@amo.on.ca. [Register here](#).

Gain skills in building collaborative relationships and negotiating difficult ones. This 2 part, interactive workshop will explore the constructs, traps and pitfalls of conflict relationships, and how to approach, plan and execute relationships successfully. [Register here to save your spot](#).

The [Lead Where You Live Resource](#) provides key information for anyone running in the 2026 municipal election. This guide will introduce you to some of the key steps in that process. It will also give you a sense of what life is like as an elected member of a municipal council.

LAS

Looking for an easy way to reduce costs in your facilities? Uncover hidden energy savings with an [Energy Workshop & Treasure Hunt](#) led by LAS and Stephen Dixon. Contact [Christian Tham](#) to book your spring session now.

Is a Road or Sidewalk survey part of your 2026 plan? The [LAS Road & Sidewalk Assessment](#) program offers high-quality data to help you make smart decisions for your assets. [Contact Tanner](#) for a free quote.

Build faster and streamline the permitting and approval processes to ensure your municipality is on track for this year's targets. Learn about the other perks in the [LAS Electronic Permitting program](#).

Municipal Wire*

Applications are now open for the next intake of the AMCTO-Mitacs Municipal Innovation Internship Program. This program offers municipalities a cost-effective way to identify, advance, and address innovation or research challenges by partnering with a post-secondary student interested in a career in local government. To learn more or to submit an application, [Click Here](#).

AMO is partnering with the University of Waterloo's Work-Learn Institute to better understand how municipalities can more effectively attract and retain the next generation. If you've supervised a student in a municipal setting – or know someone who has – please forward them this short, [anonymous survey](#) to share their experiences. If you have any questions, please contact WGardiner@amo.on.ca.

Careers

[IT Systems Administrator - Association of Municipalities of Ontario \(AMO\)](#). Closing Date: February 25, 2026.

[Program Manager - Association of Municipalities of Ontario](#). Closing Date: February 20, 2026.

[Executive Director \(ED\) - Regional Tourism Organization 7](#). Closing Date: March 8, 2026.

[Administrative Coordinator, Development Services - Town of Georgina](#). Closing Date: February 23, 2026.

[Manager, Little River Pollution Control - City of Windsor](#). Closing Date: March 4, 2026.

[Finance Coordinator - City of Kawartha Lakes](#). Closing Date: February 20, 2026.

[Asset Management Supervisor - City of Belleville](#). Closing Date: March 10, 2026.

[Director of Finance and Administration - The Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board](#). Closing Date: March 6, 2026

About AMO

AMO is a non-profit organization representing almost all of Ontario's 444 municipal governments. AMO supports strong and effective municipal government in Ontario and promotes the value of municipal government as a vital and essential component of Ontario's and Canada's political system. Follow [@AMOPolicy](#) on Twitter!

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From: AMO Policy <policy@amo.on.ca>
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2026 11:10 AM
To: Group Arnprior
Subject: AMO Policy Update - Submission on Municipal Environmental Assessments, Advocacy on Municipal Case Law, New Funding for Postsecondary Education



AMO Policy Update – Submission on Municipal Environmental Assessments, Advocacy on Municipal Case Law, New Funding for Postsecondary Education

Top Insights

- AMO recommends the province aligns its proposed streamlined environmental assessment process for high-risk projects with existing planning and heritage frameworks.
- AMO has written to the Attorney General recommending a review of recent legal decisions that impact tools municipalities use to manage land.
- The Ontario government announces a new long-term funding framework for postsecondary education institutions.

AMO Submission on Changes to Municipal Environmental Assessments

The province has updated its proposed approach to streamlining environmental assessments (EAs) to address feedback, including those in [AMO's March 2024 submission](#). Changes include:

- Consistently applying the new EA process to private sector led water infrastructure projects.
- Strengthening requirements for Indigenous consultation.

AMO welcomes these changes, as they progress AMO's long-running call to reduce red tape for low-risk projects while ensuring that environmental checks and balances are in the right place.

New changes introduced in this round of public consultation are:

- Revisions to the new streamlined EA process and projects that would be subject to it.
- New archaeological assessment requirements.

[AMO's latest ERO submission](#) sets out three recommendations to reduce the risk of project delays and support effective Indigenous consultation:

1. Review how the new EA process fits within existing planning and permitting rules and timelines.
2. Work closely with Indigenous communities to design and roll out the new archaeological assessment process that's aligned with the province's broader heritage framework.
3. Provide clear guidance, training, and transition support to ensure consistent and timely application of the new requirements.

AMO Advocacy on Recent Municipal Case Law

AMO has [written to the Ontario Attorney General](#) outlining two court decisions and asking the province to review the decisions to determine if action is needed to protect municipal land management tools. The first case is a Supreme Court ruling that municipalities may lose property title when private owners encroach on parkland. The second is an Ontario Appeal Court ruling that limits the ability of municipalities to enforce contracts with property owners if part of a contract become void.

Ontario Government Announces New Funding for Postsecondary Education

The Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security has announced a new fiscal framework for post-secondary institutions including:

- A new long-term funding model with \$6.4 billion focused on delivering programs that align with student and labour-marked demand.
- Allowing public institutions to raise tuition by 2 per cent for three years, after which tuition increases may align with inflation.
- Aligning OSAP financial assistance for students at public institutions with other provinces'. This involves allowing up to 25 per cent of OSAP funding as grants, and a minimum of 75 per cent as loans, while removing eligibility for private career colleges students.

Municipalities recognize the value of postsecondary institutions play in supporting Ontario's economic competitiveness. We support measures to address the financial strain colleges and universities are under. These changes will help communities benefit from the economic and social benefits brought by postsecondary institutions.

An online version of this Policy Update is also available on the [AMO Website](#).

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Kaitlyn Wendland

From: AMO Education <events@amo.on.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, February 17, 2026 3:09 PM
To: Group Arnprior
Subject: Just launched: Leading with Respect Handguides



AMO Launches *Leading with Respect Handguides*

Dear AMO Member,

AMO has launched its Leading with Respect Handguides to provide practical, accessible resources for councils and staff to navigate conflict and build a culture of civility in their workplaces.

Civility is the foundation of effective and respectful governance. Yet, harassment and hostility toward municipal leaders are undermining local democracy and the ability of municipal leaders to serve their communities: the pipeline of elected leadership is shrinking and municipal staff are under growing pressure.

Through the [Healthy Democracy Project](#) and [Workforce Development Project](#), AMO is committed to supporting effective municipal government through research, training, and organizational capacity. Through these projects, AMO will:

- Advocate on systemic issues affecting municipal governance
- Build capacity through education and training
- Support councils and staff in fostering respectful workplaces
- Shift the narrative around the value of public service

Get the Handguide

For more information about these initiatives, AMO's Healthy Democracy Project or AMO's Municipal Workforce Development Project, please contact: healthydemocracy@amo.on.ca or workforce@amo.on.ca.

Inquires: events@amo.on.ca

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Leading With Respect Handguides

AMO's Leading With Respect Handguides provides practical resources, tips, and tools that elected officials and senior staff can adapt, rebrand, and use to foster civility and respect in municipal governance across Ontario.

The handguides were developed by [MASS LBP](#) and AMO in a joint initiative of the [Healthy Democracy Project](#) and [Municipal Workforce Development Project](#).

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How to Use These Guides

1

Who These Guides are For

These guides were designed for the people who keep Ontario's municipalities running: **mayors and reeves, members of council, chief administrative officers (CAOs), clerks, and senior managers.**

Whether you serve a major urban centre or a rural township, this resource recognizes that you may be operating in a climate of heightened polarization and declining public trust.

What They Are (and Why AMO Produced Them)

This is a **practical, modular, and optional** toolkit. It is not a rigid rulebook or a provincial directive.

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) produced this guide because the tone of municipal life has undeniably changed. Through the Healthy Democracy Project and the Workforce Development Project, AMO identified that harassment and toxic behaviour are no longer occasional outbursts but have become systemic barriers to effective governance and service delivery. We heard clearly that while local governments continue to

deliver essential services, the system is increasingly strained by mistrust, misinformation, fatigue, and incivility.

Public support for Canada's political system has held steady for the last 15 years, and 74% of Canadians agree that democracy is preferable to any other form of government, particularly authoritarian government.¹ This signals to us that everyday people do value the democratic fabric that shapes their lives, that people believe there is something valuable here to protect.

These guides translate extensive research and member feedback into actionable strategies to help you:

- Protect the well-being of elected officials and staff.
- Preserve the quality of democratic decision-making.
- Attract and retain the next generation of local leaders - elected and staff.

They were not developed to displace existing policies, frameworks, or strategy that a municipality might have, rather to complement and strengthen what exists and to provide guidance on what to develop when there are gaps.

¹ https://www.environmentalinstitute.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/read-the-report17b8667c-aa1d-4593-a6f0-8f877d609ee4.pdf?sfvrsn=6049dc67_1

How They Were Developed

The insights here are grounded in lived experience. They are drawn from:

- **Confidential interviews** with 29 municipal leaders, staff, and experts.
- **Workshops and drop-in conversations** involving about 150 participants at the AMO 2025 Annual Conference.
- **A review** of best practices from jurisdictions grappling with similar challenges globally.

Adapt and localize

There is no "one size fits all" for Ontario's 444 municipalities.

You have clear permission to adapt, rebrand, and localize these tools. Take what works for your community's size, context, and capacity, and leave the rest.

Using These Guides Under Pressure

We know you are busy. You do not need to read this cover-to-cover to find value.

For Staff

Use these resources to support your Council. This guide is intended to make your job easier by providing third-party, evidence-based frameworks for difficult conversations regarding conduct and safety.

For Elected Officials

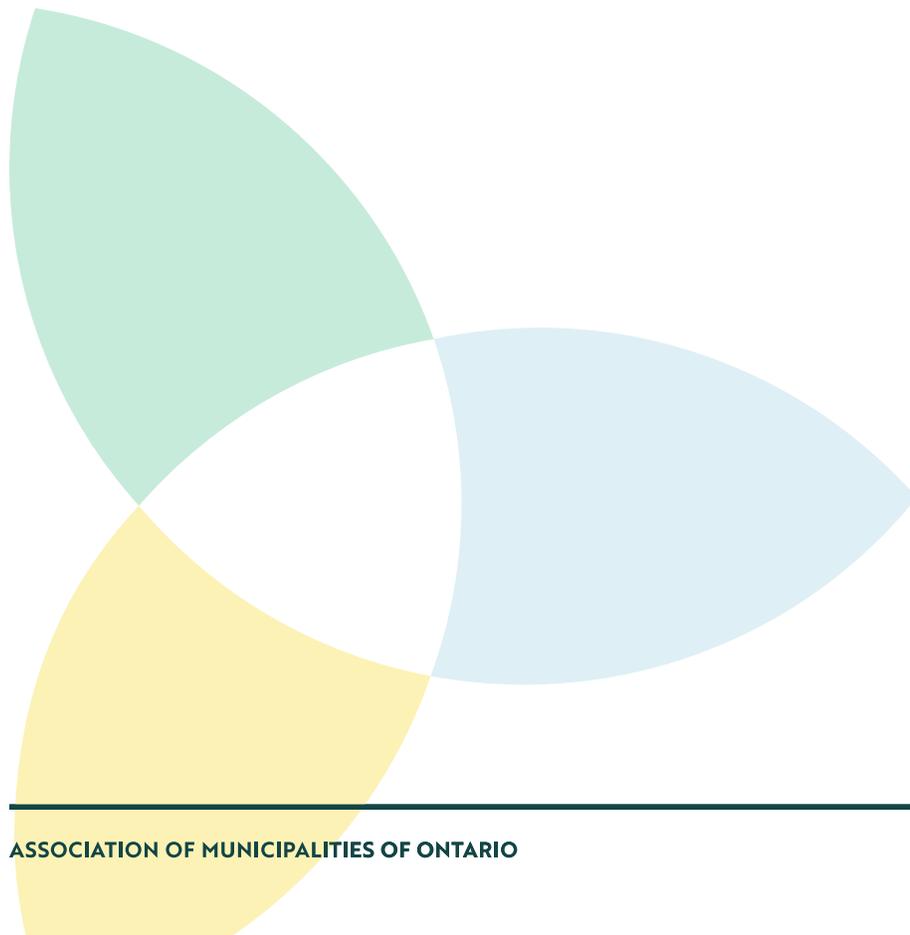
Use the checklists and decision trees to navigate complex interactions with constituents and colleagues without engaging in "retail politics" that erode your time and well-being.

A. Leading with Respect

Creating a Culture of Civility

Civility is not just about politeness; it is the "invisible infrastructure" that allows us to live together despite our differences. In a municipal context, civility is the professional discipline that allows conflict to be expressed without violence and disagreement to occur without a breakdown in governance.

Leading with respect does not mean suppressing debate. Politics is inherently competitive and adversarial, and disagreement is both inevitable and necessary. Opinions will differ, priorities may conflict, and solutions will not always align. The goal of this guide is to help create conditions where people can challenge one another and hold each other to account in ways that remain rooted in mutual regard and recognizing a shared commitment to the community and to the democratic process that makes principled disagreement possible.



What Is at Stake?

Leaving incivility unaddressed is not an option. The costs are already being paid by municipalities across Ontario:

Decision Quality

When councils are consumed by interpersonal conflict or inundated by aggressive lobbying, strategic work suffers. Councils report spending disproportionate time on minor operational details or procedural battles rather than long-term planning. The result is a shift from deliberation to defensiveness.

Staff Retention

Senior staff are facing unprecedented hostility, sometimes from council and sometimes from the public, often leaving them feeling undermined or "cross-examined" rather than consulted. As other staff witness this, succession planning and promotions become harder to fill. This environment contributes to burnout and early retirements, draining municipalities of institutional memory and professional expertise.

Candidate Recruitment

The toxicity of the current environment is narrowing the pipeline of future leaders. Many current members of council have indicated they will not run again due to the toll on their mental health and families. This is particularly true for women, racialized individuals, and young people, who disproportionately face identity-based harassment.

Public Trust

Dysfunction breeds cynicism. When residents see councils paralyzed by infighting or staff subjected to abuse, they disengage. This creates a feedback loop: as reasonable voices withdraw, extreme voices dominate the public forums, further eroding confidence in local government.

B. What We Heard From AMO Members

Municipal government plays a foundational role in Canada’s democratic system. Elected officials and senior staff are responsible for decisions that shape daily life, often under intense public scrutiny and with limited resources. Across Ontario, municipal leaders continue to show professionalism, commitment, and resilience in the face of growing complexity and public pressure. At the same time, the conditions under which this work is carried out are changing. Increased polarization, blurred boundaries between public and private life, and new forms of engagement—particularly online—are creating risks that existing norms and supports were not designed to manage.

To create this handguide, we listened to the people on the front lines of local government. From small rural townships to large urban centres, the message was consistent: the status quo is unsustainable.

Here is a summary of the challenges facing Ontario’s municipal leaders today.

Proximity Without Protection

Municipal government’s closeness to the people fosters accountability but can also be the source of vulnerability.

"Leading Where You Live": Unlike MPs or MPPs, municipal officials cannot retreat to a capital city. In small communities, home, the grocery store, the hockey rink is the office. Members of council report being accosted in grocery stores, at places of worship, and in their driveways.

Not Employees: Members of council are not "employees," which means they often lack Occupational Health and Safety Act protections, leaving them isolated and exposed to harassment without institutional support.

Declining Expertise and Respect

There is a growing skepticism toward professional advice.

Skepticism of Staff: Senior staff report being called "liars" or accused of bias when presenting evidence-based reports.

Role Confusion: Members of council are increasingly pressured or choose to act as operational managers rather than governors. This leads to interference in day-to-day administration, undermining staff authority and bogging Council down in operational minutiae.

The Information Vacuum

The collapse of local journalism has left many communities in "news deserts," creating a void filled by unmoderated social media.

A new public square: In this vacuum, Facebook groups have become the de facto public square, where complex policies are often replaced by memes and unfiltered outrage. These spaces can become echo-chambers where misinformation spreads unchecked.

Dehumanizing interactions: This shift also dehumanizes officials, as it is far easier to abuse a digital avatar than a neighbour.

Structural Strain

Incivility flourishes in environments under stress. We heard clearly that the municipal sector is facing chronic under-resourcing that makes meeting rising public expectations nearly impossible.

The Volunteer Trap: In many municipalities, councilship is a "part-time" role despite requiring full-time hours. Small and rural municipalities often lack dedicated staff and office infrastructure including legal counsel, or communications staff to manage harassment.

Inconsistent Response to Threats: We heard that responses to threats vary wildly. While some urban centres have dedicated police liaisons, some municipal officials reported that police don't respond or are unsympathetic to "lawful but awful" behaviour, and rural officials report that police may be hours away.

At-a-Glance Menu of Handguide Topics and Tools

Each handguide covers a specific topic and includes different types of practical resources that can be adapted and used. There are seven topics:

② Responding to Constituents

- Core Principles That Reduce Escalation
 - Guidance for Setting Boundaries
 - Sample Response Language
 - Foundational Policies: The Rules That Protect You
-

③ Chairing Meetings Effectively

- Principles for Civil and Orderly Meetings
 - Participation Standards
 - The Role of the Chair: Responsibilities & Tactics
 - Proactive Conflict Management: From Preparation to Follow-Up
 - De-Escalation Principles and Structured Models
-

④ Holding Public Meetings

- A Checklist for Designing Civility and Safety in Public Meetings
 - Working with Security and Law Enforcement
 - Decorum Policy for Public Meetings
 - Principles for Public Engagement: Preempting a Frustrated Public
-

5 **Fostering Civility at the Council Table**

- Building Effective Working Relationships on Council
- Shared Norms and Civility Pledges
- Policy Tools for Managing Conflict
- How to Be an Active Bystander

6 **Social Media and Online Platforms**

- Moderation Principles for Online Forums & When to Disengage
- Personal vs. Official Account Guidance
- Policies to Consider for Online Platforms

7 **Self-Care for Municipal Leaders and Staff**

- Warning Signs of Burnout
- Practical and Realistic Self-Protection Strategies
- Peer Support Options

8 **Professional Development and Education**

- Comparative Models: Professional Development as a Core Council Practice
- Recommended Training Topics: An Annotated Guide
- Tips for Making Professional Development Practical

Responding to Constituents

2

2.0 Responding to Constituents

Responding to constituents is one of the most demanding and consequential parts of municipal work. Most interactions take place outside formal meetings, through emails, calls, social media, and informal encounters, where expectations are often unstated and pressure can accumulate quickly. How these routine exchanges are handled shapes public trust and sets the tone for civic engagement.

These interactions matter because escalation rarely begins with a single hostile moment. Conflict typically develops when residents feel uncertain, unheard, or unclear about what will happen next.

Without consistent approaches to communication and boundaries, frustration can harden into incivility or harassment, placing strain on staff, elected officials, and the institution as a whole.

This section focuses on practical ways to reduce escalation while maintaining accessibility and fairness. It outlines core principles for constituent engagement, guidance for setting boundaries when behaviour becomes problematic, sample response language to support consistency, and foundational policies that provide administrative protection. Used together, these tools can help your municipal offices manage constituent interactions tactfully and foster a culture of civility.

2.1 Core Principles That Reduce Escalation

Escalation rarely begins with a single moment. It usually develops through routine interactions where expectations are unclear or boundaries are tested. Below are core principles for constituent engagement that can prevent, diffuse, and de-escalate conflict.

Acknowledgement Matters More Than Speed

In most cases, fast acknowledgement reduces repeat contact more effectively than fast resolution. The constituent's first concern is often not the outcome, but whether anyone is listening.

A predictable acknowledgement reassures residents and prevents inbox-clogging follow-ups that increase frustration on both sides.

Predictable Timelines Are Safer Than Optimistic Ones

Escalation often begins when expectations float. Offices are safest when timelines are boring, standard, and consistently applied.

If you cannot meet your stated timeframe, set a new one before the old one expires. This keeps the relationship anchored in rules rather than emotions.

Helping Is Not the Same as Owning

Your office adds value by navigating systems, clarifying processes, and advocating where appropriate. It becomes vulnerable when it quietly becomes the default operator for every service request.

Routing operational matters to the correct department—while closing the loop—protects staff time and prevents dependency that can later turn into resentment.

Jurisdictional Clarity Is a Form of Service

Residents do not always know which order of government is responsible, especially in moments of stress. Explaining jurisdiction clearly, and directing them to the correct office, is not a brush-off—it is an act of respect. What matters is not just transfer, but explanation.

A Clear “No” Preserves Trust Better Than Ambiguity

People can live with “no.” They struggle with shifting rationales, vague answers, or the feeling they were managed rather than answered.

A defensible “no”

- Explains constraints (legal, budgetary, policy, jurisdictional).
- Avoids lectures or moralizing.
- Is paired with the best available next step, even if limited.

2.2 Guidance For Setting Boundaries

Boundary-setting is not about refusing service. It is about creating the conditions that make service possible.

Name the Condition for Continuing

When communication becomes abusive or hostile, address the behaviour directly:

1. Identify the behaviour.
2. State the condition for continuing (professional language).
3. State the consequence if it continues.

This should be brief, factual, and calm.

Do Not Negotiate Boundaries

Explaining or debating boundaries invites further conflict. A useful internal rule is, "We will engage on the issue; we will not engage on abuse."

Time-Box Where Necessary

For demanding or repetitive interactions, time-boxing (allotting a fixed maximum amount of time for something) protects staff without appearing punitive:

1. Set meeting durations in advance.
2. Limit interactions to specific questions.
3. Offer one clear next step rather than many options.

Know When to Stop

Your office is not required to provide unlimited access when contact becomes harassment. Disengagement should be clean: state the decision, the condition for re-engagement, and the appropriate channel for legitimate requests.

2.3 Sample Response Language

Once correspondence has been handled within policy and principle, language matters. Clear, professional responses often prevent future escalation.

The ABC Rule (+ Empathy)

A – Accuracy

→ Do not guess.

B – Brevity

→ Avoid unnecessary jargon.

C – Clarity

→ Separate issues if needed.

E – Empathy

→ Acknowledge inconvenience or stress without conceding fault.

Pulse Check: If your message appeared on the front page of the local paper tomorrow, would its tone reflect professionalism and restraint? If not, remove adjectives and stick to the facts.

Below are examples of a few different types of professional but clear emails you can tailor to suit the situation.

Holding Reply

“Thank you for contacting me regarding [Issue]. I want to ensure I provide you with accurate information. This matter requires review with [Department]. I will provide an update by [Date]. Thank you for your patience.”

The “Soft No”



“I appreciate you raising this concern. After reviewing the matter, we’re unable to proceed with [Request] due to [Reason]. I understand this is disappointing. While we can’t [Action], you may wish to consider [Alternative or Referral].”

Jurisdictional Transfer



“Thank you for writing regarding [Issue]. This matter falls under provincial responsibility. To ensure your concern reaches the appropriate authority, I recommend contacting your MPP at [Contact].”

Campaign Response



“Thank you for contacting me regarding [Issue]. I have received a high volume of correspondence on this issue and have noted your views for consideration when this matter comes before Council.”

Boundary Warning



“I want to assist where I can. However, I cannot engage with correspondence that contains abusive language. If we can keep communication professional, I am happy to continue reviewing the substance of your request.”

2.4 Foundational Policies: The Rules that Protect You

To respond effectively to constituents without exposing yourself to burnout or liability, your practices and those of your staff should be backed by clear policies. These do not need to be complex legal documents; they are simply "rules of engagement" that ensure consistency, fairness, and administrative protection.

Below are four key policy areas to consider adopting. We have drawn these from established government frameworks in Ontario, the United Kingdom, and the United States to show that these are tested, defensible standards.

Service Level Standards (The "20-Day" Rule)

The Concept: Ambiguity creates anxiety, and anxiety drives repeat emails. A published service standard manages expectations by defining exactly when a resident will receive a reply, and from whom in cases when a staff response is more appropriate.

The UK Cabinet Office establishes a clear benchmark for government departments: a maximum of 20 working days for substantive replies. While you may aim to be faster, adopting a formal policy like this protects you during busy periods.

The "Holding Reply": Your policy should authorize the use of "holding replies." As practiced in the UK, if a substantive answer cannot be provided within the standard timeframe, staff must send an interim message explaining the delay and setting a new date. This stops the clock and reassures the constituent.

Calculation: The "clock" starts the day after correspondence is received.

Vexatious and Unreasonable Behaviour Policy

The Concept: You need a formal mechanism to disengage from interactions that consume disproportionate resources without a constructive goal.

It is vital to know that “disengaging” is not a dereliction of duty; it is a standard administrative practice. Tribunals Ontario maintains a policy allowing for the “Summary Dismissal” of complaints under specific conditions. Your office can mirror this language to define when you will stop engaging. According to Ontario practice, a matter may be dismissed if it is:

Frivolous or Vexatious: The complaint has no serious purpose or is intended purely to cause annoyance.

Made in Bad Faith: The correspondence is dishonest or has an ulterior motive.

Abuse of Process: The resident is using the complaints process to harass staff rather than resolve an issue.

Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

The Concept: Handling casework involves collecting sensitive personal information. A robust policy protects you from privacy breaches and builds trust.

Following the example of Tribunals Ontario, your policy should state that you cannot process complaints anonymously; a complainant must be willing to disclose their name and connection to the matter.

Personally Identifying Information: Your policy should clearly detail that members of council are not considered employees of the municipality and correspondence between a member of council and a constituent is not subject to the stipulations of the Municipal Freedom and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA). However, when this correspondence is forwarded to municipal staff, or included as part of a formal agenda, it does become part of the public record. Your policy should indicate that identifying information will be redacted from the correspondence before it is made publicly available.

The "Need to Know": If a constituent implicitly or explicitly expects confidentiality, you should not share their details without their consent unless there is a risk of harm.

Campaign and Anonymous Correspondence

The Concept: An established policy prevents your office from wasting time chasing "ghosts" or responding manually to bots.

National Center for Principled Leadership & Research Ethics (NCPRE, USA) guidance suggests that while anonymous complaints should not be ignored if they reveal a serious risk, they generally do not trigger a direct response or serious decision-making process without independent verification.

Batched Responses: For mass email campaigns (form letters), the UK Cabinet Office advises against individual replies. Your policy should allow for a "batched response". You may issue a single standard reply to all identical messages or post a position statement on your website to address the campaign collectively.

Governance Tip: These policies act as a shield. When you block an abusive emailer, you are not being "undemocratic"—you are applying the Tribunals Ontario standard for Summary Dismissal. When you send a holding reply rather than an immediate answer, you are following the UK Cabinet Office protocol for accuracy. These are not personal choices; they are professional standards.

Learn More

Organization	Links
Ontario Ombudsman <u>What the public can expect when filing a complaint about an Ontario government or public service</u>	ombudsman.on.ca
Tribunals Ontario <u>Complaints policy and Process</u>	tribunalsontario.ca
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign National Centre for Principle Leadership & Research Ethics <u>Approach to managing complaints from External Constituents</u>	lcpathways.web.illinois.edu
UK Parliamentary Health Service Ombudsman <u>Helping constituents use the Ombudsman’s service</u>	ombudsman.org.uk
UK Parliamentary Health Service Ombudsman <u>Online Complaint Form</u>	ombudsman.org.uk
UK Cabinet Office <u>Guide to Handling Correspondence (PDF)</u>	gov.uk
Healthcare Insurance Reciprocal of Canada (HIROC) <u>Responding to Complaints and Concerns: A Letter Writing Guide for Healthcare Providers and Administrators</u>	hiroc.com
Minnesota Psychological Association <u>A guide for Legislators: communicating with troubled constituents (PDF)</u>	apadivisions.org
Ombudsman New South Wales (Australia) <u>Managing unreasonable conduct by a complainant (PDF)</u>	ombo.nsw.gov.au

Chairing Meetings Effectively

3

3.0 Chairing Meetings Effectively

Public meetings ultimately succeed or fail in the moment-by-moment management of discussion. The presiding official carries unique responsibility for translating established rules, procedures, and expectations into fair and consistent practice under real-time pressure.

Effective chairing requires judgement, neutrality, and emotional regulation, particularly when participants are frustrated, fearful, or angry. How rules are applied and how interventions are delivered strongly shape whether participants experience the process as legitimate, even when outcomes are disappointing or contested. When meetings feel disorganized, permissive, or inconsistently managed, frustration can escalate quickly.

Disorder rarely begins with a single outburst; it develops when expectations are unclear, rules appear optional, or the chair's authority is uncertain. Once that dynamic takes hold, it can be difficult to restore calm without escalating further.

Meetings that are clearly structured and predictably chaired tend to feel safer, even when the subject matter is controversial. When roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, particularly between elected officials and staff, participants have a better understanding of how decisions are made and where accountability lies. This clarity helps reduce confusion and tension, and makes people more likely to accept outcomes, including decisions they oppose, when the process is visibly fair and consistently applied.

3.1 Principles for Civil and Orderly Meetings

These principles support chairs in creating meetings that are orderly, fair, and accessible. When applied consistently, they reduce confusion and frustration and help establish shared expectations for behaviour. The goal is not to limit public input, but to ensure it can be heard and considered without conflict overtaking the process.

Predictability

Clear, easy-to-understand ground rules established both before the meeting, in posted and circulated documents, and at the start of the meeting reduce uncertainty that fuels frustration.

Impartiality

The presiding official acts as the protector of the process, directing discussion without using their position to sway outcomes. Chairs must remain open to persuasion during deliberation.

Consistency and Evenhandedness

Procedural rules, such as speaking time limits and sign-up requirements, must be applied identically to all participants. Favoring one viewpoint by granting extra time while strictly cutting off another violates viewpoint neutrality. Addressing minor disruptions immediately and proportionally prevents the perception that rules are optional.

Separation of People from Problems

Discussion should focus on the factual merits of proposals rather than personalities or motives. Chairs should redirect or stop debate if it devolves into personal attacks.

Acknowledgment Without Endorsement

Neutral acknowledgment of emotion or concern helps reduce escalation without validating positions or conclusions.

Transparency

Trust increases when the public understands the rules in advance and sees how input relates to outcomes, including explanations when feedback cannot be used.

Firm but Neutral Limit-Setting

Disruptions should be addressed using clear, proportional warnings and “when-then” statements. Removal is a last resort following warnings and opportunities to comply.



3.2 Participation Standards

These standards may be printed on agendas or read at the start of meetings to establish clear expectations. Some elements will be more appropriate for open/public, rather than closed, meetings.

Registration	All speakers must register as delegations by the prescribed deadline.
Time Limits	Each speaker is limited to the allotted time set by the chair.
Respectful Conduct and a Neutral Environment	Applause, booing, or catcalls are not permitted as they disrupt the neutrality of the space.
Prohibited Items	Picket signs, placards, or banners are not permitted in the meeting room.
Focus on Issues	Comments must be directed to the chair and focused on the item under debate. Back-and-forths between delegates and council or staff are not appropriate in this setting. Questions and comments from delegates are captured and on record but a direct, immediate response is rarely possible. A formal response will be provided in a future staff report.
Digital Standards	Online participants must comply with established terms of use; abusive behaviour results in removal.

3.3 The Role of the Chair: Responsibilities & Tactics

The The head of council or presiding officer owns the process, while members own the outcome. Effective chairing balances efficiency and fairness to ensure all voices are heard without allowing disorder.

Core Responsibilities

1. **Preparation:** Review agenda materials in advance to anticipate contentious items.
2. **Impartiality:** Facilitate debate fairly, separating the role of facilitator from that of voter.
3. **Enforcement:** Preserve order, enforce procedural rules, and rule on motions.

Chairing Tactics

Set expectations at the outset, acknowledging emotional issues while restating conduct rules.

Enforce one speaker at a time, recognized by the chair.

Keep **debate focused** on policy rather than personality.

Manage time to ensure efficient progress.

Attend to the energy in the room. Consider calling for recess after heavy agenda items to help with fatigue and meeting flow.

Demonstrate **active listening** through attention and summarizing.

Use the gavel sparingly; **rely on procedure and call recesses** when necessary.

3.4 Proactive Conflict Management: From Preparation to Follow-Up

Conflict escalates when individuals feel unheard, unsafe, or confused about what is happening. De-escalation combines preparation, early intervention, and structured in-the-moment responses..

Before the Meeting

1. Identify likely flashpoints in consultation with senior staff.
2. Prepare opening scripts that emphasize civility, community values, or shared purpose.
3. Ensure agendas are finalized and distributed in advance to avoid surprises.

During the Meeting

1. Watch for signs of emotional overwhelm, such as raised voices or interruptions.
2. Remind participants of the meeting process and shared goals.
3. Clarify procedure when confusion arises.

After the Meeting

1. Close the “feedback loop” by reporting how public input influenced decisions.
2. Debrief with appropriate staff and members of council to assess what worked and where protocols could improve.

3.5 De-Escalation Principles and Structured Models

De-Escalation Principles

1

Active Listening

Maintain neutral, attentive body language and focus on understanding concerns.

2

Acknowledgment

Validate emotion without endorsing facts or positions.

3

Separation of People from Problems

Redirect heated exchanges back to the merits of the issue.

4

Managing Repetitive Speakers

Acknowledge contributions respectfully while preventing domination of the agenda.

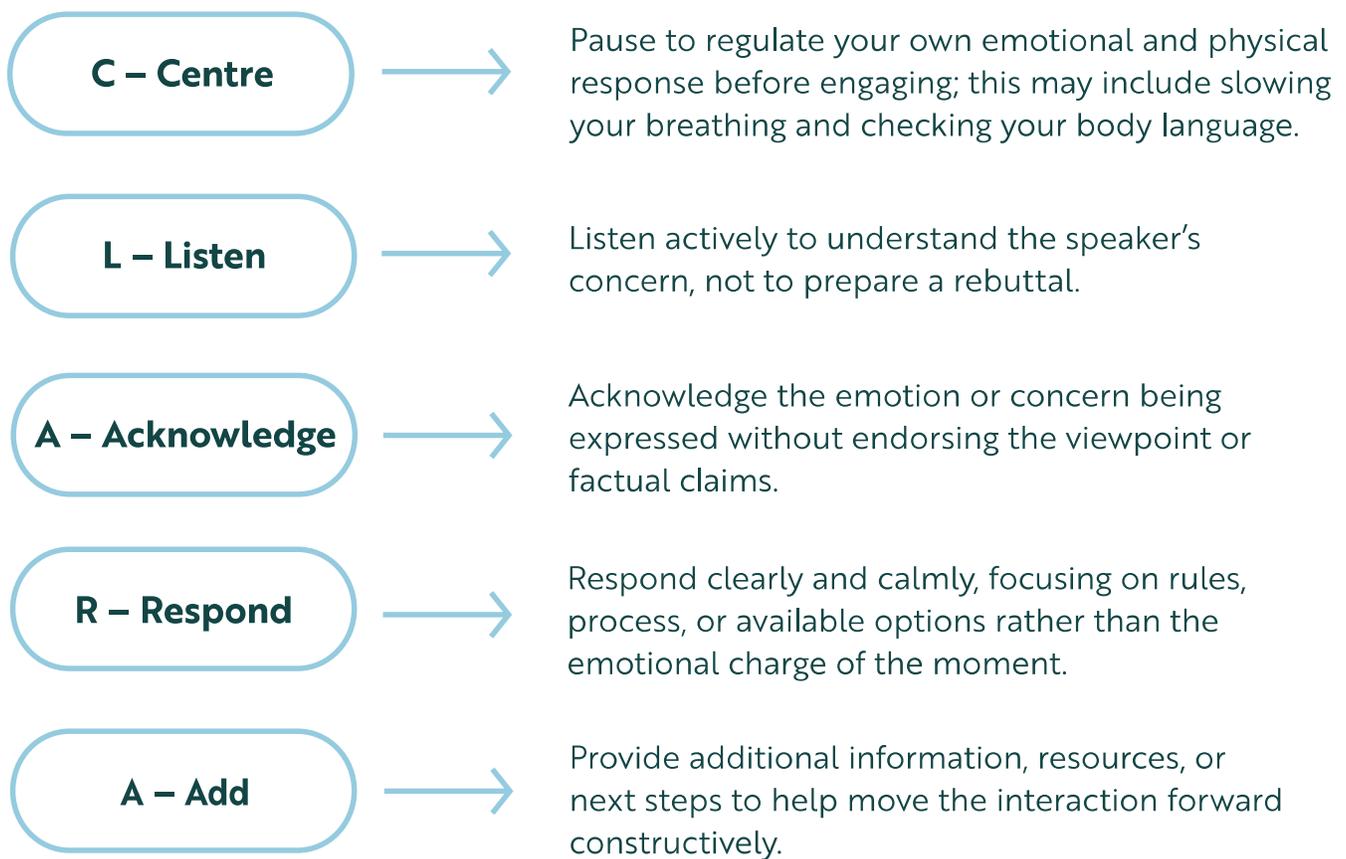
Strategic Recess:

Short breaks can reduce emotional intensity and restore order.

Structured De-Escalation Models

Widely used de-escalation models are helpful because they give chairs and participants a simple, reliable structure to fall back on in tense moments, reducing the likelihood of reactive responses and helping restore calm, clarity, and procedural fairness under pressure.

CLARA (Centre, Listen, Acknowledge, Respond, Add) is drawn from trauma-informed communication and conflict-resolution practice, with particular emphasis on the internal regulation of the responder before engaging externally.



LEAPS (Listen, Empathize, Ask, Paraphrase, Summarize) originated from conflict resolution training programs, particularly those used in security and law enforcement. It provides a structured communication approach to de-escalate tense situations by addressing emotional triggers like feeling unheard.

L – Listen



Give the speaker your full attention without interrupting, allowing them to express their concern fully.

E – Empathize



Acknowledge the speaker’s emotional experience without agreeing with their position or conclusions.

A – Ask



Ask neutral, clarifying questions to better understand the core issue or concern being raised.

P – Paraphrase



Restate the concern in your own words to confirm understanding and demonstrate that the speaker has been heard.

S – Summarize



Briefly summarize the issue and, where appropriate, outline next steps or how the concern fits within the meeting process.

Learn More

Organization	Links
Ombudsman Ontario Open Meetings: Guide for Municipalities	ombudsman.on.ca
Office of the Ombudsperson, British Columbia Open Meetings: Best Practices Guide for Local Governments	bcombudsperson.ca
Institute for Local Government Tips for Promoting Civility in Public Meetings (PDF)	ca-ilg.org
Princeton University Bridging Divides Initiative Guidelines for De-Escalation and Communication Around Contentious Meetings for Local Elected Officials (PDF)	bridgingdivides.princeton.edu
National Civic League How to De-Escalate Public Meetings: A Practical, Step-by-Step Guide for Cities	nationalcivicleague.org
California School Boards Association Managing Board Meetings in Turbulent Times (PDF)	csba.org
Municipal Research and Services Centre Strategies for Managing Difficult Public Meetings	mrsc.org

Holding Public Meetings

4

4.0 Holding Public Meetings

Municipalities hold different kinds of meetings that involve the public. Council meetings are formally open to anyone, allowing residents to observe municipal decision-making. Public engagement activities, by contrast, are designed specifically to involve residents in dialogue, consultation, or co-creation around particular issues. Both require careful attention to the conditions under which they occur, but the purpose and expectations of each can shape how they are planned and experienced.

The quality of public participation depends heavily on the physical, procedural, and social environment. Layout, access, communication, and clearly signaled expectations all influence how people behave, how safe they feel, and whether meetings can proceed without disruption.

Public meetings often bring together residents experiencing high emotions, limited trust, or a sense of urgency. Barriers such as poor acoustics, unclear procedures, overcrowding, or inconsistent signals about acceptable conduct can quickly escalate frustration into conflict, often unrelated to the topic under discussion. Thoughtful design anticipates these stressors, making it easier for participants to engage constructively.

Intentional planning for space, movement, accessibility, security, and communication—including selective, transparent coordination with local law enforcement where appropriate—protects everyone involved: members of the public, elected officials, and staff. By creating predictable, transparent, and physically safe meeting conditions, municipalities ensure that both council meetings and public engagement activities can foster meaningful participation, informed discussion, and decisions made without intimidation, exclusion, or unnecessary escalation.

4.1 A Checklist for Designing Civility and Safety in Public Meetings

The physical and logistical design of public meetings has a direct impact on both participant behaviour and overall safety. When people struggle to see, hear, move through the meeting room, or understand what is expected of them, frustration can build quickly and spill over into conflict—often unrelated to the issue under discussion. At the same time, poorly planned spaces can expose elected officials, staff, and members of the public to unnecessary safety risks.

Entry, Screening, and Expectations Checklist



- Post community agreements, sign-in and search policies at entrances, on the municipality's website, and in all materials sent in advance of the meeting.
- Use pre-registration or check-in tables as needed.
- Conduct bag or coat checks where appropriate.

Layout and Accessibility Checklist



- Use clear audio-visual systems so participants can see and hear proceedings.
- Turn off unused equipment to minimize background noise.
- Reduce glare with drapes or blinds and use adjustable lighting.
- Provide reserved seating for those who are Deaf, hard of hearing, or have low vision.
- Keep aisles clear and designate seating for service animals and mobility devices.
- Maintain a physical buffer of 6–8 feet between officials and the public.

Safety and Movement Checklist



- Plan separate entry and exit routes for staff and officials.
- Ensure all exits are clearly marked and unobstructed.
- Identify non-public exits and ensure officials and staff know them.

Proactive Design Checklist



- Where possible, designate a quiet break-out room for overwhelmed participants or staff.
- Where possible, install reliable live-streaming systems to allow the remote participation of members of the public, including overflow of an at-capacity in-person meeting. Ensure that the virtual meeting space – including Q&A in public engagement meetings – is attended to, and that the meeting is paused if any technical disruptions inhibit the live stream.

4.2 Working with Security and Law Enforcement

Local law enforcement can play a constructive role in supporting safe, orderly public meetings when their involvement is carefully planned, clearly defined, and transparently communicated. Effective coordination helps ensure that meetings remain accessible to the public while protecting elected officials, staff, and attendees from intimidation, harassment, or physical risk.

Law enforcement presence should never compensate for poor chairing, unclear procedures, or inconsistent enforcement of meeting rules. Instead, it should function as a backstop—available to support the chair if conduct escalates to the point of actual disruption or safety concern.

When expectations, roles, and thresholds for intervention are established in advance, the likelihood of unnecessary escalation is reduced, and public confidence in the fairness of the process is strengthened.

Transparency is critical. Members of the public should be informed in advance, and at the outset of the meeting, when security or law enforcement will be present and why. Clear communication helps prevent misinterpretation of security measures as punitive or viewpoint-based and reinforces that their purpose is to protect everyone's right to participate safely.

Coordinating With Law Enforcement

Establish Clear Points of Contact

Develop direct, ongoing relationships between designated municipal representatives and the local law enforcement agency to ensure continuity, trust, and shared understanding of expectations.

Prebrief: Share Relevant Meeting Information in Advance

When security or law enforcement are in attendance, provide them with the meeting agenda and contextual information, including anticipated attendance, known hot-button issues, and any prior incidents or individuals likely to test meeting rules. Ensure there is a clear, shared understanding and preferred approach to managing the meeting.

Clarify Roles and Authority

Confirm in advance that the Chair remains the primary authority for managing the meeting and that law enforcement intervention occurs only at the Chair's direction or in response to clear safety threats.

Determine Appropriate Visibility

Decide how visible security personnel should be, including whether uniforms are worn and where officers are positioned. Options may include monitoring from outside the chamber via CCTV, with a clear plan for when and how officers would enter if needed.

Define Escalation Thresholds and Response Protocols

Establish clear criteria for intervention, including what constitutes actual disruption or a safety concern. Ensure all parties understand the graduated response approach, from observation to verbal intervention to removal as a last resort.

Communicate Expectations Publicly

Inform the public in advance, and at the beginning of the meeting, about the presence of security or law enforcement and the protocols governing their involvement.

Coordinating with Law Enforcement

Emphasize Rights-Protection and Neutrality

Ensure officers understand that their role is to protect the integrity of the public meeting and the rights of all participants—members of the public, elected officials, and staff—regardless of viewpoint or personal opinion.

Coordinate with Meeting Space Design and Logistics

Align security planning with room layout, entry and exit routes, and designated non-public areas to minimize unnecessary contact and reduce the potential for confrontation.

Debrief and Learn

After the meeting, debrief with elected officials, staff, and law enforcement to assess what worked, what did not, and whether protocols or design features should be adjusted for meetings of this nature in the future.

Communicate Changes in Advance

Proactively inform the public of any changes to security presence or procedures for upcoming meetings to avoid surprises and maintain trust.

4.3 Decorum Policy for Public Meetings

A clear decorum policy provides elected officials - particularly the chair - with a shared framework for managing challenging situations consistently, transparently, and in a viewpoint-neutral manner. When possible, this should be circulated in advance to anybody attending the meeting, including members of the public.

Template



The [Municipality Name] is committed to a meeting environment that welcomes robust debate on public policy issues in an atmosphere of inclusiveness, integrity, and respect for differing points of view. This policy ensures that meetings remain a safe forum for the public to observe their government and for the council/Board to conduct the people's business without actual disruption.

Scope of Application

- This policy applies to all attendees—including members of council, staff, and the public—at the following:
- Regular and Special Council/Board Meetings.
- Committee of the Whole and Advisory Committee Meetings.
- Statutory Public Hearings (e.g., land use and planning).



Standards of Conduct for Public Participation

To ensure the orderly and efficient conduct of meetings, all participants must adhere to the following rules:

- All individuals are expected to be kind, polite, and respectful in all interactions.
- All individuals are expected to focus remarks on factual merits and solutions rather than individuals or perceived motives, or engaging in personal attacks, name-calling, or questioning the motives of others.
- All individuals are expected to respect the rights of others to use municipal spaces and participate in proceedings without intimidation.
- No person shall speak until first recognized by the chair. All remarks must be directed to the chair (e.g., "Mr. Mayor" or "Madam Chair") rather than to staff, other audience members, or individual officials.
- All attendees must refrain from disrupting the neutrality of the council chamber, including by clapping, booing, hissing, or shouting, as these actions can intimidate other speakers and disrupt deliberations.
- Picket signs, placards, or banners are prohibited inside the meeting room to prevent visual disruption and maintain safety.

Identifying "Actual Disruption" to Public Meetings

"Actual disruption" is conduct that physically or procedurally impedes the meeting's ability to proceed. This includes:

- **Time Limit Violations:** Refusing to conclude remarks after the allotted time (typically 3–5 minutes) has expired.
- **Interruption:** Speaking out of turn from the gallery or shouting over a recognised speaker.



- **Resource Abuse:** Making excessive demands through high-volume correspondence or repeatedly arguing points after a final decision has been rendered.
- **Unauthorized Proximity:** Entering the "horseshoe" or formal staff/Council area without prior consent from the Chair.
- **Privacy Breaches:** Covertly recording meetings or taking photos/videos of staff without consent.
- **Aggressive Language:** Threats, harassment, profanity, or discriminatory slurs.
- **Safety Threats:** Implied or expressed threats of intimidation or violence directed at anyone in attendance.

Procedures for Addressing Disruptions

The Chair serves as the protector of the process and shall use a tiered approach to restore order:

1. **Verbal Warning:** The Chair shall advise the individual that their behaviour is disrupting the meeting and that failure to cease may result in removal.
2. **Muting/Technical Intervention:** In electronic or hybrid meetings, the Chair may direct staff to mute the individual's microphone if they exceed time limits or engage in offensive language.
3. **Recess:** If the room becomes overheated, the Chair may call a short recess (e.g., 5–15 minutes) to allow tempers to cool and to consult with senior staff on next steps, including perhaps the further need for expert legal or security advice or intervention.
4. **Expulsion/Removal:** If a warning is not heeded, the Chair may order the individual to leave. Removal is a last resort and must be based on the individual's disruptive actions, not the viewpoint they are expressing.

Proportional Restrictions and Follow-Up



To protect the future integrity of public meetings while respecting the Charter right to participate, the municipality may apply proportional restrictions to repeat disruptors:

- **Written Submission Only:** Requiring the individual to provide input via letter or email rather than oral delegations for a set period.
- **Single Point of Contact:** Designating a specific staff member as the only recipient for the individual's correspondence.
- **Limited Attendance:** Prospective exclusion from future meetings should only occur if there is definitive evidence of a threat to public safety; otherwise, the individual may be escorted out only when a new disruption occurs.

"Closing the Loop" (Post-Meeting)

- **Public Reporting:** The municipality should summarize how public input gathered through a public engagement activity influenced the actions or decisions. This helps to build trust and reduces future conflict.

4.4 Principles for Public Engagement: Preempting a Frustrated Public

These principles are more relevant to public engagement meetings than they are to public participation at a council meeting.

Effective public engagement requires attention to structure, accessibility, and clear communication so residents can contribute meaningfully. Clarifying roles, connecting participants to subject matter experts, and providing multiple ways to learn and share input are essential for fostering trust, equity, and influence.

What Frustrates the Public	Engagement Principles & Solutions
<p>1. "The decision is already made."</p> <p>Residents often feel that public hearings happen too late in the process, serving only as a procedural checklist after staff and developers have finalized plans. This leads to a perception of "sham participation" or "box-checking".</p>	<p>Early Engagement & The Feedback Loop</p> <p>Engage Before, During, and After: Start dialogue during the visioning stage, not just the approval stage.</p> <p>Share Decisions to Date: Be transparent about what decisions have already been made and when. Be clear about where public input is still relevant and valuable.</p> <p>Close the Loop: Explicitly report back to the public on how their input influenced the final decision. If feedback wasn't used, explain why (e.g., legislative constraints or budget limits) to build trust and reduce suspicion.</p>

What Frustrates the Public	Engagement Principles & Solutions
<p>2. "It's us versus them."</p> <p>Traditional meeting layouts (for example, theater style with an elevated dais) create a physical hierarchy that cues opposition. This "performance model" often makes residents feel they are speaking to a passive, unresponsive wall of officials.</p>	<p>Dismantle Physical Hierarchies</p> <p>Active Listening: Officials must use body language (eye contact, sitting still) to show they are listening, rather than crossing arms or checking phones.</p> <p>Accessible Events: Public engagement activities work well with formats like round tables, workshops, facilitated conversations, or Public Information Centres (PICs) to encourage dialogue with staff and experts in informal, inclusive, and equitable settings, where a wider group of people may feel able to participate.</p>
<p>3. "The loudest voices dominate."</p> <p>Open mic sessions often become contests of volume or numbers, and organized interest groups can dominate. As a result, quieter, marginalized, or moderate voices can be intimidated, or lost in the crowd.</p>	<p>Structure for Equity</p> <p>Small Group Discussion: Break large audiences into facilitated small groups. People behave more respectfully in face-to-face clusters, and this format prevents a single viewpoint from hijacking the room</p> <p>Randomized Speaking Order: If a speaker list is long, select speakers randomly rather than in order of sign-up to prevent organized groups from "stacking" the deck.</p>
<p>4. "It's too complicated / I don't understand."</p> <p>The use of technical jargon, complex legal constraints, and insider acronyms creates barriers to entry. Residents may rely on misinformation because the municipality has not provided accessible facts.</p>	<p>Education First, Input Second</p> <p>Embed Learning: Move residents from "reacting" to "learning" by providing balanced, plain-language background presentations before the discussion begins.</p> <p>Visualizations: A picture can often communicate impacts more effectively than detailed text or technical documentation. Design materials that favour visual clarity and simplicity.</p>

What Frustrates the Public	Engagement Principles & Solutions
<p>5. "It's inconvenient."</p> <p>Fixed meeting times, formal venues, and single participation formats can unintentionally exclude people. Engagement should offer convenient timing, accessible locations, and multiple ways to participate to reflect how different groups live and engage.</p>	<p>Go to the People</p> <p>Pop-up Engagement: Instead of expecting residents to come to you, set up booths at grocery stores, libraries, or community events.</p> <p>Asynchronous Input: Allow residents to submit audio, video, or written comments online beforehand so they don't have to attend in person to be heard.</p>
<p>6. "I'm getting conflicting information."</p>	<p>Defer to Expertise</p> <p>Clarify Roles: Make it clear who holds expertise and decision-making authority. While council members may wish to participate in public engagement sessions organized by the municipality, they should avoid giving technical or procedural answers outside their role to avoid sowing confusion with residents.</p> <p>Connect to Experts: Direct residents to staff or subject matter experts through public meetings, workshops, online Q&A sessions, open houses, or advisory committees to provide accurate, structured responses.</p>

What Frustrates the Public	Engagement Principles & Solutions
<p>7. “This is too fast / I don’t have time to catch up.”</p> <p>Compressed timelines, short notice, or last-minute materials can make people feel rushed into reacting rather than meaningfully contributing.</p>	<p>Respect People’s Time</p> <p>Adequate Notice: Share materials early and clearly communicate decision timelines.</p> <p>Paced Engagement: Match the complexity of the issue with sufficient time for learning, reflection, and dialogue.</p> <p>Staged Input: Allow multiple points of entry rather than a single high-stakes moment.</p>
<p>8. “Nothing ever changes.”</p> <p>When people invest time and energy but see the same outcomes repeatedly, engagement begins to feel futile—even when processes are technically sound.</p>	<p>Demonstrate Impact Over Time</p> <p>Track Commitments: Publicly document themes heard, commitments made, and progress on implementation.</p> <p>Show Evolution: Explicitly reference how past engagement influenced current policies or projects.</p> <p>Name Constraints: Be transparent about what engagement can and cannot change to avoid false expectations.</p>

Learn More

Organization	Links
Scott Lazenby, Community Heart and Soul <u>Seating Matters! How Room Arrangement Encourages or Discourages Civility</u>	communityheartandsoul.org
City of Niagara Falls <u>Decorum Policy for Public Meetings</u>	niagarafalls.ca
Town of Innisfil <u>Respectful Interactions Policy (PDF)</u>	innisfil.ca
Municipality of West Grey <u>RZone (Respect-Zone) Brochure (PDF)</u>	westgrey.com
The Crime and Justice Institute <u>Guidelines for Law Enforcement Role at Public Meetings (PDF)</u>	bridgingdivides.princeton.edu
Ottawa Police Service & Service de police de la Ville de Gatineau <u>Running for Office, Ready for Anything: Safety Tips for You and Your Team (PDF)</u>	ottawapolice.ca

Organization	Links
University of Calgary School of Public Policy <u>Community Engagement in Local Communities: Hearing the Voices of the Public</u> (PDF)	policyschool.ca
Newfoundland and Labrador Office of Public Engagement <u>Public Engagement Guide</u> (PDF)	gov.nl.ca
SFU Morris J Wosk Centre for Dialogue <u>Public Engagement Toolkit</u> (PDF)	sfu.ca
Ombudsman Ontario <u>Open Meetings: Guide for Municipalities</u>	ombudsman.on.ca

Fostering Civility at the Council Table

5

5.0 Fostering Civility at the Council Table

Civility at the council table is not about the absence of conflict; rather, it is about the presence of respect while navigating inevitable disagreements. In the context of democratic governance, civility requires focusing debate on the strengths and weaknesses of policy solutions rather than engaging in personal attacks against colleagues or staff.

Maintaining this standard is critical for both institutional stability and public trust. The rise in incivility and harassment is currently driving resignations among elected officials and deterring dedicated community representatives from seeking office.

Beyond retention, a lack of decorum undermines decision-making; robust debate is necessary to avoid "group think," but it must remain constructive to ensure that collective decisions reflect the best interests of the community.

This section provides practical principles, tips, and tools designed to help you build productive working relationships with your fellow council members and manage meetings effectively, even when tensions run high. It outlines strategies for guiding disagreement toward productive outcomes, such as separating the people from the problem and utilizing parliamentary procedure to maintain order.

5.1 Building Effective Working Relationships on Council

Effective governance relies on the ability of elected officials to work together despite differing ideologies. While you do not need to be friends with every colleague, you must be able to function as a cohesive decision-making body. The following strategies can help build a foundation of trust and respect at the table.

Practice the "No Surprises" Rule

Adopt a practice of giving colleagues or the chair a "heads-up" if you plan to ask a particularly tough question or introduce a complex motion. Avoiding "gotcha" moments demonstrates professional courtesy and ensures that debate is focused on the merit of the issue rather than the shock of the process.

A fundamental rule of civility is to separate the people from the problem. Debate must remain focused on the item and policy in question, never on the motives or character of other members. When tension rises, re-center the discussion on shared goals, such as the economic or social well-being of the community, rather than personal differences.

Disagree Without Being Disagreeable

Conflict is a necessary part of democracy, but it must be managed to avoid toxicity. Strive for collegiality even when voting on opposite sides of an issue. Recognize that debate and disagreement are fundamental to avoiding "group think" and ensuring robust decision-making. Once a decision is made, accept the will of the majority and move on without harboring lingering hostilities.

Invest in Connection Outside the Chamber

It is easier to demonize a colleague you only see during contentious votes. Create spaces or opportunities for connection that are not about conflict or policy. Ad hoc conversations around the 'water cooler' are great for building social connection and empathy. Talking about real life—families, hobbies, or shared community interests—humanizes your colleagues and builds a reservoir of goodwill that can be drawn upon during difficult debates. If you find a colleague particularly difficult, actively try to identify their "biggest redeeming quality" and keep it in mind during interactions.

Listen to Understand, Not Just to Reply

Active listening is a powerful tool for reducing polarization. When a colleague is speaking, focus entirely on their argument rather than formulating your rebuttal. Demonstrating that you are willing to hear differing perspectives—and potentially be persuaded by facts—builds credibility and encourages others to accord you the same respect.

Respect Role Clarity ("Noses In, Fingers Out")

Conflict often spills over between members when the lines between governance and administration blur. Adhere to the "Noses In, Fingers Out" (NIFO) principle: Council's role is to set policy (noses in), while the CAO and staff are responsible for execution (fingers out). Respecting these lanes reduces friction not only with staff but among members of council who may feel compelled to defend staff from micromanagement.

Model the Standard You Expect

As a leader, your behaviour sets the tone for the community. If you engage in eye-rolling, interruptions, or personal attacks, you grant permission for the public to treat the council with similar disrespect. Commit to a standard of civility where you treat colleagues with the courtesy you wish to receive, regardless of the heat of the moment.

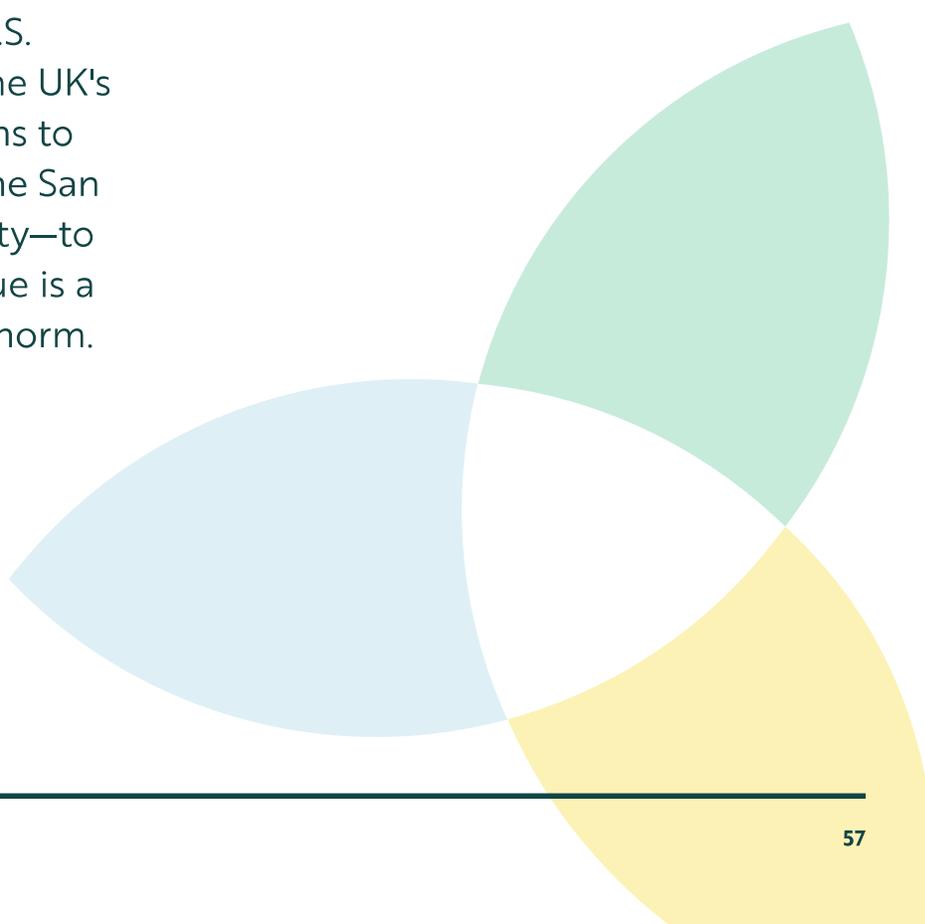
5.2 Shared Norms and Civility Pledges

Civility pledges and shared norms templates are formal commitments that establish clear behavioural expectations for elected officials and the public, providing a "neutral reference point" to de-escalate conflict and define acceptable conduct.

These tools are increasingly being utilized by governance bodies globally—ranging from the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the UK's local government associations to specific local agencies like the San Diego County Water Authority—to signal that respectful dialogue is a non-negotiable community norm.

In Ontario, [Elect Respect](#) is a civility pledge that municipalities and citizens can become signatories to.

For councils that want their own bespoke approach to norm setting, there are different kinds of shared norms or pledges to adopt.



Option 1: The "Commitment to Civil Behaviour"

(Procedural Focus)

This template focuses on the mechanics of the meeting and specific behavioural constraints. It is best suited for councils seeking clear, enforceable boundaries.

Council Commitment to Civil Governance



To maintain a productive working environment and retain public trust, the council commits to the following standards:

- 1. Unity of Purpose:** We will support the municipality's mission and bring authority-related concerns to the council table for open discussion rather than letting them fester.
- 2. Constructive Debate:** We will focus on the problem, not the person. When addressing a problem, we commit to offering alternative solutions rather than just opposition.
- 3. Respect for Roles:** We will show respect to each other as elected representatives and to staff as professional public servants. We will adhere to the "Noses In, Fingers Out" principle, respecting the distinction between policy (Council) and administration (Staff).
- 4. Meeting Decorum:**
 - We will listen to understand, not just to reply.
 - One person speaks at a time; we will not interrupt colleagues or staff.
 - We will limit side conversations and turn off mobile devices to demonstrate active listening.
- 5. Confidentiality:** We will strictly maintain the confidentiality of materials and discussions held in closed meetings (in-camera), honoring our legal obligations under the Municipal Act.
- 6. Self-Correction:** We pledge to correct ourselves and accept correction from the chair constructively should our conduct fall below this standard.

Option 2: The "Pledge of Civility"

(Values Focus)

This template is broader and focuses on the culture of the organization. It is useful for setting a tone of inclusion and respect, particularly regarding public interaction.

Statement of Values and Civility



- 1. Governance Matters:** We acknowledge that the manner in which we govern ourselves is often as important as the positions we take.
- 2. Valuing Divergence:** We believe our collective decisions will be better—and truer to our mission—when differing views have had the opportunity to be fully vetted and considered. Disagreement is necessary for democracy, but we will disagree without being disagreeable.
- 3. Right to Respect:** All those who appear before the council—including residents, staff, and fellow members—have the right to be treated with respect, courtesy, and openness.
- 4. Zero Tolerance for Hate:** We unequivocally condemn hate speech, discrimination, and harassment. We commit to a standard where such behaviour is never acceptable in our chambers or on our digital platforms
- 5. Accountability:** We commit to conducting ourselves with civility at all times. If we fail to meet these standards, we will take responsibility for our actions and seek to repair the harm.

Option 3: Short-Form Meeting Opener

(The "Community Character" Statement)

Some councils find it effective to read a brief statement at the beginning of meetings to set the stage for the public and the members. This can be read by the Chair or rotated among members.

Template



"Welcome to this meeting of the [Name] Council. This forum is a place for democracy, respectful discussion and debate. We are committed to the values of integrity, honesty, responsibility, and respect. We ask that everyone present—council members, staff, and the public—exercise self-discipline. Please focus your comments on the issues at hand, respect the time limits, and accord others the same courtesy you wish to receive. Let us work together to build a community where diverse views are heard and valued."

Implementation Tips for CAOs and Clerks

Formalization: Do not just agree verbally. Adopt the pledge via resolution or have all members sign a ceremonial copy to hang in the council chambers.

Refresh: Revisit the pledge annually or at the start of every new term to ensure buy-in from new members.

Orientation: Include the pledge in the orientation package for candidates and newly elected officials so expectations are set before the first meeting.

Public Visibility: Post the pledge on the municipal website and at the entrance to the council chambers. This signals to the public that abuse and intimidation are not welcome.

5.3 Policy Tools for Managing Conflict

Beyond pledges, councils should enact specific policies to provide structure, manage conflict, and stipulate consequences for misconduct. This section outlines four specific policy instruments that define boundaries, clarify roles, and provide mechanisms for resolution.

A Robust Procedure By-law

The **Procedure By-law** is the primary tool for maintaining order. It should be viewed not just as a scheduling tool, but as a mechanism to enforce decorum.

Purpose: To govern the proceedings of meetings and provide the chair with enforceable rules to manage debate and behaviour.

Key Provisions to Adopt:

Role of the chair: Explicitly empower the chair to preserve order, enforce rules, and rule on whether motions or speakers are out of order.

One Speaker at a Time: Enforce the rule that only one person speaks at a time and must be recognized by the chair.

Focus on the Issue: Include a provision that requires debate to focus on the item and policy in question, strictly prohibiting personal attacks or comments regarding the motives of other members.

Electronic Participation: Clearly define rules for electronic participation to ensure remote members are held to the same standards of decorum and attention as those physically present. Ensure that video participation is monitored in the same manner as the live session, and that participant conduct online aligns with what is expected of participants in-person.

Enhanced Code of Conduct

Every municipality should have a Code of Conduct that goes beyond financial impropriety to address behavioural standards and interpersonal conduct.

Purpose: To set ethical standards for members of council and local boards and provide a mechanism for accountability.

Key Provisions to Adopt:

Respectful Conduct: mandated provisions regarding respectful conduct toward officers, employees, and fellow members.

Social Media Usage: A specific section governing members' conduct online, clarifying that the Code applies to communication on social media platforms.

Non-Interference: Provisions prohibiting members from using their office to attempt to influence staff or interfere in administrative duties (operationalizing the "Noses In, Fingers Out" principle).

Reprisal Protection: A clause prohibiting members from engaging in reprisal or threats against anyone who files a complaint or cooperates with an inquiry.

Council-Staff Relations Policy

Conflict often arises from role confusion between elected officials (policy) and staff (administration). A formal policy clarifies these lanes.

Purpose: To clearly define the distinct roles of staff (neutral advice, implementation) and council (policy, decision-making) and manage the relationship between them.

Key Provisions to Adopt:

Role Clarity: Explicit definitions of the CAO's role as the only employee reporting directly to council, and the restriction of individual members of council giving direction to staff.

Respectful Communication: Standards for how inquiries are made to staff, ensuring they are not subjected to abuse or undue pressure.

NIFO Principle: Formal adoption of the "Noses In, Fingers Out" principle to prevent members of council from interfering in day-to-day operations, a frequent source of friction.

Complaint and Inquiry Protocol

Policies are ineffective without a clear process for enforcement. This protocol defines how complaints are handled.

Purpose: To set out how to file complaints against members regarding code of conduct contraventions and how the integrity commissioner will investigate.

Key Provisions to Adopt:

Informal Resolution: Include an option for mediation or informal resolution. This allows the integrity commissioner to resolve interpersonal disputes without a costly, formal investigation, saving time and money.

Frivolous Complaints: Give the integrity commissioner discretion to dismiss complaints that are frivolous, vexatious, or made in bad faith to prevent the weaponization of the complaint process.

Timelines: Establish reasonable time limits for filing and reviewing complaints to prevent issues from dragging on and poisoning the council environment.

Social Media Policy

Given that online interactions are a major driver of modern political conflict, a specific policy or detailed section within the Code of Conduct is critical.

Purpose: To govern how members of council and senior staff represent themselves and the municipality online.

Key Provisions to Adopt:

Personal vs. Political: Clear distinction between personal accounts, campaign profiles, and official municipal channels.

Zero Tolerance for Hate: A statement that hate speech, harassment, and discrimination are never acceptable, even on personal political platforms.

Engagement Rules: Guidelines on how to disengage from toxicity and avoiding "feeding the trolls" to prevent online conflicts from spilling into the council chamber.

5.4 How to Be an Active Bystander

Bystander inaction when witnessing harassment, bullying, or other targeted uncivil behaviour is rarely due to apathy; rather, it stems from psychological barriers such as a diffusion of responsibility (assuming someone else will act) and a crowd mentality (assuming the situation is not an emergency because others are not reacting). To move from a passive witness to an active bystander, sometimes called an "upstander," an individual must navigate a specific decision-making process: noticing the event, interpreting it as a problem, assuming personal responsibility, knowing how to intervene and, finally, taking action.

The 5Ds of Bystander Intervention

The "5Ds" are a set of versatile strategies designed to help bystanders safely intervene in situations of harassment or incivility.

1 Direct

Intervene by directly addressing the situation or the individuals involved. This can involve setting boundaries by telling the aggressor, "That is not okay," or checking in with the person being targeted by asking, "Are you okay?". When using this method, be firm, clear, and concise, focusing on the behaviour rather than attacking the person to avoid escalating the conflict.

2 **Distract**

De-escalate the situation by creating a diversion that interrupts the harassment or shifts attention away from the conflict. This is a subtle approach that ignores the aggressor and engages the target, such as asking for the time, pretending to know the person, or accidentally dropping an item to create a commotion.

3 **Delegate**

Seek assistance from a third party who may be better positioned or have more authority to intervene. In a municipal or public meeting context, this could involve alerting a supervisor, security personnel, or a presiding official to help you intervene.

4 **Delay**

Check in with the person who experienced the harm after the incident is over. This action validates their experience and shows them they are valued; support can include listening without judgement, offering resources, or simply asking if they need anything.

5 **Document**

If it is safe and someone else is already assisting the victim, create a record of the incident by taking notes, photos, or video. Always ask the person who was harmed what they want to do with the documentation, such as share it with meeting officials or law enforcement. Never post or share it without their explicit consent, as doing so can cause further trauma or harassment.

Learn More

Organization	Links
Ombudsman Ontario <u>Codes of Conduct and Integrity Commissioners - Guide for Municipalities</u>	ombudsman.on.ca
University of Western Ontario Ivey Executive Education <u>Understanding and Counteracting Incivility in Canadian Municipal Politics</u>	ivey.uwo.ca
iBABS (Euronext) <u>The 7 Chairing Meetings Skills That Every Chair Should Develop</u>	ibabs.com
City Clerk’s Office (City of Toronto) <u>Meeting Processes and Simplified Rules of Procedure</u>	toronto.ca
Government of Ontario <u>The Ontario Municipal Councillor’s Guide on Council Meetings</u>	ontario.ca
Institute for Local Government (USA) <u>Tips for Promoting Civility in Public Meetings (PDF)</u>	ca-ilg.org
Local Government Association (UK) <u>Councillor Workbook – Chairing Skills (PDF)</u>	local.gov.uk
GagnonStrategix (for the New Brunswick Government) <u>Governance Best Practices (PDF)</u>	gnb.ca
Western City Magazine (League of California Cities, USA) <u>Essential Tips for Effective City Council Meetings</u>	westerncity.com

Organization	Links
National Association of Counties (USA) <u>The Right Way to Run A Meeting – A Guide for Council Officials (PDF)</u>	naco.org
Strong Cities Network <u>Policy Brief – City Leadership in the Face of Rising Incivility and Polarisation: Ten Considerations for Mayors and Local Governments</u>	strongcitiesnetwork.org
Elect Respect (Ontario) <u>Civility Pledge</u>	electrespect.ca
National Association of Local Councils (UK) <u>Civility and Respect Pledge</u>	nalc.gov.uk
City of Whitehorse (Yukon) <u>Civility Policy</u>	whitehorse.ca
Institute for Local Government <u>Everyday Ethics for Local Officials – Promoting Civility at Public Meetings: Concepts and Practices (PDF)</u>	ca-ilg.org
Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (USA) <u>De-Escalation Tip Sheet (PDF)</u>	cisa.gov
States United Democracy Center (USA) <u>De-Escalation: A Toolkit for Election Officials (PDF)</u>	statesunited.org

Organization	Links
Princeton University Bridging Divides Initiative (USA) Resource on De-Escalation and Communication Around Contentious Meetings for Local Elected Officials (PDF)	statesunited.org
American Psychological Association Bystander Intervention Tip Sheet	apa.org
Wilfrid Laurier University 5Ds Direct, Delegate, Delay, Distract and Document	students.wlu.ca
University of Waterloo Office of Equity, Diversity, and Anti-Racism Bystander Intervention Resource Sheet (PDF)	uwaterloo.ca

Using Social Media and Online Platforms

6

6.0 Using Social Media and Online Platforms

Social media is now a common venue for civic communication, but it is not a neutral or cost-free tool for municipalities. While these platforms can help reach residents quickly, they also introduce legal, operational, and democratic risks that require careful judgement about when and how they are used.

When used appropriately, social media can support municipal work by sharing information about council decisions and local priorities. It can be used to set the record straight when misinformation and disinformation is swirling. The vacuum left by the retreat of news media and journalism at the local level means that social media is the only way for council and staff to disseminate information to residents in a timely manner.

Different platforms serve different purposes, and municipalities can choose channels based on their communication objectives and the audiences they aim to reach:

Facebook is a common starting point for community engagement and institutional updates;

X (formerly Twitter) is better suited for real-time information, event coverage, and responding to public inquiries;

TikTok & Instagram can be effective for reaching younger residents through visual content;

AI tools such as Grok on X have been the subject of recent controversy and underscore the importance of ongoing risk assessment, content moderation, clear account controls, and careful oversight of automated or algorithmic features.

At the same time, online behaviour shapes offline civic life. Harassment and abuse affect who feels able to participate, who is willing to engage publicly, and who considers running for office or working in municipal roles. Poorly managed platforms can narrow participation and weaken public trust. The informal nature of social media also creates legal and ethical exposure: accounts and posts are often perceived as extensions of official authority, creating risks related to conduct, privacy, and the use of public resources.

6.1 Moderation Principles for Online Forums and When to Disengage

Without clear moderation standards, online engagement can quickly expose municipalities to legal risk, privacy and data breaches, and staff harm. The principles below provide a defensible baseline for managing these risks while preserving open civic discussion.

1 Publish Your "House Rules"

You cannot enforce rules you have not posted. Before moderating content, publish a Social Media Community Policy or Terms of Use and link to it prominently. This policy provides the authority to hide or remove content. At minimum, prohibited content should include:

- Discrimination or harassment
- Threats, illegal activity, or copyright violations
- Spam or commercial solicitation
- Demonstrably false information related to elections, public health, or safety

2 Enforce Behaviour, Not Opinion

(Viewpoint Neutrality)

Moderation must be viewpoint-neutral. Distinguish between **what** is being said and **how** it is expressed. Criticism of council or staff is protected political speech. Abusive, threatening, or discriminatory conduct is not. Removing content based on disagreement rather than behaviour may violate Charter protections.

3 Protect Privacy

(No Casework in Public)

Social media is not a secure channel. Public threads are inappropriate for handling service requests or sharing personal information.

- Remove posts containing personal or identifying details
- Redirect residents to a secure channel, explaining the privacy rationale

4 Use a Graduated Response

Apply the least intrusive intervention needed:

- Hide spam or irrelevant content
- Preemptively disable comments on certain hot-button topics
- Delete material that clearly violates posted rules (retain records)
- Block only after repeated violations or credible threats

5 Documenting Evidence for Potential Legal Action

If legal action may be pursued, it is important to preserve thorough and accurate records of all relevant interactions:

Screenshots: Capture clear images of all messages, comments, posts, or images.

Ensure each screenshot shows timestamps and the sender's username or profile URL.

Detailed Log: Maintain a chronological record of incidents, noting the date, time, platform, and a concise description of what occurred.

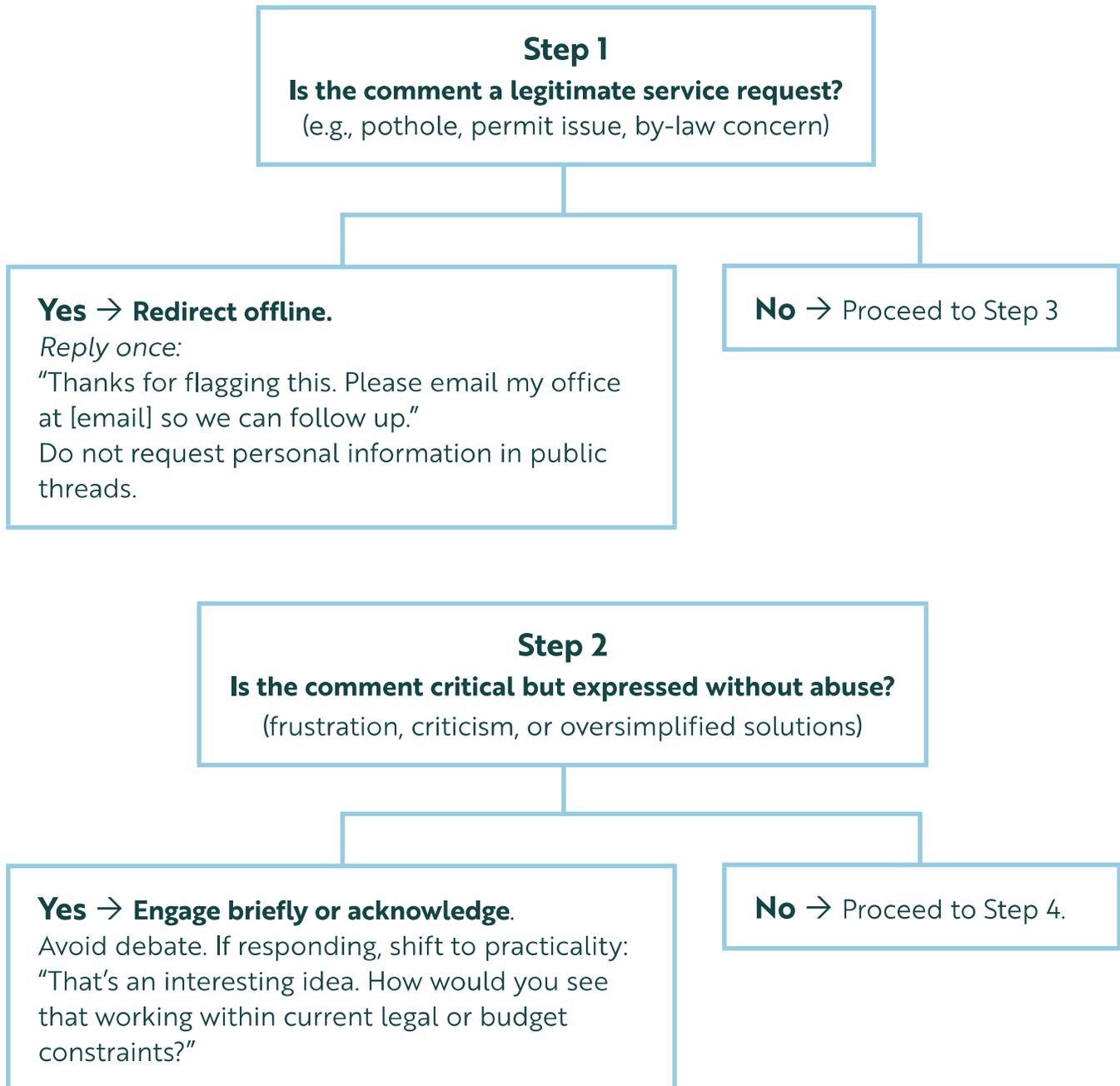
- Note that some may view any of these actions as preventing dissent or infringing on free speech, and escalation is possible; seek legal advice on an appropriate policy when uncertain.

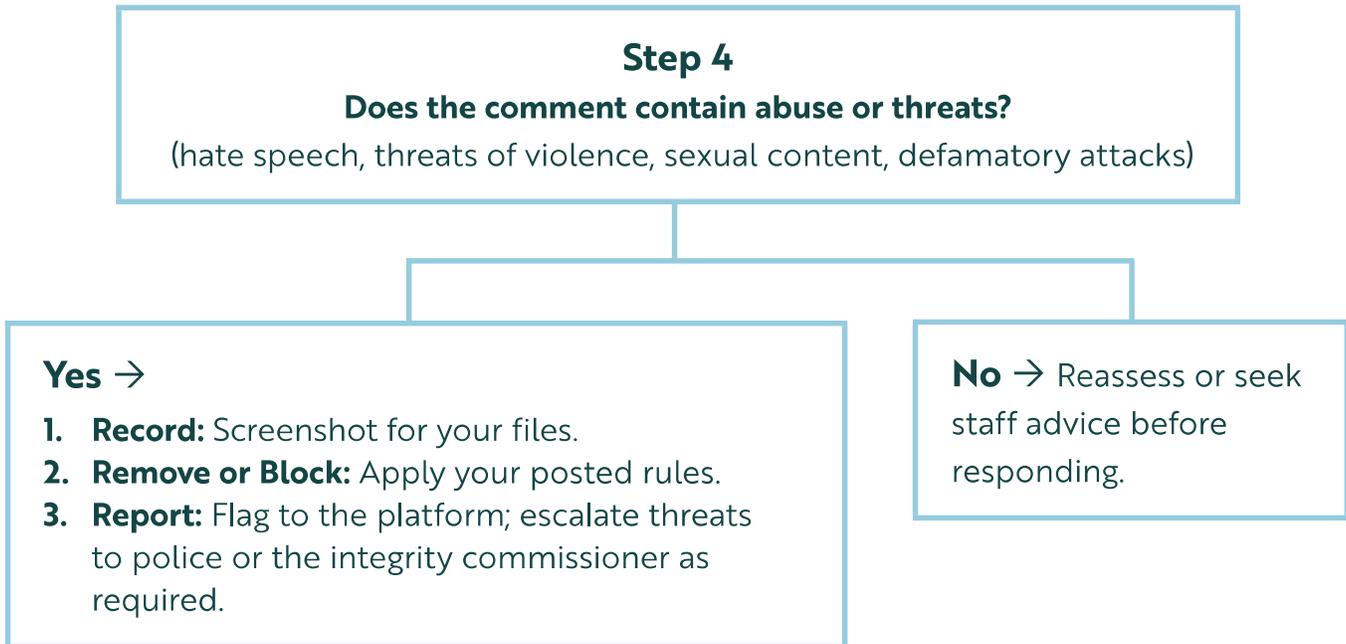
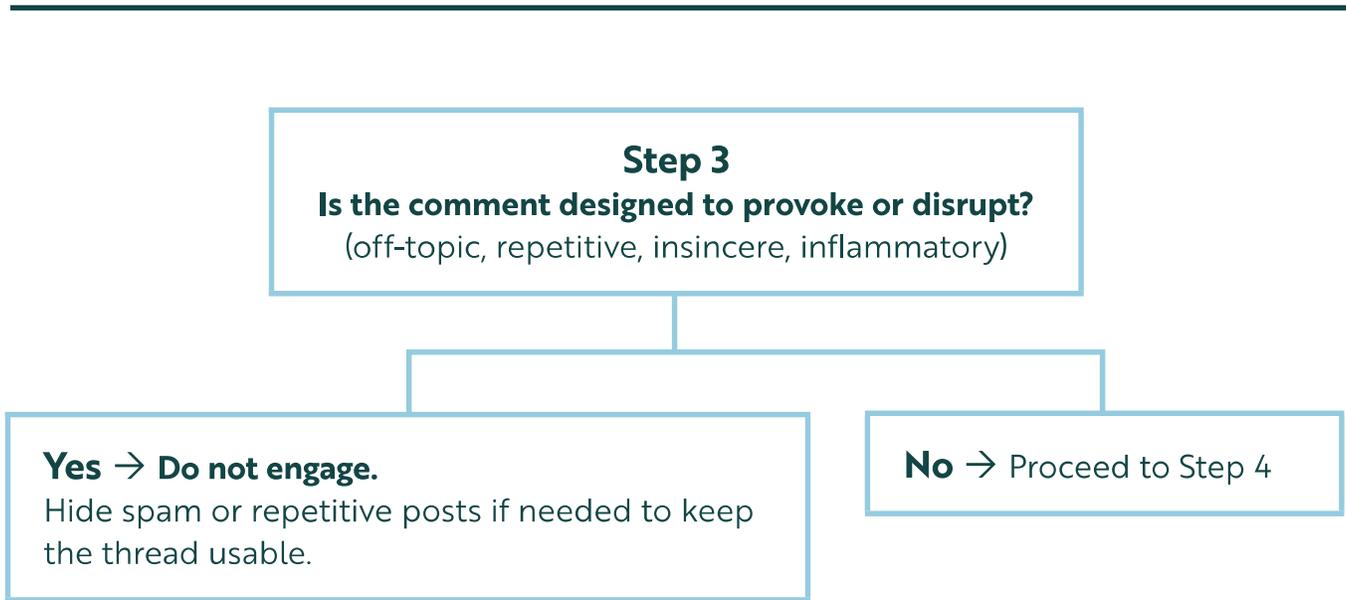
Moderation Analogy:

A municipal page is like a community notice board. Residents may criticize municipal decisions, but they may not deface the "board", post threats, or use it for commercial advertising. Moderation removes harmful conduct—not unpopular opinions.

Disengagement Decision Tree

Engaging online does not mean you are required to suffer abuse. **"Don't feed the trolls"** is a core tenet of digital survival. Use this decision tree to determine when to engage, when to ignore, and when to block.





Pulse check:
When in doubt, ask: Will this response advance service—or escalate the conflict?
If engagement adds heat rather than clarity, disengagement is the appropriate professional choice.

6.2 Personal vs. Official Account Guidance

One of the most common pitfalls for elected officials and senior staff is the blurring of lines between a "personal" opinion and an "official" statement. In the municipal context, how you set up and use your account determines your liability, your ability to moderate comments, and your obligations under your Code of Conduct and privacy legislation (such as the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act).

The "Official" Test

According to the Toronto Integrity Commissioner, an account is likely considered official (and therefore subject to Council Codes of Conduct and records retention rules) if it meets any of the following criteria:

Identity: You use your official title (e.g., "Councillor," "Mayor," "CAO") in the handle, username, or profile description.

Resources: The account is managed using municipal devices (computers, smartphones) or maintained by municipal staff or volunteers.

Contact Info: You list your city hall or municipal email address/phone number for registration or contact.

Branding: You use the municipal logo or other corporate imagery.

Promotion: The account is linked from the municipality's official website or your official constituency site.

The "Personal" Test

To maintain a truly personal account where you retain greater control over content and blocking, you must strictly separate it from your office.

No Official Business: You cannot use the account to make official announcements, solicit public input on municipal decisions, or issue orders.

Clear Disclaimers: Clearly state that views are your own.

No Municipal Resources: You cannot engage in this account during working hours or using municipal hardware.

The "Hybrid" Trap:

Many officials attempt to run "hybrid" accounts. Be warned: if you mix personal family photos with official policy announcements, the account will likely be treated as official by integrity commissioners and the courts. If you use your title, you are trading on the influence of your office, and the Code of Conduct applies.

Election Year Scrubbing

During an election period, the distinction becomes critical to avoid using municipal resources for campaigning. You generally have two options:

- 1. Separate Accounts:** Maintain a distinct "Re-Elect" account funded entirely by your campaign. This is the safest approach.
- 2. Conversion:** If you use your official account for campaigning, you must "scrub" it during the election period. This involves removing references to your official title, removing municipal logos, and ensuring no staff or city devices are used to update it.

6.3 Policies to Consider for Online Platforms

To professionalize your digital governance and protect against liability, your municipality should consider adopting or updating three specific types of policy documents. These examples are drawn from established Canadian municipal frameworks.

External "House Rules" (Community Guidelines)

You need a public-facing document linked in your bio or "About" section that explicitly grants you the licence to moderate. Without this, blocking users may be seen as arbitrary or discriminatory.

Prohibited Content: Clearly list what is not allowed. This can include: insulting, threatening, or harassing language; promotion of illegal activity; spam; and content that violates another person's privacy.

Right to Remove: State clearly: "We reserve the right to hide and/or remove content that does not abide by these Guidelines".

Disclaimer on Endorsements: State that "following," "liking," or "sharing" content does not constitute an official endorsement of the views expressed.

Internal Elected Official Guidance

(Code of Conduct application)

This internal policy clarifies how the Code of Conduct applies to digital actions, specifically distinguishing between "Official" and "Personal/Election" accounts to prevent the misuse of municipal resources.

The "Official" Definition: Define an account as official if it uses a corporate email for registration, uses the municipal logo, or is maintained by municipal staff/devices.

Election Year Protocol: Mandate that during an election period, official accounts must either be "scrubbed" of municipal branding and titles or kept distinct from new campaign accounts. No municipal resources (computers, staff time) can be used for campaign content.

In-Camera Confidentiality: Explicitly prohibit the use of social media during in-camera meetings to prevent inadvertent disclosure of confidential information or real-time broadcasting of privileged proceedings.

Service Level Expectations

(Terms of Use)

Manage public expectations regarding response times and service requests to protect staff workflow and resident privacy.

Not for Formal Complaints: State clearly that social media is not the venue for official complaints or complex service requests because platforms are not confidential. Direct these to a secure web form, email, or phone number.

Availability: Define monitoring hours (e.g., "Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm"). Explicitly state that accounts are not monitored 24/7 to avoid liability during emergencies.

Privacy Warning: Remind users that social media is a public record. Warn them never to post personal details (addresses, file numbers) on the public feed.

Learn More

Organization	Links
Office of the Integrity Commissioner Toronto: Use of Social Media by Council Members (PDF)	toronto.ca
Ombudsman Toronto Social Media Policy (PDF)	uwaterloo.ca
Ombudsman Ontario Approach to Social Media Engagement	ombudsman.on.ca
City of Victoria Forum Etiquette & Moderation	engage.victoria.ca
City of Markham Social Media Community Guidelines	markham.ca
City of Peterborough Social Media Policy (PDF)	peterborough.ca
Samara Centre for Democracy The 2023 Toronto Mayoral By-election Report	samaracentre.ca
UK Parliament Corporate Use of Social Networking Sites (PDF)	parliament.uk
UK Department for Work & Pensions Guidance on Social Media Policy	gov.uk

Organization	Links
UK Society of Local Council Clerks <u>Civility and Respect Guide to Social Media</u>	slcc.co.uk
UK City of London <u>Employee Handbook: Social Media Policy (PDF)</u>	democracy.cityoflondon.gov.uk
UK City of London <u>Social Media FAQs (PDF)</u>	democracy.cityoflondon.gov.uk
USA Office of the Chief Technology Officer <u>Social Media Access and Use Policy</u>	octo.dc.gov
USA Office of Personnel Management <u>Social Media Policy (PDF)</u>	opm.gov
USA Association of Washington Cities <u>Guidelines for Elected and Appointed Officials Using Social Media</u>	wacities.org
USA New York State <u>Social Media Policy</u>	ny.gov
USA Election Assistance Commission <u>Social Media Comment Policy</u>	eac.gov
Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University <u>Social Media for Public Officials 2.0 Factsheet</u>	knightcolumbia.org

Self-Care for Municipal Leaders and Staff

7

7.0 Self-Care for Municipal Leaders and Staff

Municipal work increasingly takes place in high-pressure environments shaped by public scrutiny, complex decision-making, and frequent conflict. These conditions place sustained demands on the mental and emotional capacity of elected officials and staff, making well-being an operational concern as well as a personal one.

Self-care matters because burnout and chronic stress do not only affect individuals; they shape how institutions function. In municipal roles, fatigue, hypervigilance, and emotional exhaustion can impair judgement, narrow attention to immediate crises, and increase the likelihood of escalation in already tense situations.

Over time, unmanaged stress contributes to staff turnover, withdrawal from public engagement, and weakened democratic participation. Protecting mental well-being is therefore central to risk management, workplace safety, and public trust.

The section outlines practical strategies for recognizing and responding to stress before it becomes debilitating. It identifies early warning signs of burnout and offers self-protection and recovery practices. This section also highlights the role of peer and professional support networks in sustaining perspective and judgement.

7.1 Warning Signs of Burnout

In municipal roles marked by high scrutiny and frequent conflict, mental well-being is a professional requirement. Sustained exposure to pressure and hostility increases the risk of burnout, which rarely appears suddenly. It develops when ongoing stress outpaces recovery. Recognizing early warning signs allows for intervention before health, judgement, or performance are affected.



Physical signs often appear first:

Persistent fatigue

Exhaustion despite rest, insomnia, or frequent waking.

Stress-related symptoms

Headaches, muscle tension, chest discomfort, or digestive issues.

Physical anxiety

Elevated heart rate or blood pressure outside of acute situations.



Cognitive and decision making signs are especially consequential in leadership roles:

Decision fatigue

Difficulty making routine or low-stakes decisions.

Narrowed focus

Trouble balancing immediate demands with long-term goals.

Reduced concentration

Difficulty focusing in meetings or reviewing material.



Emotional and behavioural signs often become visible to others:

Hypervigilance

Constantly anticipating conflict or hostility.

Emotional masking

Feeling compelled to act calm or show interest you do not feel.

Compassion fatigue

Reduced empathy, growing cynicism toward constituents.

Withdrawal

Avoiding public engagement, colleagues, or meetings.

Irritability

Shortened temper or difficulty managing frustration.

It is important to note, however, that burnout is rarely isolated to one individual. Organizational warning signs include increased absenteeism and turnover, declining morale, and a defensive or distrustful posture toward the public.

7.2 Practical and Realistic Self-Protection Strategies

Safety protocols must be standard operating procedure, not an afterthought to combat increasing incivility. Effective self-protection requires a holistic approach that secures your physical environment and your mental bandwidth.

Psychological Self-defence

Protecting your decision-making capacity is as important as physical safety.

Validate the Experience: Acknowledge that harassment is a systemic issue, not a "part of the job" you must silently endure. If you feel hypervigilance or dread, step back and engage your support network immediately.

Monitor Your "Battery": Be alert to signs of anxiety (hypervigilance) or depression (difficulty concentrating, irritability). These are not weaknesses; they are physiological responses to chronic stress that impair your ability to serve.

Normalize Professional Support: Just as CEOs use executive coaching, municipal leaders should utilize therapy and counseling to maintain performance. Access organizational resources or private therapy to address trauma and protect your family from the stress of your role.

Mandatory Debriefing: After a hostile interaction, engage in immediate "peer debriefing." This quick conversation off-loads stress and helps "close the stress cycle" so you do not carry the incident home.

Tactical & Operational Breaks

Recovery is an operational requirement, not a luxury.

The "Time Out": During a heated interaction, if you feel your control slipping, call a "time out." Tell the individual, "These are important questions/comments. I need a five-minute break to review the file," and step away. This allows emotions to cool and helps you regain control of the interaction.

Protect Your Recovery Time: Resilience requires regular time away from high-pressure environments. Enforce basic boundaries like taking lunch breaks and annual leave to prevent decision fatigue and irritability.

Digital Hygiene and Situational Awareness

Filter, Don't Absorb: If possible, have a staff member monitor social media feeds to flag threats. This keeps everyone informed of potential risks.

Document Everything: Do not delete abusive messages immediately. Screenshot and log them to establish a pattern of conduct, which is essential if legal intervention becomes necessary.

Strict Boundaries: Do not conduct municipal business on personal social media or private phone lines.

De-Escalation and Disengagement

Name the Behaviour: If a person shouts or becomes aggressive, explicitly name it: *"I cannot continue this meeting if you are yelling"*.

The "Broken Record": If a person escalates, do not argue or justify. Repeat your boundary calmly and consistently (e.g., *"As I said, I am ending this call now."*).

Disengage: You have no obligation to endure abuse. If you feel an imminent risk of harm, remove yourself immediately. Go to a secure area and lock the door.

Administrative Tools

When informal strategies fail, use formal mechanisms to protect the institution.

Incident Reporting: Log every security incident. A pattern of minor aggressions often precedes a major event; documentation allows the municipality to spot the escalation and intervene.

Restrict Access: Use trespass notices to ban threatening individuals from municipal property. This is a valid administrative response to ensure workplace safety.

7.3 Peer Support Options

Municipal leadership can be isolating. Elected officials and senior staff often operate without true peers inside their own organizations and may feel constrained in what they can share publicly or internally. Over time, this isolation limits perspective and increases the risk of misjudgement during high-pressure situations.

Seeking peer support beyond one's immediate personal or professional circle—through networks of colleagues in other municipalities, professional associations, or mentorship groups—can counteract this isolation. External peers provide perspective, continuity, and comparison, helping leaders distinguish between personal strain and systemic pressure, and offering a safe space to reflect on challenging decisions.

Peer Connections

A small external “reality-check” network—such as a mentor, coach, or trusted colleague outside your reporting line—can play a critical role. These individuals are positioned to notice shifts in judgement, tone, or risk tolerance that may not be visible internally, particularly during prolonged controversy or crisis.

Cross-Jurisdictional, Role-Based Networks

For elected officials, peer support within one's own council may be complicated by political dynamics. Cross-jurisdictional and role-based networks—such as mayor-to-mayor or CAO-to-CAO groups—often provide safer forums for candid discussion. These connections help normalize challenges and reduce the tendency to interpret persistent conflict or abuse as individual failure.

Professional Association Resources

Beyond informal relationships, municipal staff should make use of professional association resources designed specifically for leadership support.

- AMO offers a range of opportunities through its conferences, forums, and education workshops. [Workshop topics](#) have included The Mayor-CAO Relationship; and an array of topics from managing conflict, human rights, land use planning, as only some examples. AMO is currently developing a peer-to-peer (mentoring) support program, new council education and more.
- The Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) offers Leadership Hubs that provide access to executive coaching, consultations with practice experts, and training related to leadership resilience and workplace civility.

These services connect leaders with peers who understand the legal, political, and administrative pressures unique to municipal roles.

Affinity-Based Networks

Leaders from underrepresented groups, including women and racialized officials, often face more frequent and targeted harassment. Affinity-based networks, such as women in local government associations and candidate attraction and support organizations, can provide tailored strategies and shared understanding that general peer networks may not fully offer.

Peer support should be understood as a professional infrastructure, not a personal coping mechanism. Maintaining these connections helps sustain judgement, perspective, and decision-making capacity over the long term.

Learn More

Organization	Links
American Psychological Association <u>Impact of election stress</u>	<u>apa.org</u>
American Psychological Association <u>Managing stress related to political change</u>	<u>apa.org</u>
Canadian Association of Municipal Administrations <u>Standing Strong Toolkit (PDF)</u>	<u>camacam.ca</u>
New Zealand Parliament Ombudsman <u>Managing unreasonable complainant conduct (PDF)</u>	<u>ombudsman.parliament.nz</u>
Better Politics Foundation <u>Mere Mortals – The State of Politicians’ Mental Wellbeing and Why It Matters</u>	<u>betterpolitics.foundation</u>
AMCTO <u>Your Voice Matters: Results from Our Harassment & Incivility Survey</u>	<u>amcto.com</u>
Canadian Centre for Addictions <u>7 Warning Signs of Burnout at Work</u>	<u>canadiancentreforaddictions.org</u>
Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety <u>Mental Health - Job Burnout</u>	<u>ccohs.ca</u>
Queen’s University <u>Burnout: Signs, Causes, and Preventative Strategies</u>	<u>pros.educ.queensu.ca</u>

Candidate Support Organization	Links
electHER NOW	electhernow.ca
Equal Voice	equalvoice.ca
Guelph Campaign School	municipalcampaignschool.ca/ Guelph
Leadership féminin Prescott-Russell	leadershipfemininpr.ca
Nominee	gonominee.com
Operation Black Vote Canada	obvc.ca
Oxford Campaign School	municipalcampaignschool.ca/ oxford
PoliticsNOW	polinow.org
ProudPolitics	proudpolitics.org
The Canadian-Muslim Vote	canadianmuslimvote.ca
The Jean Collective	thejeancollective.ca
Waterloo Region Women’s Campaign School	wrwomenrun.wordpress.com
Wellington Campaign School	municipalcampaignschool.ca/ wellington

Professional Development and Education

8

8.0 Professional Development and Education

The role of a municipal member of council has become a complex, 24/7 position requiring high-level decision-making and personal resilience. While elected officials bring valuable diverse life experiences to the table, they are not expected to be immediate experts in land use planning, municipal finance, or conflict mediation upon taking the oath of office. This section argues that continuous professional development is not a "perk" or a luxury item to be cut when budgets are tight, but a critical risk management strategy necessary for good governance and organizational stability.

Investing in professional development protects the municipality by:

Supporting Council and Staff to Work to Their Highest Scope:

Clarifying the critical distinction between council's strategic role and staff's role in operational implementation.

Enhancing Decision-Making: Moving from reactive decision-making to strategic oversight requires specific skills in analyzing data and understanding governance roles.

Preventing Toxicity: Training in conflict management and code of conduct compliance can prevent the breakdown of council relations, which is often costly to repair.

8.1 Comparative Models: Professional Development as a Core Council Practice

In Ontario, professional development is largely discretionary. It is typically funded through municipal operating budgets, often with a specific allocation per member of council for the term or year. Support is provided through associations like the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), which offers user-pay workshops and conferences.

When budgets are tight, professional development is often among the first items reduced or deferred. This approach contrasts with practices in other jurisdictions that treat councillor education as a structural requirement for democratic health.

Comparative models for consideration:

Mandatory Model

(Victoria – Australia)

The state government mandates that all mayors, deputy mayors, and members of council complete specific training within set timeframes (e.g., one month for mayors, four months for members of council). This includes mandatory annual professional development. Failure to complete training results in the withholding of allowances. Councils must report training completion in their annual reports, ensuring total transparency.

Academy Model

(Georgia, Colorado, Iowa – USA)

These jurisdictions utilize a "Municipal Leadership Academy" model. This is a structured, multi-part curriculum (e.g., Parts 1, 2, and 3) that guides officials from basics to advanced strategic thinking, treating the role as a profession requiring certification.

Capped Policy Model

(Cardston, Alberta – Canada)

To manage costs while ensuring access, some municipalities implement strict policies where members of council are entitled to a specific cap (e.g., \$2,000 per term). This creates a "use it or lose it" incentive without open-ended liability for the municipal budget.

The Case for Improvement:

Ontario municipalities should consider formalizing professional policies that protect training budgets from ad-hoc cuts, and empower members of council to take ownership of their own learning, ensuring that training is viewed as essential work rather than a luxury.

8.2 Recommended Training Topics: An Annotated Guide

Effective councils approach professional development deliberately. The goal is not to “train for everything,” but to ensure that high-risk areas—where conflict, incivility, or public mistrust often arise—are addressed early and revisited over time. Strong councils balance technical competence, relational capacity, and leadership judgement.

The categories below are intended as a practical menu. Councils should consider training and workshops on core topics and procedures within the first year of a term and to reinforce them through refreshers. Additional topics may be suitable for specific roles or council situations, as the context dictates.

A Core Orientation

(Early in the first year of the term)

Roles, authorities, and boundaries (council vs. staff): Prevents operational interference, reduces internal conflict, and protects staff from becoming targets when boundaries blur.

Meeting procedure and decision-making basics: Procedural missteps are a frequent source of public flashpoints. Strong procedural literacy supports orderly debate and reduces escalation.

Integrity, ethics, and accountability systems: Codes of conduct, conflict of interest rules, and the role of the Integrity Commissioner set expectations for respectful behaviour.

Strategic planning: Dos and don'ts of setting strategy that help shore up role clarity between council and staff.

B Governance, Finance, and Legal Risk

Municipal finance and asset management: Financial literacy reduces suspicion, misinformation, and conflict over spending decisions.

Procurement and value-for-money basics: Transparent decision-making reduces allegations of favouritism or misconduct.

Land use planning and quasi-judicial decision-making: Planning files are among the most contentious and emotionally charged; training supports defensible decisions and calmer public engagement.

Human and health services: Ontario has a distinct model in the delivery of human and health services with a centralized funding model and local delivery of services.

Human resource management: Collective bargaining and other staffing decisions that councils need to navigate.

C Civility, Conflict, and Public-Facing Conduct

De-escalation and difficult interactions: Practical boundary-setting skills help prevent harassment from becoming normalized.

Social media and communications risk: Charter-aware moderation and message discipline reduce online escalation and staff exposure to abuse.

Media relations and crisis communications: Scenario-based training prepares officials to communicate under pressure without inflaming conflict.

Community engagement: Good practice on how to effectively engage residents in your community.

D Safety, Security, and Information Protection

Personal and workplace security basics: Training helps identify early warning signs of escalation and supports appropriate responses.

Cybersecurity and account hygiene: Reduces impersonation, doxxing, and digital harassment risks.

E Equity, Human Rights, and Accessibility

Human rights and respectful service: Understanding systemic barriers reduces harm and conflict rooted in exclusion or misunderstanding.

Accessible meetings and communications: Improves participation and lowers frustration that can fuel incivility.

Indigenous–municipal relations: Protocol awareness helps avoid missteps that escalate tensions or damage relationships.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: How to bring consideration for those historically excluded from decision making to the council decisions and deliberations.

F Leadership Development

Chairing and meeting management: Strong chairs set the tone for respectful debate and protect staff and delegations.

Council–CAO relationship training: Role clarity reduces internal dysfunction that often spills into public conflict.

Coaching and peer learning: Coaching and cohort-style programs reduce isolation and improve judgement under sustained pressure.

8.3 Tips for Making Professional Development Practical

Training only reduces risk if it is planned, visible, and taken up by council. The following practices help translate professional development from an aspirational goal into a routine part of municipal governance.

AMO is currently exploring these approaches and you can reach out to them for more information.

Create a dedicated council learning line item



Establish a clearly named budget line for council education and training, rather than burying costs within general conference or travel accounts. This increases transparency, protects learning funds from ad hoc cuts, and reinforces that training is essential governance work.

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Use shared and regional training models



Partner with neighbouring municipalities to deliver joint sessions, particularly for specialized or high-risk topics such as land use planning, integrity systems, and media or social media risk. Shared training reduces costs, builds peer networks, and supports consistency across regions.

Adopt a term-based learning plan

Structure professional development across the council term. For example:

Year 1: Core orientation and high-risk topics (roles and boundaries, integrity, planning, finance).

Years 2–4: Targeted refreshers, leadership development, and deeper dives into emerging risks (communications, conflict, security).

A shared plan helps normalize learning and reduces the perception that training is remedial or optional.

Leverage sector and association resources

Make routine use of offerings from municipal associations and trusted providers to avoid reinventing content and to ensure training reflects current legal and governance standards. These are great resources that can support smaller, less-resourced municipalities

Document participation and revisit annually

Track training uptake and review learning priorities annually to ensure coverage of core risks and responsiveness to new challenges.

Councils that treat professional development as infrastructure—planned, budgeted, and revisited—are better equipped to manage complexity, prevent dysfunction, and sustain effective leadership over a full term.

Learn More

Organization	Links
Association of Municipalities of Ontario Education Workshops	amo.on.ca
Cardston Ontario (Canada) Professional Development Fund for Councillors Policy (PDF)	cardston.ca
Action! Chinese Canadians Together Foundation (Canada): Aspire to Act Leadership Training Program	acctfoundation.ca
Victoria State Government (Australia) Guidance on the Mandatory Training for Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors (PDF)	localgovernment.vic.gov.au
Municipal Association of Victoria (Australia) Citizen to Councillor Guide (PDF)	mav.asn.au
Georgia Municipal Association (USA) Certificate Programs	gacities.com
Civic Results - Colorado (USA) Municipal Leadership Academy	civicresults.org
Iowa League of Cities (USA) Municipal Leadership Academy	iowaleague.org

Organization	Links
International City/County Management Association (USA) <u>Practices for Effective Local Government Management and Leadership</u>	iowaleague.org
Local Government Association (UK) <u>Councillor Development Courses</u>	local.gov.uk
South West Councils (UK) <u>Councillor Development Courses</u>	swcouncils.gov.uk
City of York Council (UK) <u>Member Training & Development Policy (PDF)</u>	york.gov.uk
Improvement Service (Scotland) <u>Elected Members Development</u>	improvementservice.org
University of Birmingham Public Service Academy <u>The 21st Century Councillor (PDF)</u>	21stcenturypublicservant.wordpress.com



Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)

155 University Ave., Suite 800, Toronto, ON M5H 3C6

Telephone direct: 416-971-9856
Fax: 416-971-6191
Toll-free in Ontario: 1-877-4-AMO-LAS (1-877-426-6527)
E-mail: amo@amo.on.ca
Website: amo.on.ca

[Click here to read the full newsletter](#)

Pikwakanagan Tibadjumowin

CHÌBAYATIGO-KÌJIGAD AKAKODJISH KIZIS 6TH, 2026

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 6TH, 2026

WWW.ALGONQUINSOFPIKWAKANAGAN.COM | 613-625-2800

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- News & Events
 - Trapping Course (**POSTPONED**)
 - RCDSB Save the Date
 - Annual Fishing Derby (AOPFN Fire & Rescue)
- Volunteers Needed
 - Round Dance Planning Committee
 - Correctional Service of Canada
- Resources and Contacts
 - Welcoming Taytun
- Health Updates
 - Community Health Calendar (February)
 - Heart Health Month
 - Wear Red Day (**Feb. 7th**)
 - Movement is Medicine Lunch and Learn
 - Sexual Health Awareness Week (**Upcoming**)
- Employment Opportunities
 - Training Opportunities (Various)
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 - Caterer Call Out
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 - Snow Removal for Home Care Clients
 - Hours of Operation
 - Membership Additions

Membership Notice

Please update your mailing address with Lands, Estate and Membership to ensure you get the latest news and upcoming election information.

Contact - Curtis Jahn at 613-625-2800 ext 231
Email - coordinator.lem@pikwakanagan.ca

Upcoming Office Closure

Please note that the Administration Building will be closed at **12:00PM on Friday, February 13, 2026** and will return to regular operations at **8:30AM on Tuesday, February 17, 2026**.

FEBRUARY IS HEART HEALTH MONTH!



[Click here to read the full newsletter](#)

Pikwakanagan Tibadjumowin

CHÌBAYATIGO-KÌJIGAD AKAKODJISH KIZIS 13TH, 2026

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 13TH, 2026

WWW.ALGONQUINSOFPIKWAKANAGAN.COM | 613-625-2800

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FEBRUARY IS HEART HEALTH MONTH!





Town of Plympton-Wyoming
546 Niagara Street, PO Box 250
Wyoming, ON N0N 1T0

January 28, 2026

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario

The Honourable Prabmeet Sarkaria
Minister of Transportation
Province of Ontario

Re: Municipal Support for School Bus Safety and Stop-Arm Camera Systems

Dear Premier Ford and Minister Sarkaria,

On behalf of the **Town of Plympton-Wyoming**, I am writing to express our strong support for enhanced school bus safety measures across Ontario, including the implementation of school bus stop-arm camera systems and other child-safety technologies.

Illegal passing of stopped school buses remains a serious and widespread issue throughout the province, occurring an estimated 30,000 times per day. These violations place children at unacceptable risk and continue to result in preventable injuries and fatalities. Municipalities require effective, modern enforcement tools to address this dangerous behaviour.

The Town of Plympton-Wyoming supports provincial investment in and expansion of school bus stop-arm camera systems under Part XIV.3 (School Bus Camera Systems) of the Highway Traffic Act. These systems have demonstrated success in deterring illegal passing, improving driver compliance, and strengthening accountability. Provincial funding and implementation support would help ensure municipalities of all sizes can deploy this technology equitably.

We also support the Let's Remember Adam – Stop for the School Bus campaign, launched in memory of Adam Ranger, a five-year-old child who tragically lost his life when a driver failed to stop for a school bus displaying its flashing lights and stop arm. This tragedy highlights the urgent need for continued public education, enforcement, and the use of technology to better protect children travelling to and from school.

We respectfully call on the Province of Ontario to provide municipalities with the necessary funding tools, legislative support, and implementation guidance to advance school bus stop-arm camera systems and complementary child-safety initiatives across Ontario.

Protecting children on our roads is a shared responsibility. Through strong provincial leadership and municipal partnership, meaningful progress can be made to prevent further tragedies and enhance road safety for families across Ontario.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Gary Atkinson, Mayor
Town of Plympton-Wyoming

cc:

The Honourable Steve Clark, Government House Leader
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
Ontario Municipalities

THE MUNICIPALITY OF NORTH PERTH
COUNCIL MEETING
Regular Council - Updated



Agenda Number: 7.
Resolution Number 14.01.26
Date: January 26, 2026

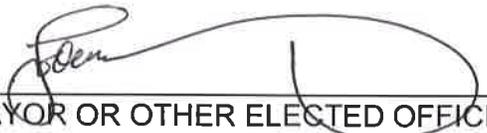
Moved By Sarah Blazek
Seconded By Dave Johnston

THAT: The Council of The Municipality of North Perth supports item 7.9 City of Peterborough Resolution Regarding Sustainable Funding for Police; and

THAT: The support resolution be circulated to the Premier of Ontario, Minister of the Solicitor General, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Perth County OPP Detachment Board, and all Ontario Municipalities.

CARRIED

ACTION ON MOTION:



MAYOR OR OTHER ELECTED OFFICIAL



City of
Peterborough

Office of the City Clerk, City Hall
500 George Street North
Peterborough, Ontario
K9H 3R9

December 3, 2025

Honourable Doug Ford, Premier for the Government of Ontario;
Honourable Michael S. Kerzner, Minister of the Solicitor General;
Honourable Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing;
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO);
Mary ten Doeschate, Peterborough Police Services Board Chair; and
Councils of each of Ontario's municipalities.

Subject: Sustainable Funding for Police Services Request

The following resolution, adopted by City Council at its meeting held on November 3, 2025, is forwarded for your consideration.

Moved by Councillor Crowley
Seconded by Councillor Vassiliadis

Whereas municipalities across Ontario are required to maintain a police service; and

Whereas municipalities across Ontario are required to constitute a municipal board to have policing responsibility for the municipality, or enter into a written agreement for an alternate provision of policing services; and

Whereas the City of Peterborough has constituted a municipal board; and

Whereas municipalities, across Ontario, with a police service board, are required to “ensure adequate and effective policing is provided in the area for which they have policing responsibility in accordance with the needs of the population in the area and having regard for the diversity of the population in the area” and

Whereas police service boards within municipalities where court proceedings are conducted are required to ensure the security of judges, other judicial officials, members of the public participating in court proceedings, ensuing the secure



custody of persons in custody who are on or about the premises, including persons taken into custody at proceedings; and

Whereas the provision of court security is not part of providing adequate and effective policing; and

Whereas the cost of providing court security is a cost of the municipality, regardless of whether all matters originate within that municipality; and

Whereas municipalities across Ontario are required to have and maintain critical infrastructure, including appropriate police facilities and equipment, to ensure adequate and effective policing is provided; and

Whereas municipalities across Ontario are experiencing increased police operating and capital costs directly related to new compliance and operational standards required under the Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019; and

Whereas these cost increases stem from provincially mandated requirements — including training, certification, technology, reporting, and staffing obligations — necessary to bring local police services into compliance with the Act; and

Whereas municipalities have no discretion in implementing these measures and limited ability to absorb the resulting financial pressures within existing budgets; and

Whereas policing is a provincially legislated responsibility, yet municipalities are bearing the brunt of the costs to implement provincial mandates;

Therefore, be it resolved that:

Council request that the Province of Ontario provide targeted financial assistance to municipalities to offset any additional costs that are directly and demonstrably incurred as a result of compliance with the Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019, and not general increases to police budgets; and

Therefore, be it further resolved that:

Council urge the Province of Ontario to review and reform its current police grant programs to ensure a more equitable distribution of funding to municipalities so that communities with growing populations and expanding service demands receive fair and sustainable provincial support; and

Therefore, be it further resolved that:

Council request that the Province of Ontario provide stable sustainable funding to offset costs associated with the provision of providing court security services; and



City of
Peterborough

That this resolution be forwarded to the Premier of Ontario, the Minister of the Solicitor General, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Peterborough Police Services Board Chair, and all Ontario municipalities for endorsement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Kennedy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

John Kennedy
City Clerk



Mary ten Doeschate, Chair

Drew Merrett, Vice-Chair

Mayor Jeff Leal

Councillor Gary Baldwin

Steve Girardi

December 18, 2025

City of Peterborough (Sent via email)
500 George St. N.
Peterborough, ON K9H 3R9

Attention: Members of Council

Jasbir Raina, Chief Administrative Officer

Richard Freymond, Commissioner of Finance and Corporate Support Services

John Kennedy, Clerk

Members of Council, Mr. Raina, Mr. Freymond and Mr. Kennedy:

Re: Council Resolution – Stable Funding for Police Service Boards

The Peterborough Police Service Board unanimously passed the following motion at their Board meeting held on December 16, 2025:

Moved by Drew Merrett

Seconded by Jeff Leal

That the Board receive for consideration and endorsement the Peterborough City Council resolution made November 3, 2025 regarding stable funding for Police Service Boards.

Accordingly, the Board sends this letter in support of Council's call for the Province of Ontario to review and reform its current police grant programs to ensure a more equitable distribution of funding to municipalities; the Board believes increased and sustainable funding support from the Province is necessary to ensure the Board can meet its legislated mandate of providing adequate and effective policing in the City of Peterborough.

Sincerely,

Mary ten Doeschate,
Chair

Peterborough Police Service Board
500 Water Street, P.O. Box 2050 Peterborough, Ontario K9J 7Y4
Telephone: 705-876-1122 ext. 220 Fax: 705-876-6005
www.peterboroughpolice.com

THE MUNICIPALITY OF NORTH PERTH
COUNCIL MEETING
Regular Council - Updated



Agenda Number: 7.
Resolution Number 15.01.26
Date: January 26, 2026

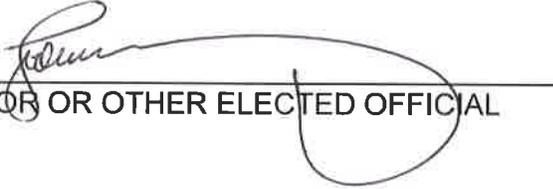
Moved By Allan Rothwell
Seconded By Sarah Blazek

THAT: The Council of the Municipality of North Perth supports item 7.13 Municipality of North Grenville, Merrickville-Wolford Village OPP Detachment Board Regarding Enhanced School Bus Safety; and

THAT: The resolution be circulated to Perth-Wellington MP, Perth-Wellington MPP, Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), and all Ontario Municipalities.

ACTION ON MOTION:

CARRIED



MAYOR OR OTHER ELECTED OFFICIAL



285 County Road 44, Box 130
Kemptville, ON K0G 1J0
T: 613) 258-9569
clerk@northgrenville.on.ca

January 2, 2025

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario

The Honourable Prabmeet Sarkaria
Minister of Transportation
Province of Ontario

RE: Support for Enhanced School Bus Safety and the Implementation of Stop-Arm Camera Systems

Dear Premier Ford and Minister Sarkaria,

On behalf of the Grenville 1 O.P.P. Detachment Board, we are writing to express our strong support for enhanced school bus safety measures across Ontario, including the implementation of school bus stop-arm camera systems and other child-safety technologies.

Illegal passing of stopped school buses remains a persistent and dangerous problem in Ontario, occurring an estimated 30,000 times per day. These violations place children at serious risk and continue to result in preventable injuries and fatalities. Municipalities require additional tools to address this issue effectively and consistently.

The Grenville 1 O.P.P. Detachment Board supports provincial investment in and expansion of school bus stop-arm camera systems under Part XIV.3 (School Bus Camera Systems) of the Highway Traffic Act. These systems have proven effective in deterring dangerous driving behaviour, improving compliance, and enhancing accountability. Provincial funding and support would enable municipalities to implement these technologies equitably and at scale.

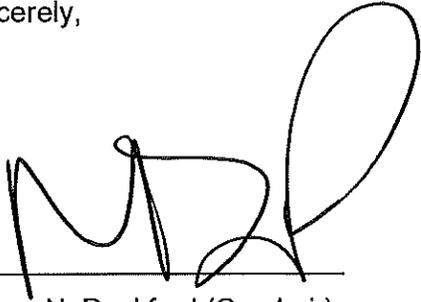
Grenville 1 O.P.P. Detachment Board also proudly supports the Let's Remember Adam – Stop for the School Bus campaign, launched in memory of Adam Ranger, a five-year-old child who tragically lost his life when a driver failed to stop for a school bus displaying its flashing lights and stop arm. Adam's story underscores the urgent need for stronger enforcement, public education, and modern safety solutions to protect children travelling to and from school.

We respectfully call on the Province of Ontario to continue advancing this life-saving work by providing municipalities with the funding mechanisms, legislative support, and implementation guidance necessary to deploy stop-arm cameras and complementary safety technologies province-wide.

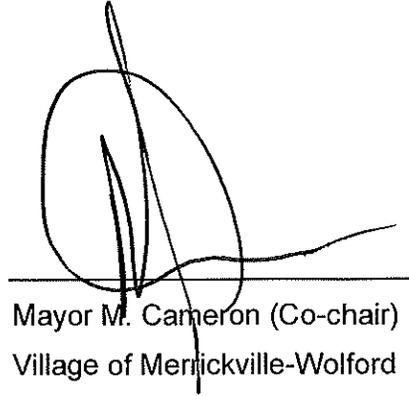
Protecting children is a shared responsibility. With provincial leadership and municipal partnership, we can take meaningful action to prevent further tragedies and ensure Ontario's roads are safer for students and families.

Thank you for your consideration and continued commitment to road safety.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long vertical stroke on the right side.

Mayor N. Peckford (Co-chair)
Municipality of North Grenville

A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a large circular loop on the left and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mayor M. Cameron (Co-chair)
Village of Merrickville-Wolford

cc:

The Honourable Steve Clark, Government House Leader
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
Ontario Municipalities

Enclosed: Co-signing Template

[Municipality Name]
[Municipal Address]

[Date]

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario

The Honourable Prabmeet Sarkaria
Minister of Transportation
Province of Ontario

Re: Municipal Support for School Bus Safety and Stop-Arm Camera Systems

Dear Premier Ford and Minister Sarkaria,

On behalf of the **[Council / Municipality / Township / City] of [Municipality Name]**, I am writing to express our strong support for enhanced school bus safety measures across Ontario, including the implementation of school bus stop-arm camera systems and other child-safety technologies.

Illegal passing of stopped school buses remains a serious and widespread issue throughout the province, occurring an estimated 30,000 times per day. These violations place children at unacceptable risk and continue to result in preventable injuries and fatalities. Municipalities require effective, modern enforcement tools to address this dangerous behaviour.

[Municipality Name] supports provincial investment in and expansion of school bus stop-arm camera systems under Part XIV.3 (School Bus Camera Systems) of the *Highway Traffic Act*. These systems have demonstrated success in deterring illegal passing, improving driver compliance, and strengthening accountability. Provincial funding and implementation support would help ensure municipalities of all sizes can deploy this technology equitably.

We also support the Let's Remember Adam – Stop for the School Bus campaign, launched in memory of Adam Ranger, a five-year-old child who tragically lost his life when a driver failed to stop for a school bus displaying its flashing lights and stop arm. This tragedy highlights the urgent need for continued public education, enforcement, and the use of technology to better protect children travelling to and from school.

We respectfully call on the Province of Ontario to provide municipalities with the necessary funding tools, legislative support, and implementation guidance to advance school bus stop-arm camera systems and complementary child-safety initiatives across Ontario.

Protecting children on our roads is a shared responsibility. Through strong provincial leadership and municipal partnership, meaningful progress can be made to prevent further tragedies and enhance road safety for families across Ontario.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title – Mayor / Reeve / Warden]

[Municipality Name]

cc:

The Honourable Steve Clark, Government House Leader
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
Ontario Municipalities



**TOWNSHIP OF
BRUDENELL, LYNDOCH AND RAGLAN**

42 Burnt Bridge Road, PO Box 40
Palmer Rapids, Ontario K0J 2E0
TEL: (613) 758-2061 · FAX: (613) 758-2235

February 4, 2026

The Right Honourable Mark Carney, P.C., M.P. Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2
Mark.carney@parl.gc.ca

RE: Support for the Steel and Lumber Sectors

Dear Prime Minister,

Please be advised that at the Regular Council Meeting on February 4th, 2026, Council for the Corporation of the Township of Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglan passed the following resolution, supporting the resolution from the Township of Naim & Hyman.

Resolution No: 2026-02-04-07
Moved by: Councillor Quade
Seconded by: Councillor Keller

"Be It resolved that the Council for the Corporation of the Township of Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglan support the Township of Naim & Hyman's resolution regarding Support for the Steel and Lumber Sectors.

And further that this resolution be forwarded to the Prime Minister of Canada, Premier of Ontario, the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry Minister of Northern Development, FONOM, Renfrew Nipissing & Pembroke MP and MPP, and all municipalities in Ontario."

Carried.

Sincerely,

Tammy Thompson
Deputy Clerk
Township of Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglan



64 McIntyre Street • Nairn Centre, Ontario • P0M 2L0 ☎ 705-869-4232 📠 705-869-5248
Established: March 7, 1896 Office of the Clerk Treasurer, CAO E-mail: belindaketchabaw@nairncentre.ca

December 17, 2025

The Right Honourable Mark Carney
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister:

Re: Support Resolution

On behalf of the Council of the Township of Nairn and Hyman, I am writing to formally convey Council's support for recent federal measures aimed at stabilizing and strengthening Canada's steel and softwood lumber sectors.

As a small Northern Ontario municipality whose economy is closely tied to the continued operation of Interfor, a local softwood lumber mill, Council is increasingly concerned that ongoing trade pressures and market uncertainty are placing added strain on the long-term viability of this key employer. Any reduction in operations or a potential closure would have significant and lasting consequences for local employment, municipal revenues, and the overall economic and social wellbeing of our community.

In this context, and in response to the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities' November 26, 2025 media release, Council adopted the enclosed resolution at their meeting of December 8, 2025:

SUPPORT FOR STEEL AND LUMBER SECTORS

RESOLUTION # 2025-14-247

MOVED BY: Karen Richter

SECONDED BY: Wayne Austin

WHEREAS the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) has issued a media release dated November 26, 2025, welcoming the Government of Canada's new measures to support the steel and softwood lumber sectors in response to ongoing U.S. tariff pressures; and

WHEREAS the federal actions—including strengthened protections for domestic producers, expanded financial supports, and increased incentives to utilize Canadian steel and lumber in federal infrastructure and housing projects—represent important steps in stabilizing industries that are vital to Northern Ontario's economy; and

WHEREAS municipalities across the North continue to experience the economic impacts of industry closures, including the recent shutdown of Domtar a pulp and paper mill in the neighboring Town of Espanola, which has demonstrated the vulnerability of resource-dependent communities and the need for coordinated intergovernmental support; and

WHEREAS the Township of Naim and Hyman recognizes the significant role of Interfor, our local soft-wood lumber mill, as a major employer and economic anchor in our region, and further recognizes that any threat to its continued operation would have devastating consequences for workers, families, and local businesses; and

WHEREAS the Province of Ontario has a shared responsibility to ensure the long-term sustainability of the forestry, lumber, and steel sectors, which are foundational to the economic wellbeing of Northern and rural communities;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council of the Township of Naim and Hyman commends the Government of Canada for its leadership and for implementing substantial measures to support Canada's steel and softwood lumber industries during this period of trade volatility; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Council respectfully urges the Government of Ontario to introduce additional financial, regulatory, and policy-based supports to ensure that Ontario's steel, forestry, and lumber sectors remain competitive, resilient, and able to withstand ongoing international trade pressures; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Council specifically calls upon the Province of Ontario to work directly with industry stakeholders, including municipalities and major employers such as Interfor, to create programs and investments that will help protect jobs, maintain production capacity, and support long-term industry growth in Northern Ontario; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Prime Minister of Canada, the Premier of Ontario, the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, the Minister of Northern Development, FONOM, MP Jim Belanger, MPP Bill Rosenberg and all Ontario Municipalities.

CARRIED

Sincerely Yours,



Belinda Ketchabaw
CAO Clerk - Treasurer

BK/mb

cc: Premier of Ontario
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry
Minister of Northern Development
FONOM
MP Hon. Jim Belanger
MPP Hon. Bill Rosenberg
All Ontario Municipalities



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 26, 2025

FONOM Welcomes Federal Support for Steel and Lumber Sectors Impacted by U.S. Tariffs

Northeastern Ontario – The Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) welcomes today’s announcement by Prime Minister Mark Carney outlining new federal measures to support Canada’s steel and softwood lumber industries, which continue to face unprecedented challenges due to aggressive U.S. tariff actions.

The federal plan includes strengthened protections for domestic producers, expanded financial supports for companies facing liquidity pressures, and new incentives to increase the use of Canadian steel and lumber in national infrastructure and housing projects. These measures aim to stabilize sectors vital to the economies of many Northern Ontario communities.

Prime Minister Carney announced that Canada will significantly tighten tariff-rate quotas on foreign steel imports, opening an estimated \$850 million in domestic demand for Canadian producers. In addition, the federal government is allocating \$500 million in new financing for softwood lumber firms, paired with a further \$500 million expansion of the Business Development Bank of Canada’s softwood guarantee program.

FONOM is encouraged by the federal government’s recognition of the pressures facing Northern resource-based communities, where steel and lumber operations support thousands of jobs and anchor local economies.

“These measures acknowledge what Northern Ontario has long understood — that our steel and lumber sectors are national economic pillars,” said FONOM President Dave Plourde **“U.S. tariffs continue to destabilize communities across the North, and today’s announcement provides needed tools to help our workers and industries adapt, compete, and grow.”**

FONOM also welcomes the federal commitment to reduce interprovincial freight rates by 50 per cent for steel and lumber shipments beginning next spring. Lower transportation costs will help Northern producers access new domestic markets and move product efficiently while north-south trade remains constrained.

As part of the plan, the federal government will also advance the Buy Canadian Policy, ensuring that major defence, construction, and infrastructure projects prioritize Canadian steel, aluminum,

665 Oak Street East, Unit 306 North Bay, ON P1B 9E5 Tel: (705) 498-9510
Email: fonom.info@gmail.com Website: www.fonom.org

and wood products. This aligns strongly with FONOM's longstanding advocacy for procurement policies that support Canadian jobs and supply chains.

"Keeping Canadian dollars working in Canada is essential," added the President. "These steps will create new demand for made-in-Canada materials while helping stabilize communities affected by unpredictable U.S. trade actions."

FONOM looks forward to continued collaboration with federal officials to ensure the timely rollout of these programs, and to ensure that Northern Ontario municipalities and industries can fully benefit from the measures announced today.

Media Contact:

Dave Plourde, President

Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM)

705-335-1615 | fonom.info@gmail.com



**TOWNSHIP OF
BRUDENELL, LYNDOCH AND RAGLAN**

42 Burnt Bridge Road, PO Box 40
Palmer Rapids, Ontario K0J 2E0
TEL: (613) 758-2061 · FAX: (613) 758-2235

February 4, 2026

The Right Honourable Mark Carney, P.C., M.P. Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2
Mark.carney@parl.gc.ca

RE: Call for Reform and Publication of the Ontario Sex Offender Registry

Dear Prime Minister,

Please be advised that at the Regular Council Meeting on February 4th, 2026, Council for the Corporation of the Township of Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglan passed the following resolution, supporting the resolution from the City of Brantford.

Resolution No: 2026-02-04-06
Moved by: Councillor Banks
Seconded by: Councillor Keller

"Be it resolved that the Council for the Corporation of the Township of Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglan support the City of Brantford's resolution regarding a Call for Reform and Publication of the Ontario Sex Offender Registry.

And further that this resolution be forwarded to the Prime Minister of Canada, Premier of Ontario, the Attorney General of Ontario, Solicitor General of Ontario, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Renfrew Nipissing Pembroke MPP and MP, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, AMO and all municipalities in Ontario."

Carried.

Sincerely,

Tammy Thompson
Deputy Clerk
Township of Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglan



December 19, 2025

Honorable Mark Carney

Sent via email: mark.carney@parl.gc.ca

Dear Honorable Mark Carney:

Please be advised that Brantford City Council, at its meeting held December 16, 2025 adopted the following:

12.2.7 Call for Reform and Publication of the Ontario Sex Offender Registry - Councillor Samwell

WHEREAS the community of Welland and the surrounding communities were deeply impacted by a recent heinous crime that highlighted critical gaps in Canada's criminal justice and offender-management systems; and

WHEREAS on September 4, 2025, Mayor Frank Campion of the City of Welland wrote to the Premier of Ontario urging comprehensive reform to strengthen sentencing, parole, and bail provisions for violent sexual offenders, and to enhance public safety protections; and

WHEREAS on September 12, 2025, Mayor Mat Siscoe of the City of St. Catharines wrote to the Prime Minister of Canada expressing strong support for these reforms and calling for immediate federal action to strengthen sentencing, parole, and accountability measures for violent sexual offenders; and

WHEREAS the City of Thorold, at its meeting of September 9, 2025, adopted Resolution 14.2 requesting the Province of Ontario to amend Christopher's Law (Sexual Offenders Registry), 2000 to make Ontario Sex Offender Registry publicly accessible; and

WHEREAS several Niagara municipalities; including Grimsby, Fort Erie, Port Colborne, and St. Catharines have subsequently endorsed this call for greater transparency and reform; and

WHEREAS municipal councils, though not responsible for criminal law or parole, play a vital role in advocating for the safety and well-being of their residents;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- A. THAT the Council of the City of Brantford hereby supports the City of Thorold's Resolution calling for the Publication of the Sexual Offender Registry and the City of Welland's correspondence dated September 4, 2025, calling for reform to sentencing, parole, and registry provisions concerning violent sexual offenders; and
- B. THAT the Province of Ontario be urged to amend Christopher's Law (Sexual Offender Registry), 2000 to make the Ontario Sex Offender

Registry publicly accessible, subject to appropriate privacy and safety safeguards; and

C. THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to:

- i. The Right Hon. Mark Carney, Prime Minister of Canada;
- ii. The Hon. Sean Fraser, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada;
- iii. The Hon. Gary Anandasangaree, Minister of Safety;
- iv. The Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario;
- v. The Hon. Doug Downey, Attorney General of Ontario;
- vi. The Hon. Michael S. Kerzner, Solicitor General of Ontario;
- vii. Member of Parliament for Brantford-Brant, Larry Brock;
- viii. Member of Provincial Parliament for Brantford-Brant, Will Bouma;
- ix. The Association of the Municipalities of Ontario (AMO);
- x. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM); and
- xi. All Ontario Municipalities for their information and support.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours truly,



Chris Gauthier City Clerk,
cgauthier@brantford.ca

CC - The Honorable Sean Fraser, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada; - Sean.Fraser@parl.gc.ca

The Honorable Gary Anandasangaree, Minister of Safety
Gary.Anand@parl.gc.ca

The Honorable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario; - premier@ontario.ca

The Honorable Doug Downey, Attorney General of Ontario; -
Doug.Downey@ontario.ca

The Honorable Michael S. Kerzner, Solicitor General of Ontario
michael.kerzner@pc.ola.org

Member of Parliament for Brantford-Brant, Larry Brock; -
larry.brock@parl.gc.ca

Member of Provincial Parliament for Brantford-Brant, Will Bouma; -
will.bouma@pc.ola.org

The Association of the Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) amo@amo.on.ca

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) FCMInfo@fcm.ca

All Ontario Municipalities for their information and support



**TOWNSHIP OF
BRUDENELL, LYNDOCH AND RAGLAN**

42 Burnt Bridge Road, PO Box 40
Palmer Rapids, Ontario K0J 2E0
TEL: (613) 758-2061 · FAX: (613) 758-2235

February 4, 2026

The Right Honourable Mark Carney, P.C., M.P. Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2
Mark.carney@parl.gc.ca

RE: Call to Action for Justice and Protection of Canada's Children

Dear Prime Minister,

Please be advised that at the Regular Council Meeting on February 4th, 2026, Council for the Corporation of the Township of Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglan passed the following resolution, supporting the resolution from the Town of Aylmer.

Resolution No: 2026-02-04-05
Moved by: Councillor Quade
Seconded by: Councillor Banks

“Be it resolved that the Council for the Corporation of the Township of Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglan support the Town of Aylmer’s resolution regarding a Call to Action for Justice and Protection of Canada’s Children.

And further that this resolution be forwarded to the Prime Minister of Canada, Premier of Ontario, the Attorney General of Ontario, Solicitor General of Ontario, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Renfrew Nipissing Pembroke MPP and MP, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and all municipalities in Ontario.”

Carried.

Sincerely,

Tammy Thompson
Deputy Clerk
Township of Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglan

January 15, 2026

The Right Honourable Mark Carney, P.C., M.P. Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A2
Mark.carney@parl.gc.ca

Dear Prime Minister

Re: Support for the City of Welland's Call to Action for Justice and Protection of Canada's Children

At their Regular Meeting of Council on January 15, 2026, the Council of the Town of Aylmer endorsed the following resolution:

Whereas the Town of Aylmer supports the City of Welland's call to action for justice and protection of Canada's children; and,

Whereas the safety and well-being of children is a fundamental responsibility shared by all levels of government; and,

Whereas recent incidents involving sexual offences against children have deeply affected communities across Ontario and Canada, raising serious concerns about public safety and the adequacy of existing legislative protections; and,

Whereas violent sexual crimes against children represent some of the most serious offences under the Criminal Code of Canada and have lifelong impacts on victims, families, and communities; and,

Whereas municipalities play a critical role in advocating for policies that protect residents and promote safe communities; and,

Whereas there is a growing concern that gaps in bail, sentencing, parole eligibility, and offender monitoring allow high-risk individuals to re-enter communities pre-maturely, placing children at continued risk;

Now therefore be it resolved that the Council of the Town of Aylmer formally urges all levels of government to review and strengthen legislation and policies related to violent and sexual offences against children, including but not limited to:

- 1. Bail and Sentencing Provisions - ensuring that individuals charged with or convicted of violent sexual offences against children are subject to the strictest possible bail conditions and sentencing outcomes that reflect the severity of these crimes;**
- 2. Parole and Early Release - limiting parole eligibility, statutory release, or other forms of early release for offenders convicted of sexual offences against children who pose ongoing risks to public safety;**
- 3. Sex Offender Monitoring - strengthening the National Sex Offender Registry and related provincial tools to improve accuracy, enforcement, and timely access to information for law enforcement; and**
- 4. Victim and Community Safety - prioritizing the protection of children and community safety within the justice system above administrative or procedural efficiencies;**

And be it further resolved that copies of this resolution be forwarded to:

The Premier of Ontario
The Attorney General of Ontario
The Solicitor General of Ontario
The Prime Minister of Canada
The Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
Member of Provincial Parliament, Rob Flack
Member of Parliament, Andrew Lawton
The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and;
All 444 Ontario Municipalities

And be it further resolved that Council encourages municipalities to adopt similar resolutions to work collaboratively to present a unified municipal voice advocating for stronger protections for children across Canada.

Yours sincerely,

Owen Jaggard
Director of Legislative Services/Clerk | Town of Aylmer
46 Talbot Street West, Aylmer, ON N5H 1J7
519-773-3164 Ext. 4913 | Fax 519-765-1446
ojaggard@town.aylmer.on.ca | www.aylmer.ca

CC:

Hon. Doug Ford doug.fordco@pc.ola.org
Hon. Doug Downey doug.downey@pc.ola.org
Hon. Michael S. Kerzner michael.kerzner@pc.ola.org
Hon. Sean Fraser sean.fraser@parl.gc.ca



The Corporation of the Town of Aylmer
46 Talbot Street West, Aylmer, Ontario N5H 1J7
Office: 519-773-3164 Fax: 519-765-1446
www.aylmer.ca

Hon. Rob Flack rob.flack@pc.ola.org

Mr. Andrew Lawton andrew.lawton@parl.gc.ca

Mayor Frank Campion c/o Theresa Ettore Theresa.ettore@welland.ca

Federation of Canadian Municipalities resolutions@fcm.ca

All municipalities



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
FRANK CAMPION
60 East Main Street
Welland, Ontario
L3B 3X4
Phone: 905-735-1700
Fax: 905-735-1543

December 2, 2025

Subject: A Call to Action: Standing Together for Justice and the Protection of Canada's Children

Dear Fellow Mayors,

I write to you today not only as the Mayor of Welland, but as a member of a community that has been deeply shaken by an unthinkable act in August 2025: the brutal sexual assault of a three-year-old child. This tragedy has horrified our residents, leaving families in grief and disbelief, and compelling us as leaders to confront the uncomfortable truth that our justice system is failing to adequately protect our most vulnerable.

While no policy can erase the trauma this child and their family will endure, we have a moral obligation to act. This moment demands leadership from all of us, to raise our collective voices and ensure that meaningful reform takes place.

I urge you to join me in calling on provincial and federal governments to take immediate and decisive action by advancing the following measures:

- The full and expedited implementation of recent federal bail and sentencing reforms, so that new provisions designed to protect the public—particularly victims of violent sexual crimes—are applied swiftly and consistently across all jurisdictions.
- Strengthening bail and sentencing provisions so that individuals charged with, or convicted of, violent sexual crimes face the strictest possible conditions, including limits on early release in cases of extreme brutality.
- That parole eligibility for sexual offences against children reflects the full gravity of these crimes, limiting conditional or early release for offenders who pose ongoing risks to community safety.
- Strengthening the National Sex Offender Registry, providing communities and police with timely, accurate information and effective tools to safeguard residents.

Canadians must be able to trust that our justice system prioritizes public safety—especially the safety of children—above all else. Communities like ours cannot bear the weight of knowing that legislative gaps may allow dangerous offenders to harm again.

I am calling on you, my colleagues in municipalities across Canada, to:

1. Pass council resolutions urging your respective provincial governments to review and strengthen laws protecting children from violent offenders.
2. Collaborate through FCM and provincial municipal associations to bring a united municipal voice to Ottawa and all legislatures across the country, advocating for the timely implementation and continued enhancement of justice reforms.
3. Engage your local MPs, MPPs/MLAs, and their governments to advocate for continued legislative and judicial reform.

4. Support awareness and prevention efforts within your communities to reinforce the safety and well-being of every child.

Together, we can create a wave of leadership that demands justice and refuses complacency. The protection of children transcends politics and geography; it is a shared duty that defines who we are as a nation.

Thank you for standing with us in this urgent cause. I would welcome the opportunity to coordinate efforts with you and your councils to move this national call forward.

With respect and solidarity,



Frank Campion
Mayor of Welland

February 6, 2026

Via Email

Right Honourable Mark Carney
Prime Minister of Canada
Mark.carney@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
premier@ontario.ca

Re: Remove the GST/HST from all New Homes Purchased as Primary Residences in Ontario

Please be advised that at its meeting held on February 2, 2026, the Council of the Town of Whitby adopted the following as Resolution # 17-26:

Whereas housing affordability is one of the most pressing issues facing Ontario families; and,

Whereas the current HST rate on new homes in Ontario is 13%, which adds tens of thousands of dollars to the cost of a typical home; and,

Whereas existing federal and provincial HST rebates on new homes purchased from the builder are limited by purchase-price thresholds, with most new homes in Ontario priced above the level required to qualify for meaningful relief, thereby limiting their effectiveness in improving overall housing affordability; and,

Whereas the federal and provincial governments have proposed new GST/HST rebates only for first-time homebuyers purchasing from the builder a newly built or substantially renovated home; and,

Whereas according to research conducted by the Ontario Homebuilders' Association, first-time home buyers currently represent approximately 5% of the new home market; and,

Whereas the Ontario Homebuilders' Association estimates that a full HST exemption would stimulate the construction of an additional 53,000 new homes,

on top of the roughly 80,000 homes already expected to be available for sale by 2026 — bringing the total to approximately 132,000 units.

Now Therefore be it resolved:

1. That the Council of the Town of Whitby calls on the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario to remove the GST/HST from all newly built or substantially renovated homes purchased from the builder as primary residences in Ontario up to \$1.5 million; and,
2. That this resolution be circulated to the Prime Minister of Canada, Minister of Finance and the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, and to the Premier of Ontario, the Ontario Minister of Finance, the Ontario Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, our local MP and MPP, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and to all municipalities in Ontario.

Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of the Town Clerk at 905.430.4300.



Kathyn Douglas
Supervisor, Legislative Services
clerk@whitby.ca

Copy: C. Harris, Director of Legislative Services/Town Clerk – clerk@whitby.ca

The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Finance and National Revenue – francois-philippe.champagne@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Gregor Robertson, Minister of Housing and Infrastructure – gregor.robertson@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance – minister.fin@ontario.ca

The Honourable Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing - minister.mah@ontario.ca

Ryan Turnbull, MP, Whitby – ryan.turnbull@parl.gc.ca

Lorne Coe, MPP, Whitby - lorne.coe@pc.ola.org

Robin Jones, President, Association of Municipalities of Ontario – amopresident@amo.on.ca

All Ontario Municipalities

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF NIPIGON

52 Front Street

Nipigon, ON P0T 2J0

Phone: 807-887-3275 Info@nipigon.net



COUNCIL RESOLUTION

AGENDA ITEM

5 d)

Date: February 10, 2026

Resolution 2026 – 21	
MOVED BY:	SECONDED BY:
<input type="checkbox"/> Anne Marie Cartwright <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Greg Harper <input type="checkbox"/> Glenn Hart <input type="checkbox"/> Suzanne Kukko <input type="checkbox"/> Gayle Westhaver	<input type="checkbox"/> Anne Marie Cartwright <input type="checkbox"/> Greg Harper <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Glenn Hart <input type="checkbox"/> Suzanne Kukko <input type="checkbox"/> Gayle Westhaver

WHEREAS the Conservation Authorities Act (1946) enables municipalities to establish local conservation authorities, and when municipalities choose to form such authorities, they assume responsibility for governance and funding through the appointment of a Board of Directors and the provision of an annual levy to cover expenses;

AND WHEREAS the municipalities within Lakehead Region established the Neebing Valley Conservation Authority in 1954 which enlarged to the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) in 1963;

AND WHEREAS local municipalities currently provide approximately 50% of total conservation authority funding, while the Province of Ontario provides approximately 5%;

AND WHEREAS municipalities have governed their respective conservation authorities for decades, tailoring programs and services to local watershed needs, maintaining accountable service standards, and ensuring fair and predictable costs for ratepayers;

AND WHEREAS conservation authorities collectively own and manage thousands of hectares of land, much of which was donated by local residents and entrusted to conservation authorities as a personal legacy for long-term protection, stewardship, and the public good, with the expectation that such lands would be cared for by locally governed conservation authorities;

AND WHEREAS Bill 68 (Schedule 3) proposes the creation of the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency, a Crown corporation that would assume governance responsibilities and consolidate Ontario's 36 conservation authorities into seven regional authorities, with municipal cost apportionment yet to be defined;

AND WHEREAS the Province already possesses the authority to establish overarching legislation, regulations, and standards through the Conservation Authorities Act and the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the **Township of Nipigon** calls on the Government of Ontario to maintain local, independent, municipally governed, watershed-based conservation authorities to ensure strong local representation in decisions related to municipal levies, community-focused service delivery, and the protection and management of conservation lands;

AND THAT while the **Township of Nipigon** supports provincial goals for consistent permit approval processes, shared services, and digital modernization, imposing a new top-down agency structure

without strong local accountability and governance risks creating unnecessary cost, red tape, and bureaucracy, thereby undermining efficiency and responsiveness to local community needs;
AND THAT the Township of Nipigon supports efforts to balance expertise, capacity, and program delivery across the province, and requests that the Province work collaboratively with municipalities and local conservation authorities to determine the most effective level of strategic consolidation to achieve both provincial and local objectives;

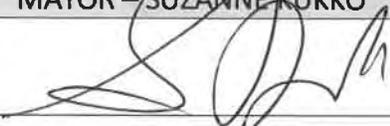
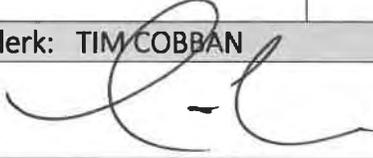
AND THAT the Township of Nipigon is opposed to the proposed “Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority” boundary configuration outlined in Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257;

AND THAT the Township of Nipigon recommends that the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority form the “Northwestern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority”;

AND THAT the Ministry engage directly with affected municipalities of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority, before finalizing any consolidation boundaries or legislative amendments;

AND THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Environmental Registry of Ontario consultations and to:

- the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and his Opposition critics;
- local Members of Provincial Parliament;
- local Members of Parliament;
- the Association of Municipalities of Ontario;
- Conservation Ontario;
- All local municipalities; and
- All Conservation Authorities in Ontario.

RESOLUTION RESULT	RECORDED VOTE		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CARRIED	MAYOR AND COUNCIL	YES	NO
<input type="checkbox"/> DEFEATED	Anne Marie Cartwright	✓	
<input type="checkbox"/> DEFERRED*	Greg Harper	✓	
<input type="checkbox"/> REFERRED*	Glenn Hart	✓	
<input type="checkbox"/> PECUNIARY INTEREST DECLARED	Suzanne Kukko		
<input type="checkbox"/> RECORDED VOTE	Gayle Westhaver	✓	
<input type="checkbox"/> WITHDRAWN*			
MAYOR – SUZANNE KUKKO 	Clerk: TIM COBBAN 		



RESOLUTION NO. 2026- 20

FEBRUARY 11, 2026

Moved by: [Signature]

Seconded by: [Signature]

WHEREAS reliable, high-speed internet access is essential infrastructure that supports economic development, housing construction, healthcare, education, municipal operations, and overall community well-being;

AND WHEREAS the Province of Ontario has recognized the importance of digital infrastructure through the *Accelerating Access to Broadband for Ontario Act, 2021*, which seeks to expand broadband access to all Ontarians, particularly in underserved and rural communities;

AND WHEREAS access to affordable high-speed internet is a necessary precondition to achieving provincial and federal housing, economic development, and population growth targets;

AND WHEREAS Bell Canada currently offers dedicated fibre internet services at the following indicative rates under a five (5) year term within a regulated area: 100 Mbps / 100 Mbps \$1,010 per month, 500 Mbps / 500 Mbps \$3,090 per month and 1 Gbps / 1 Gbps \$3,250 per month.

AND WHEREAS such pricing structures place dedicated fibre services beyond the financial reach of many municipalities, small businesses, housing developments, non-profit organizations, and community facilities;

AND WHEREAS unaffordable broadband infrastructure costs undermine the intent of provincial and federal legislation aimed at universal access to high-speed internet, including federal programs administered by Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) and regulatory oversight by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC);

AND WHEREAS affordable, high-speed internet access is essential infrastructure and a foundational requirement for inclusive growth, housing delivery, and community resilience and municipalities are required to plan for growth, housing, and economic competitiveness, yet have no say in telecommunications pricing and market structures;

AND WHEREAS the Council of the Municipality of Magnetawan calls upon the CRTC to examine the affordability of dedicated fibre pricing and its impact on municipal infrastructure, housing development, and equitable internet access;

AND WHEREAS the Council of the Municipality of Magnetawan calls upon the Government of Ontario to work with telecommunications providers to ensure that broadband infrastructure costs do not impede the objectives of the *Accelerating Access to Broadband for Ontario Act, 2021* and the *Building Faster Homes and More Choice Act, 2022*;

AND WHEREAS the Council of the Municipality of Magnetawan calls upon Bell Canada to review and revise its dedicated fibre pricing models to ensure they are affordable, transparent, and scaled appropriately for municipalities, community institutions, and local development projects;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the Municipality of Magnetawan calls upon the Government of Canada, including ISED, to strengthen affordability requirements tied to federal broadband funding and universal access programs;

AND FURTHER THAT this resolution be circulated to the Prime Minister of Canada Mark Carney, the Honourable Premier Doug Ford, the Honourable Melanie Joly, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, the Honourable Kinga Surma, Minister of Infrastructure, the Honourable Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Honourable Graydon Smith, MPP for Parry Sound–Muskoka, the Honourable Scott Aitchison, MP for Parry Sound–Muskoka, Bell Canada, the CRTC, FONOM, AMO, NOMA, and all Ontario municipalities through AMCTO.

Carried Defeated Deferred

[Signature]
Sam Dunnnett, Mayor

Recorded Vote Called by: _____

Recorded Vote

Member of Council	Yea	Nay	Absent
Bishop, Bill			
Hetherington, John			
Hind, Jon			
Kneller, Brad			
Mayor: Dunnnett, Sam			

February 16, 2026

Re: Item for Discussion – Elect Respect

At its meeting of February 11, 2026, the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Bracebridge ratified motion #26-GC-009, regarding Elect Respect, as follows:

“WHEREAS democracy is healthy when everyone is able to participate fully and safely and contribute to the well-being of their community;

AND WHEREAS we are witnessing the dissolution of democratic discourse and respectful debate across all levels of government and in neighbouring jurisdictions;

AND WHEREAS Ontario’s municipally elected officials are dealing with increasingly hostile, unsafe work environments facing threats and harassment;

AND WHEREAS social media platforms have exacerbated disrespectful dialogue, negative commentary, and toxic engagement which disincentivizes individuals, especially women and candidates from diverse backgrounds from running for office;

AND WHEREAS better decisions are made when democracy is respectful and constructive and the voices of diverse genders, identities, ethnicities, races, sexual orientation, ages and abilities are heard and represented around municipal council tables;

AND WHEREAS the Association of Municipalities of Ontario’s Healthy Democracy Project has identified concerning trends with fewer people voting in local elections and running for municipal office;

AND WHEREAS in 2024, female elected representatives from across Halton formed a group called H.E.R. (Halton Elected Representatives) which pledged to speak out against harassment and negativity in politics and call on elected officials to uphold the highest standards of conduct;

AND WHEREAS H.E.R. Halton has launched a campaign called *Elect Respect* to promote the importance of healthy democracy and safe, inclusive, respectful work environments for all elected officials that encourages individuals to participate in the political process;

AND WHEREAS on June 5, 2025, the Canadian Association of Feminist Parliamentarians launched a non-partisan “Parliamentary Civility Pledge” to encourage all parliamentarians to commit to end workplace harassment and increase civility on Parliament Hill, modelled after the pledge developed in Halton by representatives of H.E.R.;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the Town of Bracebridge supports the *Elect Respect* pledge and commits to:

- Treat others with respect in all spaces—public, private, and online;
- Reject and call out harassment, abuse, and personal attacks;
- Focus debate on ideas and policies, not personal attacks;
- Help build a supportive culture where people of all backgrounds feel safe to run for and hold office;
- Call on relevant authorities to ensure the protection of elected officials who face abuse or threats; and,
- Model integrity and respect by holding one another to the highest standards of conduct.

AND FURTHER THAT Bracebridge Council calls on elected officials, organizations and community members to support the *Elect Respect* campaign and sign the online pledge at www.electrespect.ca.

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this resolution be sent to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Muskoka Parry Sound MP and MPP, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Ontario Provincial Police (Bracebridge Detachment), the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and all Ontario municipalities.”

In accordance with Council's direction, I am forwarding you a copy of the resolution for your reference.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide any additional clarification in this regard.

Yours truly,



Lori McDonald
Director of Corporate Services/Clerk

Kaitlyn Wendland

From: OSUM Events <events@osum.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2026 12:01 PM
To: Group Arnprior
Subject: Join Us at the 2026 OSUM Annual Conference and Trade Show!



2026 OSUM Annual Conference & Trade Show

April 29 – May 1, 2026

Town of Parry Sound, ON

The Ontario Small Urban Municipalities (OSUM) invites you to its Annual Conference and Trade Show, taking place from **April 29 to May 1, 2026**, in the charming **Town of Parry Sound**. This event offers a unique platform for municipal leaders from Ontario's counties, small cities, and towns to convene and address the critical issues impacting small urban communities.

Programming starts Wednesday, April 29 with the choice of two sessions:

Discover Parry Sound: A Walking Tour of the Waterfront & Downtown

Planning Canada's Next Deep Geological Repository: Your Voice Matters, sponsored by the Nuclear Waste Management Organization

More programming information coming soon.

Exhibitors & Sponsors:

The OSUM Conference provides an excellent opportunity for businesses, organizations, and service providers to showcase their products and services to municipal leaders. Reach out to events@OSUM.ca if you would like more information.

Registration:

Members: \$625

Non-Members: \$650

[Register Here](#)

Registration includes access to all sessions, the trade show, study tour or pre-conference workshop. Registration closes on **Thursday, April 23, 2026**.

Accommodation:

Preferred rates have been secured at the Best Western Plus and Parry Sound Inn & Suites. We encourage you to [book your accommodations](#) early to ensure availability.

Cancellation Policy:

Cancellations must be submitted in writing to events@osum.ca by **April 2, 2026**, to be eligible for a refund, less a \$75.00 (plus HST) administration fee.

For more information and to register, please visit our [official conference page](#).

We look forward to welcoming you to Collingwood for an enriching and collaborative experience!

Contact: events@osum.ca

*Disclaimer: The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) is unable to provide any warranty regarding the accuracy or completeness of third-party submissions. Distribution of these items does not imply an endorsement of the views, information or services mentioned.

Association of Municipalities of Ontario

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