



Essex County Council, Regular Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 3, 2025

6:00 PM

Council Chambers, 2nd Floor

360 Fairview Avenue West

Essex, Ontario N8M 1Y6

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

- Council:
- Michael Akpata, Councillor
 - Joe Bachetti, Deputy Warden
 - Sherry Bondy, Councillor
 - Kimberly DeYong, Councillor
 - Chris Gibb, Councillor
 - John Kerr, Councillor, (Alternate Member)
 - Hilda MacDonald, Warden
 - Gary McNamara, Councillor
 - Crystal Meloche, Councillor
 - Michael Prue, Councillor
 - Dennis Rogers, Councillor
 - Rob Shepley, Councillor
 - Larry Verbeke, Councillor
 - Kirk Walstedt, Councillor
- Absent:
- Tracey Bailey, Councillor
- Administration:
- Katherine Hebert, County Clerk
 - Justin Lammers, Chief, Essex-Windsor EMS
 - Darrel Laurendeau, Director, Information Technology
 - Don McArthur, Manager, Communication and Organizational Development
 - Melissa Ryan, Director, Financial Services / Treasurer
 - David Sundin, Director, Legislative and Legal Services / County Solicitor
 - Crystal Sylvestre, Manager, Records and Accessibility / Deputy Clerk
 - Sandra Zwiers, Chief Administrative Officer
 - Rebecca Belanger, Manager, Planning Services
 - Jeanie Diamond Francis, Manager, Community Services
 - Claire Bebbington, Deputy County Solicitor

1. Closed Meeting

A Closed Meeting was held at 5:00 PM on September 3, 2025.

230-2025

Moved By Crystal Meloche

Seconded By Rob Shepley

That Essex County Council proceed into a Closed Meeting pursuant to Section 239 (2) (b), (e), (f) and (k) of the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended for the following reasons:

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

(e) litigation or potential litigation, including matters before administrative tribunals, affecting the municipality or local board;

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

(k) a position, plan, procedure, criteria or instruction to be applied to any negotiations carried on or to be carried on by or on behalf of the municipality or local board.

Carried

235-2025

Moved By Rob Shepley

Seconded By Chris Gibb

That Essex County Council adjourn and rise from the Closed Meeting of Essex County Council for September 3, 2025 at 5:47 PM.

Carried

2. Moment of Reflection

3. Singing of 'O Canada'

4. Land Acknowledgement Statement

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

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

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

5. Recording of Attendance

Warden MacDonald and members of County Council attended the meeting at the County of Essex Administration Building, Council Chambers.

Tracey Bailey was absent. John Kerr attended as an alternate member for the Municipality of Lakeshore.

6. County Warden's Welcome and Remarks

Warden MacDonald reminded everyone that September was Suicide Awareness Month and encouraged all residents to show their support by participating in the numerous events happening around the County aimed to reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness and raise funds to support those in need.

The Warden also acknowledged that September is also the month for the Face to Face campaign supporting Hospice of Windsor and Essex County. The Fairley Family Transportation Program, which works with Essex-Windsor EMS volunteers through the Genie Program – Granting Exceptional N' Impactful Experiences to fulfill the final wishes of terminal patients.

Everyone was encouraged to attend the Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee's 2nd Annual Accessibility Fest-for-All being held on Friday, September 12, 2025 at the Libro Credit Union Centre in Amherstburg. This important community event aims to raise awareness around opportunities that promote inclusion in activities, services and spaces for people with varying levels of ability.

7. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest raised.

8. Adoption of Regular Meeting Minutes

236-2025

Moved By Rob Shepley

Seconded By Gary McNamara

That the minutes of the August 6, 2025 Regular Meeting of Essex County Council be adopted as presented.

Carried

9. Delegations and Presentations

There were no Delegation or Presentations for September 3, 2025.

10. Communications

10.1. Correspondence

237-2025

Moved By Sherry Bondy

Seconded By Gary McNamara

That Essex County Council provide a letter of support for Elect Respect Pledge to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO).

Carried

238-2025

Moved By Larry Verbeke

Seconded By Chris Gibb

That the correspondence listed on the Regular Agenda for September 3, 2025, be received and any noted action approved.

Carried

10.1.1 Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)

- [AMO Watchfile Newsletter](#)
- [AMO Education Workshops](#)
- [AMO Training Events](#)

10.1.2 Ombudsman Ontario

[2024-2025 Annual Report](#)

10.1.3 Great Lakes St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (GLSLCI)

- Making Waves Newsletter
- September 28, 2025: [Cities Initiative to Host First-Ever Great Lakes Coastal Cleanup in Ontario](#)

10.1.4 Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island (TWEPI)

[W.E. Keep You Informed, Holiday Day Guide Advertising, AI Workforce Summit & MORE](#)

10.1.5 Windsor Essex Chamber of Commerce

[August 12, 2025: The Voice of Business in Windsor-Essex](#)

[August 26, 2025: The Voice of Business in Windsor-Essex](#)

10.1.6 Windsor Regional Hospital (WRH)

[New Name for the New Hospital: The Fancsy Family Hospital](#)

10.1.7 WSP Canada Inc

Letter to Agencies and Stakeholders RE Notice of Project Update Highway 3, 401 and 402 ITS, QWS and PMVMS Replacement (GWP 3007-22-00) Detail Design and Class Environmental Assessment Study dated August 12, 2025

10.1.8 Elect Respect Pledge

- City of St. Catharine's Resolution dated July 30, 2025
- Town of Grimsby Resolution dated August 14, 2025

10.1.9 Bill C-2 section 77.5

- Norfolk County Resolution dated July 31, 2025

10.1.10 Bill 5, Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act, 2025

- Town of Aurora Resolution, dated July 17, 2025
- Town of Grimsby Resolution, dated August 14, 2025

10.2. Resolutions

There were no resolutions for consideration for September 3, 2025.

11. Consent Agenda

239-2025

Moved By Joe Bachetti

Seconded By Crystal Meloche

That the recommendations in the Administrative Reports listed as items 11.1 and 11.2 on the Consent Agenda for September 3, 2025, be approved and further that the minutes listed as item 11.3 on the said Consent Agenda be received.

Carried

11.1. Summary of Outstanding Reports - September 3, 2025

Report number 2025-0903-LLS-R38-KH, Summary of Outstanding Reports, dated September 3, 2025, from Katherine Hebert, County Clerk

11.2. Procurement Updates-Contracts Exceeding Budget

Report number 2025-0903-FIN-R25-MR, 2025 Procurement Updates- Contracts Exceeding Budget, dated September 3, 2025, from Melissa Ryan , Director, Financial Services / Treasurer

11.3. Essex County Library Board (ECL)

Minutes of the Essex County Library Board Regular Board Meeting, dated June 25, 2025

12. Reports and Questions

12.1. Regional Affordable Housing Strategy

Report number 2025-0903-LLS-R41-DMS Regional Affordable Housing Strategy, dated September 3, 2025, from David Sundin, Director, Legislative and Legal Services / County Solicitor

Consultants Bahar Shadpour, Senior Manager, Policy and Research; Ed Starr, Partner; and Matt Pipe, Manager, Housing Policy and Research of SHS Inc. provided an overview of outcomes from the Regional Housing Strategy (RHS) that was developed in collaboration with the City of Windsor. The RHS will provide supporting information, to assist in the decision-making process, ensuring that residents of Essex County have access to safe, affordable and quality housing options.

David Sundin noted that with the adoption of the RHS, Council will have the opportunity to use the information therein, to develop a financial strategy to address some of the issues identified.

Jeanie Diamond-Francis provided statistical information on the reality of the housing situation in the County of Essex; noting that for 80 percent of the population home ownership is out of reach financially, and from among those folks, 20 percent are not able to afford rent.

It was noted that collaboration is underway with local municipal partners to develop Community Improvement Plans (CIP), which will be brought before Council at a future meeting for consideration. Further, Administration intends to bring information before Council at a future meeting, regarding specific recommendations to move forward low cost, high impact housing solutions and for funding consideration during the budget process.

Gary McNamara, Councillor left the meeting at 7:06 pm.

240-2025

Moved By Chris Gibb

Seconded By Crystal Meloche

That Essex County Council receive Report Number 2025-0903-LLS-R41-DMS, Regional Affordable Housing Strategy and receive the Regional Affordable Housing Strategy and the Regional Housing Needs Assessment as information; and

That Essex County Council approve the Regional Housing Needs Assessment.

In Favour (13): Michael Akpata, Joe Bachetti, Sherry Bondy, Kimberly DeYong, Chris Gibb, Hilda MacDonald, Crystal Meloche, Michael Prue, Dennis Rogers, Rob Shepley, Larry Verbeke, Kirk Walstedt, and John Kerr

Carried

12.2. Preservation of Tree Canopy and Vegetation Policy and By-law – Supplementary Report

Report number 2025-0903-IPS-R16-RB Preservation of Tree Canopy and Vegetation Policy and By-law – Supplementary Report, dated September 3, 2025, from Rebecca Belanger, Manager, Planning Services

Rebecca Belanger explained that the By-law was required under the Municipal Act and aims to balance the protection of the remaining natural heritage system and enhancing the natural heritage system while supporting the streamlining of the planning process requested by the Province.

Gary McNamara, Councillor joined the meeting at 7:25 pm.

241-2025

Moved By Gary McNamara

Seconded By Joe Bachetti

That Essex County Council approve report number 2025-0903-IPS-R16-RB, Preservation of Tree Canopy and Natural Vegetation Policy and By-law – Supplementary Report; and

That Essex County Council adopt Policy 2025-013 Preservation of Tree Canopy and Natural Vegetation pursuant to Section 270(1)7 of the *Municipal Act, 2001, c.25*; and

That Essex County Council approve By-law 2025-35, at the appropriate time.

In Favour (14): Michael Akpata, Joe Bachetti, Sherry Bondy, Kimberly DeYong, Chris Gibb, Hilda MacDonald, Gary McNamara, Crystal Meloche, Michael Prue, Dennis Rogers, Rob Shepley, Larry Verbeke, Kirk Walstedt, and John Kerr

Carried

12.3. Lease Agreement for EMS Pelee Island Base

Report number 2025-0903-LLS-R37-CB Lease Agreement for EMS Pelee Island Base, dated September 3, 2025, from Claire Bebbington, Deputy County Solicitor

David Sundin explained the agreement presented would formalize an informal arrangement with the Township of Pelee for the use of the Paramedic station. David stated that the timing for the agreement is to support an input of \$20,000 from the Township of Pelee for maintenance and improvements to the facility.

242-2025

Moved By Michael Akpata

Seconded By Larry Verbeke

That Essex County Council receive report number 2025-0903-LLS-R37-CB, Lease Agreement for the EMS Pelee Island Base, as information; and

That the Warden and the Clerk be authorized to execute the Agreement to Formalize Lease for the property municipally known as 1047 West Shore Road, Pelee Island, on behalf of the Corporation of the County of Essex; and,

That By-Law 2025-34 be adopted at the appropriate time.

In Favour (14): Michael Akpata, Joe Bachetti, Sherry Bondy, Kimberly DeYong, Chris Gibb, Hilda MacDonald, Gary McNamara, Crystal Meloche, Michael Prue, Dennis Rogers, Rob Shepley, Larry Verbeke, Kirk Walstedt, and John Kerr

Carried

12.4. Trade Impacted Communities Program

Report number 2025-0903-CAO-R07-SZ Trade Impacted Communities Program, dated September 3, 2025, from Sandra Zwiers, Chief Administrative Officer

Sandra Zwiers was seeking Council's support to offer a letter of support to Invest WindsorEssex (IWE) to be submitted with a grant application under the Trade Impacted Communities Program.

IWE's goal is to reposition the region as a resilient and diversified advanced manufacturing and automation hub in the wake of tariff tensions.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with each of the partners is for in kind support for the program such as the use of County facilities, administration, marketing and communications.

243-2025

Moved By Michael Prue

Seconded By Gary McNamara

That Essex County Council receive report number 2025-0903-CAO-R07-SZ, Trade Impacted Communities Program as information and approve a letter in support and execution of an MOU for Invest Windsor Essex's application under the Trade Impacted Communities Program.

In Favour (14): Michael Akpata, Joe Bachetti, Sherry Bondy, Kimberly DeYong, Chris Gibb, Hilda MacDonald, Gary McNamara, Crystal Meloche, Michael Prue, Dennis Rogers, Rob Shepley, Larry Verbeke, Kirk Walstedt, and John Kerr

Carried

12.5.2025 AMO Conference - Delegation Update

Report number 2025-0903-CAO-R08-SZ, 2025 AMO Conference – Delegation Update, dated September 3, 2025, from Sandra Zwiers, Chief Administrative Officer

Sandra Zwiers provided Council with a summary of the County's delegation efforts at the 2025 AMO Conference. The County's 'pitch' was for financial support for intersection improvements at County Road 19 and County Road 22. It was noted that the delegation was well received and that local MPP's joined the delegation to express their interest and support for the project to improve the current flow of traffic at the intersection and to prepare for the anticipated increase in traffic as a result of the new hospital and battery plant in the near future.

A video summary was provided during the pitch to the Province, and was played for Council.

Since the delegation, Administration had been in contact with the Minister's office and have a positive sense that this important project will be considered by the Province for funding. Any relevant information will be provided to Council as it becomes available.

244-2025

Moved By Gary McNamara

Seconded By Kirk Walstedt

That Essex County Council receive report number 2025-0903-CAO-R08-SZ, 2025 AMO Conference – Delegation Update, as information.

In Favour (14): Michael Akpata, Joe Bachetti, Sherry Bondy, Kimberly DeYong, Chris Gibb, Hilda MacDonald, Gary McNamara, Crystal Meloche, Michael Prue, Dennis Rogers, Rob Shepley, Larry Verbeke, Kirk Walstedt, and John Kerr

Carried

13. Unfinished Business

There was no Unfinished Business for Council's consideration on September 3, 2025.

14. New Business

14.1. Public Reporting of Closed Meeting

Essex County Council met in a Closed Meeting at 5:00PM, as permitted, and pursuant to Section 239 (2) (b), (e) and (f) of the Municipal Act, 2001, to receive information related to report number 2025-0903-LLS-R39-DMS, Committee of Management Review and,

Council further met in Closed Meeting as permitted, and pursuant to Section 239 (f) and (k) of the Municipal Act, 2001, to receive information related to report number 2025-0903-LLS-R40-DMS – Homelessness Program Funding Update and Related Contract Amendment.

The Closed Meeting adjourned at 5:47 PM.

14.2 CIP Considerations

Councillor Michael Prue requested that when County Administration brings forward the draft proposal for Community Improvement Plan (CIP) implementation, that it include considerations for existing

businesses, not only new businesses, to incentivise both, the attraction of new investment, and also the retention of existing.

15. Adoption of By-Laws

245-2025

Moved By Michael Prue

Seconded By Chris Gibb

That By-laws 2025-34 through 2025-36 be given three readings, and having been read a first, second and third time, be finally passed and enacted.

In Favour (14): Michael Akpata, Joe Bachetti, Sherry Bondy, Kimberly DeYong, Chris Gibb, Hilda MacDonald, Gary McNamara, Crystal Meloche, Michael Prue, Dennis Rogers, Rob Shepley, Larry Verbeke, Kirk Walstedt, and John Kerr

Carried

15.1.By-law Number 2025-34

Being a By-law to Authorize the Execution of an Agreement to Formalize Lease between the Corporation of the County of Essex and the Corporation of the Township of Pelee.

15.2.By-law Number 2025-35

Being a By-law to Adopt the Preservation of Tree Canopy and Natural Vegetation Policy

15.3.By-law Number 2025-36

Being a By-law to Confirm the Proceedings of the Council of the Corporation of the County of Essex for the Regular and Closed Meetings held September 3, 2025.

16. Notice of Motion

16.1.Administration Building Damage

Councillor Sherry Bondy brought forward the following Notice of Motion:

That Essex County Council request a report on the damages to the basement space of the civic center previously occupied by Essex County Library, included and not limited to present condition of the space and plans to restore the space with timelines and proposed amenities such as a kitchenette.

17. Adjournment

246-2025

Moved By Michael Akpata

Seconded By Kimberly DeYong

That the Essex County Council meeting for September 3, 2025 be adjourned at 7:46 PM.

Carried

Hilda MacDonald,
Warden, County of Essex

Katherine J. Hebert,
County Clerk

Date Signed