



Essex County Council, Regular Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 21, 2026

6:00 PM

Council Chambers, 2nd Floor

360 Fairview Avenue West

Essex, Ontario N8M 1Y6

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

- Council:
- Joe Bachetti, Deputy Warden
 - Tracey Bailey, Councillor
 - Sherry Bondy, Councillor
 - Kimberly DeYong, Councillor
 - Chris Gibb, Councillor
 - Hilda MacDonald, Warden
 - Gary McNamara, Councillor
 - Crystal Meloche, Councillor
 - Michael Prue, Councillor
 - Dennis Rogers, Councillor
 - Rob Shepley, Councillor
 - Larry Verbeke, Councillor
 - Kirk Walstedt, Councillor
 - Mark Carrick, Councillor, (Alternate Member)
- Absent:
- Michael Akpata, Councillor
 - Tony Gaffan, Councillor, (Alternate Member)
 - Brian Houston, Councillor, (Alternate Member)
 - John Kerr, Councillor, (Alternate Member)
 - Diane Pouget, Councillor, (Alternate Member)
 - Paul Tiessen, Councillor, Municipality of Leamington (Alternate Member)
 - Kimberly Verbeek, Councillor, Town of Essex (Alternate Member)
- Administration:
- Allan Botham, Director, Infrastructure & Planning Services
 - Katherine Hebert, County Clerk
 - Justin Lammers, Chief, Essex-Windsor EMS
 - Darrel Laurendeau, Director, Information Technology

Melissa Ryan, Director, Financial Services / Treasurer
David Sundin, Director, Legislative and Legal Services /
County Solicitor
Crystal Sylvestre, Manager, Records and Accessibility /
Deputy Clerk
Sandra Zwiers, Chief Administrative Officer
Rebecca Belanger, Manager, Planning Services
Natasha Sheeler, Director, Health and Community
Services/Administrator

1. Closed Meeting

A Closed Meeting was held at 5:30PM on January 21, 2026.

001-2026

Moved By Tracey Bailey

Seconded By Chris Gibb

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

(c) a proposed or pending acquisition or disposition of land by the municipality or local board;

(d) labour relations or employee negotiations;

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

Council will receive supplemental statistical and financial information in relation to upcoming bargaining. Further, Council will receive supplemental information in relation to a proposed property acquisition.

Carried

006-2026

Moved By Kimberly DeYong

Seconded By Larry Verbeke

That Essex County Council adjourn and rise from the Closed Meeting of January 21, 2026 at 5:44 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 Council attended the meeting at the Essex County Civic Centre, Council Chambers.

Councillor Akpata was absent. Mark Carrick attended as an alternate member for the Town of LaSalle.

Councillor Meloche attended virtually from a remote location.

6. County Warden's Welcome and Remarks

Warden MacDonald shared information regarding the recently held Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) conference in Toronto. County officials delegated on priority issues before two provincial ministries and Rebecca Belanger, Manager, Planning Services, was featured on an expert panel discussing strategies for managing rural land.

Warden MacDonald and CAO Sandra Zwiers met with Ministry of Transportation officials to request provincial support to build a grade-separated interchange at the intersection of County Road 22 and County Road 19. The intersection improvements would facilitate the construction of thousands of homes and promote commercial and industrial development, creating jobs and diversifying the economy.

Essex-Windsor EMS Chief Justin Lammers advocated to Minister of Health Sylvia Jones regarding the need to optimize the new priority dispatch system coming to Windsor Essex by embedding clinicians in the dispatch centre to improve triage accuracy, optimize resource deployment amid ever-increasing call volumes, and ensure residents get the right care in the right place at the right time.

The Warden closed with offering gratitude to the County of Essex Road crews for their efforts to keep our roads safe and clear from ice and snow during the recent winter storms.

7. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest raised.

8. Adoption of Regular Meeting Minutes

007-2026

Moved By Chris Gibb

Seconded By Gary McNamara

That the minutes of the December 17, 2025 Regular and Special Meetings of Essex County Council be adopted as presented.

Carried

9. Delegations and Presentations

008-2026

Moved By Larry Verbeke

Seconded By Chris Gibb

That item 12.1 HART Hub Update, be brought forward to be considered ahead of item 9.1 Windsor-Essex Homeless and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hub delegation and presentation.

Carried

9.1. Windsor-Essex Homeless and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hub

Tammy Kotyk, Vice President of Mental Health and Addictions, Hotel-Dieu Grace Healthcare; and Nancy Brockenshire, Executive Director, Windsor Essex Community Health Centre provided a presentation regarding the Windsor Essex Homeless and Addition Recovery Treatment (HART) Hub.

Considered in conjunction with item 12.1 HART Hub Update

Tracey Kotyk offered background information regarding the HART Hub's inception and the goals and objectives the program aims to achieve.

The HART Hub was a program available to residents 16 years and older who are experiencing homelessness and seeking addiction

support. The program endeavours to offer wrap around support for those participating in the program to ensure positive outcomes.

Nancy Brockenshire explained the program is a collaboration of twenty organizations working together to find the most appropriate solutions for those seeking assistance.

10. Communications

10.1. Correspondence

010-2026

Moved By Joe Bachetti

Seconded By Chris Gibb

That the correspondence listed on the Regular Agenda for January 21, 2026, be received and any noted action approved.

Carried

10.1.1 Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)

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

10.1.2 Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus (WOWC)

- [December 2025 Newsletter](#)
- [Warden Marcus Ryan elected as 2026 WOWC Chair](#)

10.1.3 Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island (TWEPI)

[WE Keep You Informed: Last Call For Visitor Guide Sales, Downtown Windsor Skate Social, FREE Marketing Opportunities, Group Opportunities for Restaurants & MORE](#)

10.1.4 New Fancsy Family Hospital Project Update

[The PMO Report: January 2026](#)

10.1.5 Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC)

MPAC Built for Change: Ready for What's Next - 2025
Municipal Partnerships Report

10.1.6 Ontario News - Ministry of Health

[November 28, 2025 - Ontario Opens Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment Hub in Windsor: Province supporting community safety and addiction recovery with 28 HART Hubs delivering care across Ontario](#)

10.1.7 Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (GLSLCI)

[Conference Information and Registration Notice](#)

10.2. Resolutions

There were no Resolutions for consideration for January 21, 2026.

11. Consent Agenda

011-2026

Moved By Larry Verbeke

Seconded By Mark Carrick

That the recommendations in the Administrative Reports listed as items 11.1 and 11.2, on the Consent Agenda for January 21, 2026, be received and approved.

Carried

11.1. Procurement Services Annual and 4th Quarter Report-2025

Report number 2026-0121-FIN-R02-SP, Procurement Services Annual and 4th Quarter Report-2025, dated January 21, 2026, from Sandy Pillon, Manager, Procurement and Compliance.

11.2. Summary of Outstanding Regular Agenda Matters - January 21, 2026

Report number 2026-0121-LLS-R03-KH, Summary of Outstanding Regular Agenda Matters - January 21, 2026, from Katherine Hebert, Clerk

12. Reports and Questions

12.1. HART Hub Update

Report number 2026-0121-LLS-R04-DMS, HART Hub Update, dated January 21, 2026 from David Sundin, Director, Legislative and Legal Services/County Solicitor and Natasha Sheeler, Director, Health and Community Services/SPH Administrator

Considered in conjunction with item 9.1 Windsor-Essex Homeless and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hub

009-2026

Moved By Kimberly DeYong

Seconded By Dennis Rogers

That Essex County Council receive Report Number 2026-0121-LLS-R04-DMS, HART Hub Update, as information.

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

Carried

12.2. Update on the Regional Employment Land Strategy

Report number 2026-0121-IPS-R01-RB, Update on the Regional Employment Land Strategy, dated January 21, 2026, from Rebecca Belanger, Manager, Planning Services

012-2026

Moved By Kimberly DeYong

Seconded By Chris Gibb

That Essex County Council receive report number 2026-0121-IPS-R01-RB, Update on the Regional Employment Land Strategy for information; and,

That Essex County Council authorize funding of the \$63,500 budget shortfall from the Rate Stabilization Reserve to support awarding the consulting services contract for the Regional Employment Land Strategy to Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

In Favour (12): Joe Bachetti, Sherry Bondy, Kimberly DeYong, Chris Gibb, Hilda MacDonald, Gary McNamara, Crystal Meloche, Michael Prue, Dennis Rogers, Rob Shepley, Larry Verbeke, and Mark Carrick

Opposed (1): Kirk Walstedt

Absent (1): Tracey Bailey

Carried

12.3. Joint Hosting AMO AGM and Annual Conference – Bid for 2028, 2029, 2030 and 2031

Report number 2026-0121-CAO-R02-SZ, Joint Hosting AMO AGM and Annual Conference – Bid for 2028, 2029, 2030 and 2031, dated January 21, 2026, from Sandra Zwiers, Chief Administrative Officer

Sandra Zwiers provided information that the County had been approached by Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island (TWEPI) to support a joint bid with the City of Windsor to host the Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO) conference in the coming years.

Since the report was published, TWEPI had provided an estimated unmet limit of \$67,500 for each the County of Essex and the City of Windsor. Both groups would seek contributions from local businesses to offset the costs required. Offering to be the host location offers the region an opportunity to showcase Essex-Windsor to provincial and municipal officials that may not visit the area frequently. It was expected the conference would positively impact the local economy.

Crystal Meloche left the meeting at 7:00 PM.

013-2026

Moved By Michael Prue

Seconded By Chris Gibb

That Essex County Council direct Administration to attempt to negotiate a different cost sharing ratio than 50/50.

In Favour (3): Kimberly DeYong, Chris Gibb, and Michael Prue

Opposed (10): Joe Bachetti, Tracey Bailey, Sherry Bondy, Hilda MacDonald, Gary McNamara, Dennis Rogers, Rob Shepley, Larry Verbeke, Kirk Walstedt, and Mark Carrick

Lost

014-2026

Moved By Gary McNamara

Seconded By Joe Bachetti

That Essex County Council receive report number 2026-0121-CAO-R02-SZ, Joint Hosting AMO AGM and Annual Conference – Bid for 2028, 2029, 2030 and 2031 as information; and,

That Essex County Council supports Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island's submission to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) for the City of Windsor and County of Essex to be considered as the host municipalities for the Annual Conference for 2028, 2029, 2030 and 2031; and,

That Essex County Council authorizes the Chief Administrative Officer of the County of Essex to co-sign the bid document along with the Chief Administrative Officer of the City of Windsor.

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

Carried

12.4.2025 Annual Report - Chief Administrative Officer

Report number 2026-0121-CAO-R01-SZ, 2025 Annual Report - Chief Administrative Officer, dated January 21, 2026, from Sandra Zwiers, CAO

Sandra Zwiers explained that similar to the other departmental reports presented to Council throughout the year, the CAO's report summarizes the activities of the CAO's office. This initial report highlights the achievements over the last two and a half years and is modeled after the performance reporting for the CAO formalized by Council in 2025.

015-2026

Moved By Kimberly DeYong

Seconded By Larry Verbeke

That Essex County Council receive report number 2026-0121-CAO-R01-SZ, 2025 Annual CAO Report as information.

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

Carried

13. Unfinished Business

There were no matters of Unfinished Business for January 21, 2026

14. New Business

14.1. Public Reporting of Closed Meeting

Council met in a Closed Meeting at 5:30 PM this evening regarding two reports from Administration.

The reports were considered under the open meetings exceptions of the *Municipal Act, 2001 as amended* as follows:

- Pursuant to Section 239 (2)

(d) labour relations or employee negotiations;

Council received supplemental statistical and financial information in relation to upcoming bargaining.

- Pursuant to Section 239 (2)

(c) a proposed or pending acquisition or disposition of land by the municipality or local board; and

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

Council received supplemental information in relation to a proposed property acquisition.

The Closed meeting adjourned at 5:44 PM.

15. Adoption of By-Laws

016-2026

Moved By Gary McNamara

Seconded By Tracey Bailey

That By-law 2026-01 be given three readings, and having been read a first, second and third time, be finally passed and enacted.

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

Carried

15.1. By-law Number 2026-01

Being a By-law to confirm the proceedings of the Council of the Corporation of the County of Essex Regular and Closed Meetings, held January 21, 2026

16. Notice of Motion

16.1. Regional Organics Green Bin Program

Councillor Sherry Bondy brought forward the following Notice of Motion:

Whereas an organic waste program is being rolled out to the seven (7) local municipalities of the County of Essex and the City of Windsor, as a Regional Organic Green Bin Program (the "**Program**");

Whereas it is understood that the Region needs to divert organic waste from the Regional Landfill to extend its life expectancy; and

Whereas residents have many inquires about the Program including the cost, the contract, and rationale for why those who compost or wish to opt out cannot do so; and

Whereas the Program is regional in nature and is managed by the Essex Windsor Solid Waste Authority (the "**Authority**") on behalf of the entire Region and manages the contract for the Program; and

Whereas County Council is responsible for setting the service levels for the Program; and

Whereas County Council does not have the necessary information on the Program's effectiveness in the County, or the effectiveness in rural areas versus urban areas, in order for County Council to evaluate the proper service levels for the Program in the County.

Now therefore be it resolved that Council direct Administration to request that the Authority provide the following in writing to the County for Council's information:

- Available statistics to date on the effectiveness of the Program in each of the County's seven (7) local municipalities;
- Available statistics to date on the effectiveness of the Program in urban areas and in rural areas;
- Details of the public education campaign to date for the Program and details of future planned public education campaigns;
- Details about the cost of the Program to each of the seven (7) local municipalities.

17. Adjournment

017-2026

Moved By Dennis Rogers

Seconded By Michael Prue

That the Essex County Council meeting for January 21, 2026 be adjourned at 7:18 PM.

Carried

Hilda MacDonald,
Warden, County of Essex

Katherine J. Hebert,
County Clerk

Date Signed