



Essex County Council, Regular Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 15, 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, Deputy Mayor, Town of LaSalle
 - Joe Bachetti, Deputy Warden / Deputy Mayor, Town of Tecumseh
 - Tracey Bailey, Mayor, Municipality of Lakeshore
 - Sherry Bondy, Mayor, Town of Essex
 - Kimberly DeYong, Deputy Mayor, Town of Kingsville
 - Chris Gibb, Deputy Mayor, Town of Amherstburg
 - Hilda MacDonald, Warden / Mayor, Municipality of Leamington
 - Gary McNamara, Mayor, Town of Tecumseh
 - Crystal Meloche, Mayor, Town of LaSalle
 - Michael Prue, Mayor, Town of Amherstburg
 - Dennis Rogers, Mayor, Town of Kingsville
 - Rob Shepley, Deputy Mayor, Town of Essex
 - Larry Verbeke, Deputy Mayor, Municipality of Leamington
 - Kirk Walstedt, Deputy Mayor, Municipality of Lakeshore
- Administration:
- Jayne Brooks Keller, Administrator, Sun Parlor Home
 - Katherine Hebert, County Clerk
 - Justin Lammers, Chief, Essex-Windsor EMS
 - Darrel Laurendeau, Director, Information Technology
 - Don McArthur, Manager, Communication and Organizational Development
 - Kyla Pritiko, Director, Human Resources
 - 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

1. Closed Meeting

A Closed Meeting was held at 3:00 PM on January 15, 2025.

001-2025

Moved By Rob Shepley

Seconded By Chris Gibb

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

- A Delegation from the Vokes Leadership Group, under Open Meetings Exception 239 (2)(d) labour relations or employee negotiations;
- Report number 2025-0115-LLS-R04-DMS, under Open Meetings Exception 239(2) (b) personal matters about an identifiable individual, including municipal or local board employees; (f) advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege, including communications necessary for that purpose; (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.
- Report number 2025-0115-CAO-R01-SZ, under Open Meetings Exception 239(2) (b) personal matters about an identifiable individual, including municipal or local board employees;

(Voted by Show of Hands)

Carried

006-2025

Moved By Chris Gibb

Seconded By Larry Verbeke

That Essex County Council adjourn and rise from the Closed Meeting of Essex County Council for January 15, 2025 at 4:58 PM.

(Voted by Show of Hands)

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 County of Essex Administration Building, Council Chambers.

6. County Warden's Welcome and Remarks

Warden MacDonald welcomed everyone to the Regular Meeting of Essex County Council.

The Warden noted that the Essex County Homelessness Hub was operating a warming centre during the evening hours to receive residents in need of shelter from the cold.

The Warden thanked all County staff for their continual service to residents regardless of the weather.

7. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest raised.

8. Adoption of Regular Meeting Minutes

010-2025

Moved By Rob Shepley

Seconded By Dennis Rogers

That the minutes of the December 4, 2024 Regular Meeting of Essex County Council be adopted as presented.

(Voted by show of hands)

Carried

9. Delegations and Presentations

9.1 Hotel Dieu Grace Hospital (HDGH)

Kevin Matte, Director of Outpatient Mental Health Services provided a presentation regarding County Intensive Supportive Housing Program

Kevin Matte provided Council with information pertaining to the HDGH outpatient mental health program and spoke in support of the continuation of the Intensive Supportive Housing.

It was further explained that the HDGH program relies on powerful partnerships with community treatment teams such as the Intensive Supportive Housing Program that provide care in the home to patients that benefit most from in place care.

9.2 Family Services Windsor Essex (FSWE)

Bryan Rock, Manager, Community Programs and Ciara Holmes, Acting Executive Director, provided a presentation regarding County Intensive Supportive Housing Program

Bryan Rock sent his regrets. Ciara Holmes provided Council with information pertaining to the services FSWE provides to County residents that are either precariously housed or unhoused.

It was noted that finding housing for their clients was one challenge but supporting those with additional requirements increases the challenge, such as those supported by the Intensive Supportive Housing Program. Ciara noted that discontinuing this program would result in greater reliance on other services.

9.3 South Essex Community Council (SECC)

Tim Friesen and Carolyn Warkentin, Executive Director provided a presentation regarding County Intensive Supportive Housing Program

Tim Friesen sent his regrets. Carolyn Warkentin provided information regarding the services provided by SECC and the highlighted the connections of the SECC programs to County support programs such as Intensive Supportive Housing Program.

It was further noted that the County Homelessness Hub work is critical to the system and the SECC relies on their relationship with the Hub to provide vital support to Essex County residents.

011-2025

Moved By Crystal Meloche

Seconded By Chris Gibb

That item 12.5 County Intensive Supportive Housing Program be considered following Item 9. Delegations.

(Voted by show of hands)

Carried

Note: Item 12.5 was considered immediately following the delegations. That matter continued to be considered through to approximately 8:15PM, at which time the regular order of business continued with item 10. Communications.

10. Communications

10.1 Correspondence

018-2025

Moved By Larry Verbeke

Seconded By Chris Gibb

That the correspondence listed on the Regular Agenda for January 15, 2025, be received and any noted action approved.

(Voted by show of hands)

Carried

10.1.1 Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Letter dated December 12, 2024 RE the proposed Municipal Accountability Act, 2024

10.1.2 Western Ontario Wardens Caucus (WOWC)

[November 2024 Newsletter](#)

[December 2024 Newsletter](#)

10.1.3 Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island (TWEPI)

[W.E. Keep You Informed: Happy Holidays!](#)

[W.E. Keep You Informed: Thank You For Celebrating With Us!](#)
[PLUS Visitor Guide Sales, Marketing Opportunities, We're Hiring & MORE!](#)

10.1.4 Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)

- AMO [Watchfile Newsletter](#)
- AMO [Policy Updates](#)

- AMO [Calendar](#)
- 10.1.5 Municipal Engineers Association (MEA)**
Letter from MEA announcing the new Board of Directors for the 2024-2025 term
- 10.1.6 Windsor Essex Chamber of Commerce (WERCC)**
[December 2024 Newsletter](#)
[WERCC announces New President and Chief Executive Officer](#)
- 10.1.7 Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (GLSLCI)**
[Making Waves Newsletter](#)
- 10.1.8 Windsor Regional Hospital (WRH)**
Statement from WRH:
 - RFP Issued for Construction Manager to complete New Windsor/Essex Acute Care Hospital's First Phase, Including Key Infrastructure and Facilities (Attached)
 - [Ahead of schedule – proposals sought for Phase 1 of Windsor's New Acute Care Hospital](#) – Windsor Star
 - [Windsor's Acute Care Hospital Project Ahead of Schedule](#) - CTV
- 10.1.9 Enable Municipalities to Charge Fees for use of Municipal Property by Gas Utilities**
 - City of Guelph
 - City of Stratford
- 10.1.10 Ontario Deposit Return Program**
 - Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury
 - City of Stratford
- 10.1.11 Solving the Crisis (Homelessness, Mental Health and Addiction)**
 - City of Stratford
 - City of Waterloo
- 10.1.12 Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island (TWEPI)**

[W.E. Keep You Informed: Secure Your Space in our 2025 Official Visitor Guide, Kitchener Food & Wine Show Exhibit Opportunity & More](#)

10.1.13 ProsperUs

January 14, 2025 - ProsperUs Ontario Budget Considerations 2025

10.2 Resolutions

There were no resolutions for consideration for January 15, 2025

11. Consent Agenda

Gary McNamara left the meeting at 8:13 pm.

019-2025

Moved By Chris Gibb

Seconded By Crystal Meloche

That the recommendation in the Administrative Report listed as item 11.1 on the Consent Agenda for January 15, 2025, be approved.

(Voted electronically)

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

Carried

11.1 Summary of Outstanding Reports for January 15, 2025

Report number 2025-0115-LLS-R02-KH, Summary of Outstanding Reports for January 15, 2025

12. Reports and Questions

12.1 Tri-Party Emergency Response Services Agreement

Report number 2025-0115-LLS-R03-DMS, Tri-Party Emergency Response Services Agreement, dated January 15, 2025 from David Sundin, Director, Legislative and Legal Services/County Solicitor

David Sundin explained that with the proposed agreement with the Red Cross and the City of Windsor, the County would deliver their obligations under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (EMCPA). It was further remarked that having the Red Cross on

standby was more practical than the County owning and maintaining the required equipment.

020-2025

Moved By Tracey Bailey

Seconded By Kimberly DeYong

That Essex County Council receive Report Number 2025-0115-LLS-R03-DMS – Tri-Party Emergency Response Services Agreement and authorize the Clerk and the Warden to execute the Tri-Party Emergency Response Services Agreement.

(Voted Electronically)

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

Carried

12.2 County of Essex Delegation at the Rural Ontario Municipal Association Conference

Report number 2025-0115-CAO-R01-SZ County of Essex Delegation at the Rural Ontario Municipal Association Conference, dated January 15, 2025, from Sandra Zwiers, Chief Administrative Officer

Sandra Zwiers provided Council with information pertaining to Delegations that had been approved to be brought forward at the ROMA conference.

Three applications had been submitted and all three had been approved for the County to Delegate.

A Delegation to the MTO will seek funding the construction of grade-separated interchanges on County Road 22 at County Road 19 and Lesperance Road.

Meeting with the Ministry of Health will focus on advocating for the transfer of the operational responsibility for the Windsor Central Ambulance Communications Centre (CACC) allowing Essex-Windsor EMS to manage day-to-day decision-making under a performance agreement.

A joint delegation to the Ministry of Infrastructure with the Town of Tecumseh to advocate for funding support through the Housing-Enabling Core Servicing Stream (HECS). This funding would enable

critical transportation infrastructure improvements along County Road 19 (Manning Road), which is vital to unlocking new housing opportunities and supporting substantial population growth in the region.

Copies of presentation materials were provided to all members and a report would follow the event.

021-2025

Moved By Crystal Meloche

Seconded By Larry Verbeke

That Essex County Council receive report number 2025-0115-CAO-R01-SZ, ROMA Delegation as information.

(Voted electronically)

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

Carried

12.3 Canada Community Building Fund Surplus Allocations 2024

Report number 2025-0115-FIN-R01-MR, Canada Community Building Fund Surplus Allocations 2024, dated January 15, 2025, from Melissa Ryan, Director, Financial Services/Treasurer

Melissa Ryan provided Council with the report outlining the allocation of the funds received under CCBF to the lower tier municipalities. The County portion would be placed in reserve for 2025.

022-2025

Moved By Joe Bachetti

Seconded By Sherry Bondy

That Essex County Council approve report number 2025-0115-FIN-R01-MR, CCBF Surplus Allocations 2024 and direct administration to distribute the surplus funds as outlined in Appendix A and authorize By-Law 2025-01 to redistribute administrative surplus funds received through the Canada Community Building Fund.

(Voted electronically)

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

Carried

12.4 'Contact Council' Email Distribution Group

Report number 2025-0115-LLS-R01-KH DL, 'Contact Council' Email Distribution Group, dated January 15, 2025 from Katherine Hebert, County Clerk and Darrel Laurendeau, Director, Information Technology Services

Darrel Laurendeau provided the report outlining five communication options for Council's consideration. Procedures of other upper tier municipalities were reviewed and considered, and it was determined there are no consistent approaches.

Both Katherine Hebert and Darrel Laurendeau agreed that the option that recommended a web-based feedback form would be the best option for the County of Essex at the time.

023-2025

Moved By Sherry Bondy

Seconded By Rob Shepley

That Essex County Council receive report number 2025-0115-LLS-R01-KHDL Contact Council Email Distribution Group as information.

(Voted electronically)

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

Carried

024-2025

Moved By Dennis Rogers

Seconded By Kimberly DeYong

That Essex County Council direct administration to proceed with setting up a 'contact council' web-based contact form, as described in option 4 within the Administrative Report 2025-0115-LLS-R01-

KHDL Contact Council Email Distribution Group, which would include all members of County Council, the CAO and the Clerk.

(Voted Electronically)

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

Carried

12.5 County Intensive Supportive Housing Program

Report number 2025-0115-LLS-R05-DMS, County Intensive Supportive Housing Program, dated January 15, 2025, from David Sundin, Director, Legislative and Legal Services/County Solicitor

(Report amended to include supplementary information.)

David Sundin provided some background on the County's Intensive Supportive Housing Program. Noting that in 2022, the County and the City each began operating supportive housing programs that provided specialized supports to those individuals experiencing homelessness, more complex medical needs and/or mental health and/or addiction issues than the traditional Supportive Housing Program.

The City, as the Consolidated Regional Service Manager, had decided to fund the City's Intensive Supportive Housing Program differently than the County's Intensive Supportive Housing Program. The difference means that the City's Program receives approximately \$200,000 more per year from provincial funds than the County's Program does. The City's Program is also being sustained through a substantial contribution from the City's municipal tax base. The County's Program has not received any support from municipal taxes.

The contract with the current service provider of the Program is set to end on March 31, 2025, and the program itself, will be unable to continue unless there is a funding allocation from another source (i.e. County Tax dollars).

The informal RFI process uncovered a range of what would be required to run the program. Those ranges are approximately \$85 - \$115 per day (or \$120-\$390K annual County contribution). A formal RFP would be required to confirm these amounts.

Members of Council expressed support for the program generally and for those with complex needs to continue to get the care and housing they require. The concern is the lack of certainty in a service provider being able to sustain the level of care needed for the funding that is available at this time.

Considerable discussion took place with regard to the success of the traditional Housing with Supports program, and the need for continued funding of that program. Further, discussion took place regarding where the burden of financial responsibility of housing and homelessness ought to be borne.

012-2025

Moved By Tracey Bailey

Seconded By Joe Bachetti

That Essex County Council receive Report Number 2025-0115-LLS-R05 DMS – County Intensive Supportive Housing Program as information.

(Voted electronically)

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

Carried

013-2025

Moved By Kirk Walstedt

Seconded By Rob Shepley

Essex County Council direct Administration to commence a formal procurement process within the allotted Provincial funding model with respect to an Intensive Supportive Housing Program in the County, report back to Council regarding the outcome of same and for further direction, and continue operating the existing County Intensive Supportive Housing Program in the meantime;

(Voted electronically)

In Favour (4): Tracey Bailey, Kimberly DeYong, Rob Shepley, and Kirk Walstedt

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

Lost

Discussion took place regarding the financial, ethical and legal responsibilities of the County. Councillor Bondy discussed moving the motion as presented in the administrative report.

It was noted that there was a need to consult with the County Solicitor in a supplementary closed session on this matter under Open Meetings Exception 239(2) (b) personal matters about an identifiable individual, including municipal or local board employees; (f) advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege, including communications necessary for that purpose; (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.

014-2025

Moved By Dennis Rogers

Seconded By Kimberly DeYong

That Essex County Council move into Closed Session at 7:25 PM.

(Voted by show of hands)

Carried

015-2025

Moved By Gary McNamara

Seconded By Kimberly DeYong

That Essex County Council adjourn and rise from the Closed Session at 8:00 PM.

(Voted by show of hands)

Carried

The Warden called the Regular Meeting of Essex County Council back to order at 8:00 PM.

016-2025

Moved By Sherry Bondy

Seconded By Joe Bachetti

Essex County Council direct Administration to commence a formal procurement process with respect to an Intensive Supportive Housing Program in the County, report back to Council regarding the outcome of same and for further direction, to pursue a short term contract with a service provider until the RFP process concludes.

(Voted electronically)

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

Opposed (1): Rob Shepley

Carried

017-2025

Moved By Sherry Bondy

Seconded By Gary McNamara

That Council of the County of Essex request the Province of Ontario to increase the funding of the Homelessness Prevention Program so that municipalities can better support individuals in the community experiencing homelessness.

Whereas the County of Essex is not receiving enough provincial funds to support vulnerable residents in our community that are either homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Whereas it is the responsibility and jurisdiction of the Provincial government to provide social services to their communities and to end homelessness we need to prioritize, long-term housing solutions;

That the request be copied to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing of Ontario, Paul Calandra, to the Leader of the Official Opposition, to all local Members of Provincial Parliament, to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), and to the Western Ontario Warden's Caucus (WOWC); and further,

That Administration invite local MPPs to attend a Council meeting to discuss this matter further.

(Voted electronically)

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

Carried

13. Unfinished Business

There were no matters of unfinished business for January 15, 2025

14. New Business

14.1 Public Reporting of Closed Meeting

A Closed Meeting of Essex County Council was held at 3:00 PM, prior to the regular Council meeting this evening, pursuant to Section 239 (2) (b), (d), (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;

(d) labour relations or employee negotiations;

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

(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.

Council received a presentation related to labour relations and employee negotiations from the Vokes Leadership Group.

Council was also provided with information as part of Report number 2025-0115-LLS-R04-DMS which was in relation to a legal matter and ongoing negotiations.

Council further considered report number 2025-0115-CAO-R01-SZ, Staffing Update January 2025. Council received information and provided administration with direction and instruction related to a staffing matter.

The Closed Meeting concluded at 4:58 PM.

15. Adoption of By-Laws

024-2025

Moved By Larry Verbeke

Seconded By Chris Gibb

That By-laws 2025-01 and 2025-03, having been read a first, second and third time, be finally passed and enacted.

(Voted electronically)

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

Carried

15.1 By-law Number 2025-01

Being a By-law to amend By-law Number 34-2024, authorizing the allocation of Canada Community-Building Fund (CCBF) funds to the Lower Tier municipalities in the County of Essex, being the Towns of Amherstburg, Essex, Kingsville, LaSalle, and Tecumseh, and the Municipalities of Lakeshore and Leamington, in accordance with Section 5.3 of the Municipal Funding Agreement with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Canada Community-Building Fund (CCBF)

15.2 By-law Number 2025-03

Being a By-law to Confirm the Proceedings of the Council of the Corporation of the County of Essex for the Special, Regular and Closed Meetings held January 15, 2025.

16. Notice of Motion

Preamble:

During deliberations at the November 28, 2024 Essex County Council Meeting, discussion regarding the status of the progress of the New Regional Hospital resulted in an informal request for a delegation to be requested to attend a future meeting of County Council. The purpose will be to further discuss and update Council on progress and next steps. Administration received direction.

Sherry Bondy brought forward the following Notice of Motion:

That Essex County Council request that a representation from the new hospital committee attend County Council and explain where they are in

the stage of the construction and share what health care services they will be offering in the first or second quarter of 2025

17. Adjournment

025-2025

Moved By Kimberly DeYong

Seconded By Crystal Meloche

That the Essex County Council meeting for January 15, 2025 be adjourned at 8:38 PM.

(Voted by show of hands)

Carried

Hilda MacDonald,
Warden, County of Essex

Katherine J. Hebert,
County Clerk