



Essex County Council, Regular Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 5, 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 Tracey Bailey, Councillor Sherry Bondy, 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
Absent:	Kimberly DeYong, Councillor
Administration:	Allan Botham, Director, Infrastructure & Planning Services 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

Rebecca Belanger, Manager, Planning Services

1. Closed Meeting

There was no Closed Meeting held on February 5, 2025.

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 Administration Building, in the Council Chambers, with the exception of Kimberly DeYong who was absent.

6. County Warden's Welcome and Remarks

Warden MacDonald welcomed guests to the meeting and reminded everyone that February was Black History Month – a time to celebrate and honour the legacy and contributions of Black Canadians and communities to the fabric of our nation and our County dating back 400 years.

The Warden offered some information on local events planned to celebrate Black History Month.

Chief Lammers expressed appreciation for the contributions of EWEMS Paramedic Dan Pickel, over the course of his 42-year career.

Warden MacDonald and Chief Lammers presented Dan Pickel with tokens of appreciation from the Province, County and Service.

7. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest raised.

8. Adoption of Meeting Minutes

027-2025

Moved By Chris Gibb

Seconded By Crystal Meloche

That Minutes of Essex County Council Regular meeting of November 28, 2024 be adopted as amended, and Minutes of the Regular and Special meetings dated January 15, 2025 be adopted as presented.

(Voted by show of hands)

Carried

Note: The meeting was briefly recessed to address a technical issue with the livestream broadcast. The matter was resolved, and the meeting continued at 6:25PM.

9. Delegations and Presentations

9.1 ORH

Andrew Greggan, Senior Consultant ORH provided a presentation regarding the Essex-Windsor EMS 10-year Master Plan. A detailed outline of the research and data collection results were shared with Council. ORH examined areas such as:

- Call volumes
- Ratios of staffing levels
- Response times and type analysis
- Population growth patterns in the region and demographics forecasting of future state
- Performance metrics
- Geographic efficiency analysis of base locations
- Modeling options for service configuration vis-à-vis available skilled labour resources and need in the region

Note: To be considered with item 12.1 of Reports and Questions Report 2025-0205-EMS-R01-JL EWEMS Master Plan Results

028-2025

Moved By Dennis Rogers

Seconded By Michael Prue

That the order of business be amended so that agenda item 12.1 2025-0205-EMS-R01-JL, Essex-Windsor Emergency Medical

Services Master Plan Results Report, be considered in conjunction with the ORH Delegation.

(Voted by show of hands)

Carried

10. Communications

10.1 Correspondence

031-2025

Moved By Gary McNamara

Seconded By Joe Bachetti

That the correspondence listed on the Regular Agenda for February 5, 2025, be received and any noted action approved.

(Voted by show of hands)

Carried

10.1.1 Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island (TWEPI)

[W.E. Keep You Informed: Last Call for Visitor Guide Sales, Best of Windsor Essex Nominations ON NOW, Win Cirque du Soleil tix & MUCH MORE!](#)

10.1.2 Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)

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

10.1.3 Windsor Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce

- [Chambers News](#)
- [2025 Warden's Luncheon March 28, 2025](#)

10.1.4 Invest Windsor Essex

Correspondence dated January 28, 2025 - Battery Boost Job Days Program, from Holly Connelly, Executive Liaison, IWE

10.1.5 Western Ontario Warden's Caucus

January Newsletter

10.1.6 City of Peterborough

January 21, 2025 RE Bill 242 Safer Municipalities Act, 2024

10.1.7 Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce

January 28, 2025 - [Newsletter WERCC](#)

10.2 Resolutions

There were no resolutions for consideration for February 5, 2025.

11. Consent Agenda

032-2025

Moved By Larry Verbeke

Seconded By Chris Gibb

That the recommendations in the Administrative Reports listed as items 11.1, 11.4 and 11.5, on the Consent Agenda for February 5, 2025, be approved and further that the Minutes presented as information listed as items 11.2 and 11.3 on the said Consent Agenda be received.

(Voted Electronically)

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

Carried

11.1 Summary of Outstanding Reports

Report number 2025-0205-LLS-R06-KH, Summary of Outstanding Reports for February 5, 2025, from Katherine Hebert, County Clerk

11.2 Windsor Essex Regional Community Safety and Well-being Systems Leadership Table - Minutes

Minutes of the Windsor Essex Regional Community Safety and Well-being Systems Leadership Table meeting, dated June 12, 2024

11.3 Essex-Windsor Solid Waste Authority

Minutes of the Essex-Windsor Solid Waste Authority Board Meeting, dated November 5, 2024

11.4 ROMA 2025 Delegation Update

Report number 2025-0205-CAO-R02-SZ, ROMA 2025 Delegation Update, dated February 5, 2025 from Sandra Zwiers, Chief Administrative Officer

11.5 Correction to the 2025 Budget

Report number 2025-0205-FIN-R02-MR, Correction to the 2025 Budget, dated February 5, 2025 from Melissa Ryan, Director, Financial Services/Treasurer

12. Reports and Questions

12.1 Essex-Windsor Emergency Medical Services Master Plan Results

Report number 2025-0205-EMS-R01-JL, Essex-Windsor Emergency Medical Services Master Plan Results, dated February 5, 2025 from Justin Lammers, Chief, Essex-Windsor EMS

Chief Justin Lammers provided background on the lead-up to the Master Plan Update. It was noted that a service-wide analysis following the Covid-19 Pandemic was needed to adapt the Master Plan to the changed EMS Service environment. The most significant of changes identified in the Master Plan Review is a move to a 'Hub and Spoke' base model which would support patient and operational efficiencies.

Discussion took place with regard to the need for adequate financial resources to be available for the potential change in base model, on an accelerated timeline. It was further noted that a need to bolster advancing new paramedics is critical, and that partnerships with St. Clair College may be warranted.

It was further discussed that the need for an immediate Service Delivery Review of the Essex-Windsor Emergency Medical Service was in order.

029-2025

Moved By Chris Gibb

Seconded By Rob Shepley

That Essex County Council receive report number 2025-0206-EMS-R001-JL, Essex-Windsor EMS Master Plan Update, for information.

(Voted Electronically)

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

Carried

030-2025

Moved By Sherry Bondy

Seconded By Rob Shepley

That Essex County Council approve a Service Delivery Review being advanced to 2025, with the County's share of the cost for same being paid for from the County's Rate Stabilization Reserve.

(Voted Electronically)

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

Carried

12.2 Proposed Changes to Fees and Charges By-law for 2025

Report number 2024-0205-FIN-R03-MR, Proposed Changes to Fees and Charges By-law for 2025, dated February 5, 2025 from Melissa Ryan, Director, Financial Services/Treasurer

Melissa Ryan provided a brief summary of the changes to the Fees and Charges By-law for 2025 and noted that the changes related to covering actual costs of programs and to costs associated with projects requiring a final inspection. It is expected that the increase up-front cost will ensure inspections are scheduled to release the refundable deposit amounts for some projects.

033-2025

Moved By Rob Shepley

Seconded By Gary McNamara

That Essex County Council approve report number 2025-0205-FIN-R03-MR, Proposed Revisions to Fees and Charges By-law for 2025, and direct administration to charge the updated deposits and fees from the date of approval of the By-Law.

(Voted Electronically)

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

Carried

12.3 Phragmites Control Across the County

Report number 2025-0205-IPS-R02-AB, Phragmites Control Across the County, dated February 5, 2025 from Allan Botham, Director, Infrastructure and Planning Services

Allan Botham provided Council with an update with regard to phragmites mitigation activities throughout the County.

At this time there is a decentralized and fragmented effort for the eradication of phragmites in Essex County. The County continues to facilitate workshops and seeks funding opportunities along with the Essex Region Conservation Authority.

Discussion took place with regard to the level of engagement that is warranted and desired by County Administration with regard to leading and coordinating efforts for a Phragmites Working Group with all local municipalities with the goal of harmonizing the action plan across the region.

Moved By Michael Prue

Seconded By Gary McNamara

That Essex County Council receive report number 2025-0205-IPS-R02-AB, Phragmites Control Across the County as information, and

That Essex County Council direct Administration to begin a governance process to consult with local municipalities towards a concerted effort led by the County to establish a Phragmite Control program. **(No Vote Taken – see resolution 034-2025)**

034-2025

Moved By Kirk Walstedt

Seconded By Rob Shepley

That Essex County Council postpone the motion to the March 19, 2025 Regular Meeting.

(Voted electronically)

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

Carried

035-2025

Moved By Chris Gibb

Seconded By Crystal Meloche

That Essex County Council receive report number 2025-0205-IPS-R02-AB, Phragmites Control Across the County as information.

(Voted Electronically)

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

Carried

12.4 Summary of Public Comments OPA 7 - 810 Mersea Road 4

Report number 2025-0205-IPS-R04-RB, Summary of Public Comments OPA 7 - 810 Mersea Road 4, dated February 5, 2025 from Rebecca Belanger, Manager, Planning Services

Rebecca Belanger provided a summary of comments received regarding official plan amendment on Mersea Road 4 in the Municipality of Leamington.

036-2025

Moved By Larry Verbeke

Seconded By Crystal Meloche

That Essex County Council receive report number 2025-0205-IPS-R04-RB, Summary of Public Comments OPA 7 – 810 Mersea Road 4, as information and that By-law 2025-02 being a by-law to adopt Official Plan Amendment number 7 be approved at the appropriate time.

(Voted Electronically)

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

Carried

12.5 Leamington to Windsor Transit Funding 2025

Report number 2025-0205-IPS-R03-AB, Leamington to Windsor Transit Funding 2025, dated February 5, 2025 from Allan Botham, Director, Infrastructure and Planning Services

Allan Botham provided Council with background information regarding the Leamington to Windsor transit line which was originally established through grant funding and contracted services. It was noted that Council support is being requested in order for the service to continue. It was further noted that the establishing of a regional transit system is part of the County's Strategic Plan. What is being proposed is a first step and integration with other existing transit lines established independently by local municipalities may be aggregated over time, should the working group find justification

If the County does not proceed with support for this service, the line will cease operating. Grant funding has come to an end, and there is not currently another option available for funding the service.

Discussion took place regarding the best path forward for regional transit, and for the immediate need of the Leamington line.

037-2025

Moved By Chris Gibb

Seconded By Larry Verbeke

That Essex County Council receive report number 2025-0205-IPS-R03-AB, for information.

(Voted Electronically)

In Favour (11): Michael Akpata, Joe Bachetti, Sherry Bondy, Chris Gibb, Hilda MacDonald, Gary McNamara, Crystal Meloche, Michael Prue, Dennis Rogers, Rob Shepley, and Larry Verbeke

Opposed (2): Tracey Bailey, and Kirk Walstedt

Carried

038-2025

Moved By Chris Gibb

Seconded By Larry Verbeke

That Essex County Council direct Administration to establish a Regional Transit Working Group to engage all local municipalities regarding their interest in establishing regional transit services in their communities; and

That Administration bring a follow up report to County Council summarizing the work of the Regional Transit Working Group later in 2025 and prior to the 2026 budget.

(Voted Electronically)

In Favour (9): Michael Akpata, Joe Bachetti, Sherry Bondy, Chris Gibb, Hilda MacDonald, Crystal Meloche, Michael Prue, Dennis Rogers, and Larry Verbeke

Opposed (4): Tracey Bailey, Gary McNamara, Rob Shepley, and Kirk Walstedt

Carried

039-2025

Moved By Dennis Rogers

Seconded By Joe Bachetti

OPTION A

That County Council approve the funding of 50% of the 2025 net operating deficit costs of the LTW regional transit service up to a maximum of \$100,000 as follows:

- 2025 Budget Amendment – to be debated and considered at the February 19, 2025 Council Meeting

(Voted Electronically)

In Favour (3): Joe Bachetti, Hilda MacDonald, and Dennis Rogers

Opposed (10): Michael Akpata, Tracey Bailey, Sherry Bondy, Chris Gibb, Gary McNamara, Crystal Meloche, Michael Prue, Rob Shepley, Larry Verbeke, and Kirk Walstedt

Lost

040-2025

Moved By Chris Gibb

Seconded By Michael Prue

OPTION B

That County Council approve the funding of 50% of the 2025 net operating deficit costs of the LTW regional transit service up to a maximum of \$100,000 as follows:

- Transfer from the Rate Stabilization Reserve

(Voted Electronically)

In Favour (8): Joe Bachetti, Sherry Bondy, Chris Gibb, Hilda MacDonald, Michael Prue, Dennis Rogers, Rob Shepley, and Larry Verbeke

Opposed (5): Michael Akpata, Tracey Bailey, Gary McNamara, Crystal Meloche, and Kirk Walstedt

Carried

13. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business to consider for February 5, 2025.

14. New Business

14.1 New Hospital Update

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 and made the request, however no scheduled delegation has been set at this time.

At the January 15, 2025 Regular meeting of Essex County Council, Councillor Bondy brought forward a Notice of Motion:

That Essex County Council request that 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.

041-2025

Moved By Sherry Bondy

Seconded By Joe Bachetti

That Essex County Council request that 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

(Voted Electronically)

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

Carried

14.2 Provincial Election - County of Essex Advocacy Campaign

Deputy Warden Bachetti raised the matter of the upcoming Provincial Election, and the need for continued advocacy for the County of Essex. It was noted that in previous Provincial and Federal election cycles, the County of Essex strategically put forward some priorities for consideration by the engaged parties during the election. Was the County prepared to put forward a renewed advocacy campaign for the upcoming Provincial election?

Sandra Zwiers indicated that Administration is prepared to put forward a campaign of renewed advocacy for the County priorities with this election cycle.

042-2025

Moved By Sherry Bondy

Seconded By Rob Shepley

That Essex County Council direct Administration to invite the elected MPP's to County Council to discuss common priorities in the region.

(Voted Electronically)

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

Carried

15. Adoption of By-Laws

043-2025

Moved By Rob Shepley

Seconded By Crystal Meloche

That By-laws 2025-01 and 2025-04 through 2025-05, be given three readings, and 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, Chris Gibb, Hilda MacDonald, Gary McNamara, Crystal Meloche, Michael Prue, Dennis Rogers, Rob Shepley, Larry Verbeke, and Kirk Walstedt

Carried

15.1 By-law Number 2025-02

Being a By-law to adopt Official Plan Amendment Number 7 – 810 Mersea Road 4, to the County of Essex Official Plan

15.2 By-law Number 2025-04

Being a By-law to Impose Fees and Charges by the Corporation of the County of Essex

15.3 By-law Number 2025-05

Being a By-law to confirm the proceedings of the Council of the Corporation of the County of Essex Regular and Closed Meetings held February 5, 2025

16. Notice of Motion

16.1 Deputy Warden Joe Bachetti brought forward the following two Notices of Motions:

1. Preamble/Background:

Whereas at its December 4, 2024 meeting County Council passed resolution number 337-2024 which was duly moved by Tracey Bailey and seconded by Sherry Bondy as follows:

That Essex County Council reduce the funding allocation to Invest WindsorEssex by 15% to \$953,750; and

That a letter be sent to the Board of Directors and the interim CEO advising them of the reduction.

Whereas that motion was carried by a vote of 8-6 in favour by members of County Council.

Motion:

I move to rescind resolution 337-2024 which states That Essex County Council reduce the funding allocation to Invest Windsor Essex by 15% to \$953,750.

2. Motion:

I move to approve 2025 funding of Invest Windsor Essex at the originally proposed level of \$1,122,060.

16.2 Councillor Michael Akpata brought forward the following two Notices of Motion:

1. Preamble:

Whereas the recent threats of an imposition of tariffs on Canadian production would have had a substantial effect on the items produced in the County of Essex.

And that there has only been granted a 30-day reprieve before they may be implemented.

And that these tariffs were going to be applied by another country and therefore can be deemed as being external to the Province and the Country.

And Whereby the Internal trade has been deemed by the Canadian Federation of Independent business (CFIB) to represent 18 % of Canada's GDP. And that in July, the CFIB released a report that said removing interprovincial barriers could boost the economy by up to \$200 billion annually. And that items produced, grown, and manufactured in Essex County are sent across Canada and are in many cases subject to these interprovincial barriers.

Motion:

That the County of Essex call upon both the Provincial and Federal Government to eliminate inter provincial trade barriers to ensure that items produced in the County of Essex can move without barriers freely across the country.

2. Preamble:

Whereas the recent threats of an imposition of tariffs on Canadian production would have had a substantial effect on the items produced in the County of Essex.

And that there has only been granted a 30-day reprieve before they may be implemented.

And that these tariffs were going to be applied by another country and therefore can be deemed as being external to the Province and the Country. And that the County of Essex, the Province of Ontario, and Canada as a whole has a widely diverse economic base.

And that much like any other 2 tier system the County of Essex is a consumer of both goods and services

Motion:

That the County of Essex begin the process to examine the viability of beginning a "Buy Canadian Procurement strategy" And that as part of the strategy Canadian content is reviewed and percentages of Canadian content are clearly defined as part of the procurement; and,

That the County of Essex clearly define the term" Canadian Content" for the purposes of procurement of both goods and services.

17. Adjournment

044-2025

Moved By Michael Prue

Seconded By Chris Gibb

That the Essex County Council meeting for February 5, 2025 be adjourned at 8:46 PM.

(Voted by show of hands)

Carried

Hilda MacDonald,
Warden, County of Essex

Katherine J. Hebert,
County Clerk