



Essex County Council, Regular Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 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
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

Absent: eSCRIBE Admin[FORMS]

Administration: Allan Botham, Director, Infrastructure & Planning Services
Katherine Hebert, County Clerk
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

Jeanie Diamond Francis, Manager, Community Services
Ryan Lemay, Deputy Chief, Operations, EWEMS

1. Closed Meeting

Two Closed Meetings were held on March 5, 2025.

The first session at 3:00PM, and a second session at 5:15 PM.

060-2025

Moved By Rob Shepley

Seconded By Dennis Rogers

That Essex County Council move into a Closed Meeting Pursuant to Section 239 (3.1) of the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended. Members of Council will receive training in relation to meeting procedures, under the Open Meeting Exceptions addressing education or training sessions for members of council or local boards as follows:

- A meeting of a council or local board or of a committee of either of them may be closed to the public if the following conditions are both satisfied:
 1. The meeting is held for the purpose of educating or training the members.
 2. At the meeting, no member discusses or otherwise deals with any matter in a way that materially advances the business or decision-making of the council, local board or committee.

Carried

061-2025

Moved By Dennis Rogers

Seconded By Crystal Meloche

That Essex Council adjourn and rise from the Closed Meeting - Session 1, at 4:30 PM.

Carried

062-2025

Moved By Rob Shepley

Seconded By Chris Gibb

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

Report number 2025-0305-LLS-R09-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.

Carried

065-2025

Moved By Dennis Rogers

Seconded By Crystal Meloche

That Essex Council adjourn, and rise from the Closed Meeting - Session 2, at 5:55 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 all members of Council attended the meeting at the Essex County Civic Centre, Council Chambers.

6. County Warden's Welcome and Remarks

Warden MacDonald congratulated the Infrastructure and Planning Services team and other staff involved in the construction of the roundabout at the intersection of County Road 42 and County Road 43.

Good Roads had selected this project by the County of Essex and Green Infrastructure Partners as the winner of the 2024 Municipal Concrete Award. The award recognized the high standards set by this major project, which was completed on time and within budget.

The Warden also applauded three County of Essex staff members: computer technician Shari Tempesta, paramedic Dave Thibodeau and Sun Parlor Home laundry charge worker Bobbi-Jo Bazala who were selected by their colleagues through the county's Cheers for Peers program in 2024 for being exceptionally supportive, inspiring and dedicated. \

Tecumseh Mayor Gary McNamara was recognized as a recipient of the King Charles III Coronation Medal.

The Warden provided Certificates of Appreciation to representatives from Erie James Produce and the Leamington Regional Food Hub for their donation of time and resources to support the delivery, sorting and storage of almost two tons of food donated by GlobalMedic to local food banks in early December 2024. The Warden expressed gratitude to Essex-Windsor EMS staff who helped to distributed the donations across the region.

7. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest raised.

7.1 Michael Akpata - Erie Shores Health Care

Member of family employed by Erie Shores Health Care.

8. Adoption of Regular Meeting Minutes

066-2025

Moved By Larry Verbeke

Seconded By Kimberly DeYong

That the minutes of the February 19, 2025 Regular Meeting of Essex County Council be adopted as presented.

(Voted by show of hands)

Carried

9. Delegations and Presentations

9.1 Erie Shores Health Care

Kristin Kennedy, President and Chief Executive Officer and Kevin Black, Manager of Communications, Community Engagement and Public Affairs provided a presentation to County Council regarding Erie Shores Health Care.

Michael Akpata declared a conflict on this item. (Member of family employed by Erie Shores Health Care.)

Kristin Kennedy outlined how the financial contribution provided through the County has enhanced the services provided by Erie Shores Healthcare, and highlighted other funding opportunities and the resulting associated service enhancements. It was noted that ErieShores Healthcare was ranked number one in Ontario for the least off load delays for EMS and is one of the top employers for Southwestern Ontario last year.

Discussion took place with regard to the positive impact that ESHC has had in the County and Region and will continue to have as services expand. Council congratulated the delegation on their successful programs.

9.2 Ad Hoc Delegation - John Demarco

067-2025

Moved By Kimberly DeYong

Seconded By Sherry Bondy

That John Demarco be permitted to delegate at County Council this evening, on the subject of *"the County of Essex Official Plan, specifically the Natural Heritage System, and the specific case of the Howard Bouffard Secondary Plan in LaSalle"*.

(Voted by Show of Hands)

Lost

10. Communications

10.1 Correspondence

068-2025

Moved By Chris Gibb

Seconded By Michael Prue

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

(Voted Electronically)

Carried

10.1.1 Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)

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

10.1.2 Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island

[W.E. Keep You Informed: Best of Windsor Essex Awards, Southern Ontario Tourism Conference, Education Opportunities & more!](#)

10.1.3 City of Windsor

February 24, 2025 - Correspondence to Premier Ford RE Obstacles in Addressing Housing, Homelessness, Mental Health and Addictions issues in the Communities We Serve

10.1.4 Western Ontario Warden's Caucus (WOWC)

February 2025 - Monthly WOWC Update

10.2 Resolutions

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

11. Consent Agenda

069-2025

Moved By Rob Shepley

Seconded By Kirk Walstedt

That the recommendations in the Administrative Report listed as item 11.1, on the Consent Agenda for March 5, 2025, be received and approved and that the Minutes listed as 11.2 on said Consent Agenda be received.

(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

11.1 Summary of Outstanding Reports for March 5, 2025

Report number 2025-0305-LLS-R11-KH, Summary of Outstanding Reports for March 5, 2025, from Katherine Hebert, County Clerk

11.2 Essex-Windsor Solid Waste Authority

Minutes of the January 7, 2025 Essex-Windsor Solid Waste Authority, Regular Board Meeting

12. Reports and Questions

12.1 Council-Staff Relations Policy 2019-001 - Compliance Review

Report number 2025-0305-LLS-R08-KH, Council-Staff Relations Policy 2019-001 - Compliance Review, dated March 5, 2025 from Katherine Hebert, County Clerk

Katherine Hebert provided Council with a summary of the County's Policy and Procedure Governance Framework and the overall status of the review process for existing policies.

The Council Staff Relations Policy was provided three ways for ease of reference; the Current Policy, marked up version, and a clean version of the proposed revised policy. Aside from the formatting changes required to bring the Policy in line with the standard, there were several updates made to quoted language from other County documents and legislation, that have been changed or updated since the Policy was initially adopted.

The proposed Policy further outlines the alignment with the County's Strategic Plan.

070-2025

Moved By Gary McNamara

Seconded By Joe Bachetti

That Essex County Council receive report number 2025-0305-LLS-R08-KH, Council/Staff Relations Policy 2019-001 Compliance Review, and Approve the draft revised and updated Policy attached as Appendix C.

(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

12.2 County Intensive Supportive Housing Program

Report number 2025-0305-LLS-R10-DMS, County Intensive Supportive Housing Program, dated March 5, 2025 from David Sundin, Director, Legislative and Legal Services/County Solicitor

David Sundin provided Council with information regarding the County Intensive Supportive Housing Program and Request for Proposals process undertaken to uncover an appropriate vendor for this program and services. Council was provided with information regarding the two recommendations outlined in the report, noting that two RFP submissions were received.

It was noted that there are initial costs, as well as a significant annual commitment associated with the decision to proceed with the program. Administration is seeking Council direction on whether to proceed with the preferred proponent, to cancel the RFP, or to take some other action as Council sees fit.

Discussion took place with regard to the cost of the program, and the appropriate level of government where the burden of responsibility lay for programs such as these. Council expressed concern for the larger issue of homelessness and need for supportive housing, mental health and addiction supports in general.

071-2025

Moved By Michael Prue

Seconded By Chris Gibb

That Essex County Council receive Report Number 2025-0305-LLS-R10-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

072-2025

Moved By Tracey Bailey

Seconded By Rob Shepley

That Essex County Council directs Administration to advise the proponents that the Procurement Process is cancelled; and,

That Administration work with the City of Windsor and utilize one-time Safe Restart dollars to support transitions; and further,

That the County work with the City of Windsor on a joint campaign to increase HPP funding for our region.

In Favour (12): Michael Akpata, Joe Bachetti, Tracey Bailey, Sherry Bondy, Kimberly DeYong, Hilda MacDonald, Crystal Meloche, Michael Prue, Dennis Rogers, Rob Shepley, Larry Verbeke, and Kirk Walstedt

Opposed (2): Chris Gibb, and Gary McNamara

Carried

073-2025

Moved By Sherry Bondy

Seconded By Rob Shepley

Whereas municipalities across Ontario are facing increasingly complex issues related to addressing housing, homelessness, and mental health and addiction issues; and,

Whereas the Province has not provided municipalities with sufficient resources to address these issues, such that municipalities on an ad hoc basis are being forced to respond to this area of provincial jurisdiction; and,

Whereas the bulk of funding that the Province has provided has been dedicated to large urban areas, and largely to the exclusion of rural and smaller urban areas.

Now therefore, Council resolves as follows:

1. That Administration be directed to send correspondence to the Premier of the Province of Ontario, and all relevant Provincial Ministers, seeking direct funding from the Province to assist rural and smaller urban areas with addressing housing, homelessness, and mental health, and addiction issues; and
2. That Administration be directed to invite our local Members of Provincial Parliament to appear before Council to hear the concerns County Council has with funding related to housing,

homelessness, and mental health and addiction issues, for rural and smaller urban areas.

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 March 5, 2025

14. New Business

14.1 Public Reporting of Closed Meeting

On March 5, 2025, two closed meetings were held.

The first Closed Meeting of Essex County Council was held at 3:00PM.

Council met in a Closed Meeting as permitted, and pursuant to *Section 239 (3.1) of the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended* as follows:

A meeting of a council or local board or of a committee of either of them may be closed to the public if the following conditions are both satisfied:

1. The meeting is held for the purpose of educating or training the members.
2. At the meeting, no member discusses or otherwise deals with any matter in a way that materially advances the business or decision-making of the council, local board or committee.

Members of Council met for education and training facilitated by Janelle Abela, CEO & Growth Strategist at Diverse Solutions Strategy Firm Inc. The first Closed Meeting concluded at 4:30PM.

The second Closed Meeting of Essex County Council was held at 5:15 PM, prior to the regular Council meeting this evening.

Council met in a Closed Meeting as permitted, and pursuant to Section 239 (2) of the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended, and received information related to:

(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 County.

The information was provided as part of Report Number 2025-0305-LLS-R09-DMS, County Intensive Supportive Housing Program.

The second closed meeting concluded at 5:55 PM.

14.2 AMO Municipal Finance and Economic Development Task Force

Invitation to Sandra Zwiers, Chief Administrative Officer, to participate in the AMO Municipal Finance and Economic Development Task Force

074-2025

Moved By Joe Bachetti

Seconded By Kirk Walstedt

That Essex County Council approve the participation of the Chief Administrative Officer, Sandra Zwiers, in the Finance and Economic Development Task Force, through the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

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

14.3 Border Mayors Alliance 2025

Report number 2025-0305-CAO-R03-SZ, Border Mayors Alliance 2025, dated March 5, 2025 from Sandra Zwiers, Chief Administrative Officer

Sandra Zwiers provided some background information regarding the Border Mayors Alliance 2025, a committee formed of mayors of municipalities across Canada who share a border with the United States.

Lower-tier municipalities of Essex County are all border municipalities, as all share a water crossing, and are affected by the economic impacts of the Windsor-Essex region. The County of Essex, itself being an upper-tier municipality, having a Warden as head of council, is not a member of the group. Having representation through the local mayors will in tandem represent the County. It is uncertain whether the need for this committee will be long-term or a purposeful short-term, but the initial costs are proposed to be covered by the County, as there is a collective benefit in all locals having the opportunity to be represented by their mayors, at that table.

075-2025

Moved By Gary McNamara

Seconded By Chris Gibb

That Essex County Council receive report number 2025-0305-CAO-R03-SZ, Border Mayors Alliance 2025 as information and authorize the funding of the 2025 per capita membership for all seven local municipalities from the Corporation's Rate Stabilization Reserve.

(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

15. Adoption of By-Laws

076-2025

Moved By Crystal Meloche

Seconded By Kimberly DeYong

That By-law 2025-09 be given three readings, and having been read a first, second and third time, be finally passed and enacted.

(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

15.1 By-law Number 2025-09

Being a by-law to Confirm the Proceedings of the Council of the Corporation of the County of Essex for the Closed, Special Closed and Regular Meetings held March 5, 2025

16. Notice of Motion

16.1 Fresh Water Protection and Agreements

Michael Akpata brought forward the following Notice of Motion regarding Fresh Water:

Whereas the County of Essex is touched by fresh water at the local municipal, and upper tier level; and

Whereby Ontario holds more than half of the world's fresh water; and

Whereas multiple bilateral agreements with the have been signed, ensuring that this fresh water is protected; and

Whereas the current US President, while campaigning stated that 'there is a large faucet' in Canada, indicating that there is 'extra' water in Canada; and

Whereby current bilateral agreements do not appear to be followed by the new US Government Administration in a number of areas.

Be it resolved as follows:

That County Council call on the Province to ensure that the current water agreements that are in place to ensure the protection of fresh water in Ontario are followed, ensuring the residents of the County of Essex can maintain access to clean fresh water; and further,

That the Province of Ontario ensure that water outflow is included in any discussion with the United States Government as part of ongoing interactions.

16.2 Regional Policing

Michael Prue brought forward two Notices of Motion. Councillor Prue prefaced the two Notices as options 1 and 2:

Policing 1:

Whereas the Town of Amherstburg Policing Contract with the City of Windsor ends on December 31, 2028 and the City of Windsor has decided not to renew this contract with the Town of Amherstburg; and,

Whereas most of the municipalities in Essex County are currently receiving policing services from the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP); and,

Whereas the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Amherstburg has requested that due consideration be given to options for policing of the Town of Amherstburg that include a regional approach; and,

Whereas the County of Essex is uniquely positioned to administer and deliver programs as an upper tier municipality.

Now therefore it is requested:

That the Administration of the County of Essex work with local municipalities to explore options for traditional regional policing models for the County of Essex and to be in place for January 1st, 2029 and for Administration to report back as soon as possible.

Policing 2

Whereas the Town of Amherstburg Policing Contract with the City of Windsor ends on December 31, 2028 and the City of Windsor has decided not to renew this contract with the Town of Amherstburg; and,

Whereas the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Amherstburg has requested that due consideration be given to options for policing of the Town of Amherstburg that include a regional approach; and,

Whereas the County of Essex is uniquely positioned to administer and deliver programs as an upper tier municipality; and,

Whereas there is a recognized interest in preserving local span of control and service levels in policing activities, while enjoying the economies of scale and cost effectiveness of centralized control over policing activities; and

Whereas the decision on how a community is policed requires careful consideration and planning, and communities in Essex County may approach such an endeavour on different time scales.

Now therefore it is requested:

That the Administration of the County of Essex work with local municipalities to explore possible options for a collaborative approach to policing in the long term where the Police Board,

Command and Corporate structures are held at the County level and local communities are provided with options for flexible service delivery models to meet local needs and pricing. This model should be built upon the premise that any municipality can opt out of the program if they have other means of providing policing to their community and the costs borne for the command and corporate structures are levied equally amongst all signatories, with pricing for specific service delivery within each community being wholly the responsibility of the host community.

16.3 Intersection Screening

Sherry Bondy brought forward the following Notice of Motion:

That Essex County Administration provide each of the local municipalities (Administration and County Councillors) with the information obtained by County Administration and their hired consultations regarding the network screening of intersections.

Whereas this important information when shared, will allow all local municipalities and elected officials the opportunity to work collaboratively on safety improvements and increased enforcement.

Whereas County Councillors need to be informed about the state and scope of County intersections so they can ensure proper budgetary dollars are going towards road safety.

That this motion be placed on the County Council Agenda for consideration and debate, to coincide with the forthcoming Administrative Report on the same subject, which is anticipated for April 16, 2025.

17. Adjournment

077-2025

Moved By Larry Verbeke

Seconded By Kimberly DeYong

That the Essex County Council meeting for March 5, 2025 be adjourned at 7:50 PM.

(Voted by show of hands)

Carried

Hilda MacDonald,
Warden, County of Essex

Katherine Hebert,
County Clerk