



Essex County Council, Regular Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 17, 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
- 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
 - Slawomir Pulcer, Deputy Chief, Professional Standards, EWEMS

1. Closed Meeting

A Closed Meeting was held at 4:00 PM on September 17, 2025.

247-2025

Moved By Larry Verbeke

Seconded By Joe Bachetti

Pursuant to Section 239 (2) (b), (c), (d), (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;

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

(d) labour relations or employee negotiations;

(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;

(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

255-2025

Moved By Kimberly DeYong

Seconded By Larry Verbeke

That Essex County Council adjourn and rise from the Closed Meeting of Essex County Council for September 17, 2025 at 5:57 PM; and

That agenda items 7.4 and 7.5 be deferred to the October 1, 2025 Closed meeting.

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.

6. County Warden's Welcome and Remarks

Warden MacDonald applauded the Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee on the success of the 2nd Annual Outdoor Accessibility Fest-for-All. The event was held in Amherstburg at the Libro Credit Union Centre and boasted a baseball game on Canada's first Miracle League Diamond, pound fitness, yoga demonstrations and a sledge hockey demonstration by the Windsor Ice Bullets featuring Tyler McGregor, the captain of Team Canada's Sledge Hockey team.

The Warden offered thanks to the 50 plus organizations that showcased their skills and shared their stories to learn from each other and make valuable connections.

Congratulations were offered to Rebecca Belanger, Manager of Planning Services and her team, which included consultants Larry Silani and Mary Lou Tanner of NPG Planning Solutions, for receiving the 2025 Plan Ontario Vision Award of Excellence.

The County's Official Plan, named One Land, One Climate, One Future, Together, was one of only six projects across Ontario to be honoured this year with the coveted award.

Warden MacDonald also encouraged all residents to take part in Truth and Reconciliation Week activities planned throughout our community in the week leading to Truth and Reconciliation Day on September 30.

7. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest raised.

8. Adoption of Regular Meeting Minutes

256-2025

Moved By Rob Shepley

Seconded By Joe Bachetti

That the minutes of the September 3, 2025 Regular Meeting of Essex County Council be adopted as presented.

Carried

9. Delegations and Presentations

There were no Delegations or Presentations for September 17, 2025.

10. Communications

10.1 Correspondence

257-2025

Moved By Larry Verbeke

Seconded By Chris Gibb

That the correspondence listed on the Regular Agenda for September 17, 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 Western Ontario Warden's Caucus (WOWC)

[August 2025 Monthly Update](#)

10.2 Resolutions

There were no resolutions for consideration for September 17, 2025.

11. Consent Agenda

258-2025

Moved By Rob Shepley

Seconded By Crystal Meloche

That the recommendation in the Administrative Report listed as item 11.1 on the Consent Agenda for September 17, 2025, be approved.

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 - September 17, 2025

Report number 2025-0917-LLS-R46-KH, Summary of Outstanding Reports, dated September 17, 2025, from Katherine Hebert, County Clerk

12. Reports and Questions

12.1 Room Booking Policy and User Fee Amendments

Report number 2025-0917-FIN-R25-MR, Room Booking Policy and User Fee Amendments, dated September 17, 2025, from Melissa Ryan, Director, Financial Services/Treasurer

Sandra Zwiers presented the report as Melissa Ryan was away on business. It was noted that the practice of renting the committee rooms to outside organizations had been suspended at the onset, the pandemic and continued during renovations to the County Administration Building. With the completion of the renovations, the committee rooms Administration is proposing that priority access be reserved for County business and Administration Building tenants, and would no longer be made available for rent to outside parties. This change requires that the committee room rental rates be removed from the Fees and Charges By-law schedule.

Our local lower-tier municipalities and other partner organizations (such as Agencies, Boards and Committees) would be permitted to use the rooms at no charge, provided rooms are available.

259-2025

Moved By Sherry Bondy

Seconded By Gary McNamara

That Essex County Council approve report number 2025-0917-FIN-R25-MR, Room Booking Policy and User Fee Amendments; and

That Essex County Council approve the By-law 2025-38, at the appropriate time.

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 Affordable Rental Housing Property Tax Subclass

Report number 2025-0917-FIN-R27-MR, Affordable Rental Housing Property Tax Subclass, dated September 17, 2025, from Melissa Ryan, Director, Financial Services/Treasurer

Sandra Zwiers explained that there was an opportunity for the County to adopt two new optional property subclasses related to the Multi-residential and New Multi-residential tax classes.

It was further noted that approval for the new subclasses to be added to available options for taxation, does not necessarily mean they would be used in the next tax by-law. Eligibility requirements are being developed by MPAC and the Province and there would be no use of the subclasses until they were analyzed by municipal tax professionals across the province and further among the Essex County locals.

260-2025

Moved By Michael Akpata

Seconded By Chris Gibb

That Essex County Council approve report number 2025-0917-FIN-R27-MR, Affordable Rental Housing Property Tax Subclass; and,

That Essex County Council approve the accompanying By-law 2025-39 to adopt the new Affordable Rental Housing property tax subclass for the Multi Residential and New Multi Residential property classes.

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

12.3 Proposed Updates to Employment and Hiring Policy

Report number 2025-0917-HR-R09-KP, Proposed Updates to Employment and Hiring Policy, dated September 17, 2025, from Kyla Pritiko, Director, Human Resources

Kyla Pritiko provided Council with a summary of the updates to the Policy that was initially implemented in 1991. It was noted that the Policy consolidates three related County Policies; namely, the Student Hiring Policy, the Hiring of Family Members Policy and the Probationary Period for Non-Union Staff Policy, which will be repealed by the new consolidated version presented today. The updated Policy includes more robust Conflict of Interest provisions and requires an annual review.

261-2025

Moved By Kirk Walstedt

Seconded By Gary McNamara

That Essex County Council receive report number 2025-0917-HR-R09-KP, Proposed Updates to Employment and Hiring Policy as information; and

That Essex County Council approve and adopt the revisions to the Employment and Hiring Policy appended to this Report; and

That Essex County Council authorize the Warden and the Clerk to execute the associated Bylaw at the appropriate time.

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

12.4 Large Scale Industrial Grant Matching Program-Supplementary Report

Report number 2025-0917-IPS-R17-RB, Large Scale Industrial Grant Matching Program - Supplementary Report, dated September 17, 2025 from Rebecca Belanger, Manager, Planning Services

Rebecca Belanger provided a summary of the Large Scale Industrial Grant Matching Program. Implementing such a program would enable the County to participate in grant programs with the goal of bolstering Industrial Community Improvement Plans (CIP), thereby creating a more attractive opportunity for investors. Attracting large scale industrial development to the County would diversify the tax

base and target significant job creation. The County Official Plan includes the required policies to make this possible.

Pending Council approval and direction to proceed with next steps, County Administration will host an open house to obtain feedback from the public within a month's time. Further, municipalities will work to establish application and scoring methodologies, and the program guidelines will be posted on County's public website.

Kirk Walstedt, Councillor left the meeting at 6:35 pm.

262-2025

Moved By Michael Prue

Seconded By Chris Gibb

That Essex County Council receive report number 2025-0917-IPS-R17-RB, Large Scale Industrial Grant Matching Program as information; and,

That Administration be directed to undertake a public consultation process relating to the Large Scale Industrial Grant Matching Program and to prepare a report for Council, summarizing comments received and related actions and updates taken.

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, Rob Shepley, and Larry Verbeke

Carried

12.5 Final Decision County Official Plan

Report number 2025-0917-IPS-R18-RB, Final Decision County Official Plan, dated September 17, 2025 from Rebecca Belanger, Manager, Planning Services

Rebecca Belanger advised Council that the final decision had been received from the Province. County Administration noted that meetings with the local lower-tier municipalities planning staff would be held regarding the implementation of the Official Plan and guidance on its use.

263-2025

Moved By Gary McNamara

Seconded By Joe Bachetti

That Essex County Council receive report number 2025-0917-IPS-R18-RB, Final Decision County Official Plan for information.

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, Rob Shepley, and Larry Verbeke

Carried

12.6 Road Rationalization Update

Report number 2025-0917-IPS-R20-AB, Road Rationalization Update, dated September 17, 2025, from Allan Botham, Director, Infrastructure and Planning Services

Allan Botham provided Council with a detailed summary of the work undertaken thus far with regard to the Road Rationalization process. An emphasis on the synergy between the Road Rationalization and other County of Essex guiding document such as, the Transportation Master Plan, the Official Plan and the County's Strategic Plan was outlined, and have been considered during the update.

A detailed explanation of the Hybrid Road Rationalization Model was provided, along with the process undertaken for the development of the recommended model and determining of next steps in the process.

264-2025

Moved By Tracey Bailey

Seconded By Rob Shepley

That Essex County Council receive report number 2025-0917-IPS-R20-AB, Road Rationalization Update as information, approve the Hybrid Rationalization Model, support the finalization of the County Road Network with LMPs and direct Administration to continue to Step 2 of the Road Rationalization Study Timeline.

In Favour (11): Joe Bachetti, Tracey Bailey, Sherry Bondy, Kimberly DeYong, Chris Gibb, Hilda MacDonald, Gary McNamara, Michael Prue, Dennis Rogers, Rob Shepley, and Larry Verbeke

Opposed (2): Michael Akpata, and Crystal Meloche

Carried

12.7 Department of Legislative and Legal Services Update

Report number 2025-0917-LLS-R42-DMS, Department of Legislative and Legal Services Update, dated September 17, 2025, from David Sundin, Director, Legislative and Legal Services/County Solicitor

David Sundin provided a high-level summary, statistics and the contributions of the Legislative and Legal Services department as well as how those operations contributed to the advancement of the County's Strategic Plan for the period of July 1 2024 to June 30, 2025.

265-2025

Moved By Chris Gibb

Seconded By Larry Verbeke

That Essex County Council receive Report Number 2025-0917-LLS-R42-DMS, Department of Legislative and Legal Services as information.

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, Rob Shepley, and Larry Verbeke

Carried

13. Unfinished Business

There were no matters of unfinished business to address for September 17, 2025.

14. New Business

14.1 Public Reporting of Closed Meeting

Essex County Council met in a Closed Meeting at 4:00 PM on September 17, 2025, as permitted, and pursuant to Section 239 (2)(f) of the Municipal Act, 2001, to receive information related to report number 2025-0917-LLS-R47-DMS, WECHC Governance Issue. Council provided administration with direction and instruction to take steps related to the County's interest in the Windsor Essex Community Housing Corporation and to report back to Council regarding same.

Pursuant to Section 239 (2)(c) and (f) of the Municipal Act, Council received information related to report number 2025-0917-LLS-R45-

DMS, Property Acquisition Opportunity, and provided administration with direction and instruction to attempt to negotiate a purchase of certain property and report back to Council to seek approval prior to completing the said purchase.

Pursuant to Section 239 (2)(f) and (k) of the Municipal Act, Council received information related to report number 2025-0917-LLS-R48-DMS, Termination of Contract, and further provided administration with direction and instruction to advise the Essex-Windsor Solid Waste Authority of Council's position with respect to a potential contract to be entered into by the Essex-Windsor Solid Waste Authority on behalf of the Corporation of the County of Essex.

Two matters were deferred until October 1, 2025.

Finally, Council met in a Closed Meeting as permitted, and pursuant to Section 239 (2)(c) and (f) of the Municipal Act, 2001, to receive information related to report number 2025-0917-LLS-R45-DMS, Property Acquisition Proposal. Council provided Administration with direction and instruction to finalize an agreement to complete the purchase of certain property, and as a result of discussions and deliberations, there was a recommendation before Council:

266-2025

Moved By Chris Gibb

Seconded By Rob Shepley

That Essex County Council authorizes the purchase of approximately 10 acres of the property located at municipal address 4108 Concession Road 9, Windsor, Ontario, and further authorizes the Warden and the Clerk to execute such documents as may be required to complete the said purchase.

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

Opposed (1): Kimberly DeYong

Carried

14.2 Essex County Administration Building - Water Damage

At the September 3, 2025 Regular Meeting of Essex County Council, Councillor Sherry Bondy brought forward the following Notice of Motion:

267-2025

Moved By Sherry Bondy

Seconded By Joe Bachetti

That Essex County Council direct Administration to prepare a project plan that would renovate portions of the ground level of the Administration Building, occupied by Essex County Library, impacted by the recent water damage, to the new office standard, and include the budget estimate in the draft 2026 Budget.

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, Rob Shepley, and Larry Verbeke

Carried

14.3 Construction on County Roads

It was noted that IPS would review current construction projects and reach out to local municipalities as-needed.

15. Adoption of By-Laws

268-2025

Moved By Rob Shepley

Seconded By Chris Gibb

That By-laws 2025-37 through 2025-40, be given three readings, and having been read a first, second and third time, be finally passed and enacted.

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, Rob Shepley, and Larry Verbeke

Carried

15.1 By-law Number 2025-37

Being a By-law to amend Policy 1991-001 Employment and Hiring Policy.

15.2 By-law Number 2025-38

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

15.3 By-law Number 2025-39

Being a By-law to adopt optional property tax subclass for the Corporation of the County of Essex and all the local municipalities within the boundaries of the County of Essex

15.4 By-law number 2025-40

Being a By-law to confirm the proceedings of the Council of the Corporation of the County of Essex, Regular and Closed meetings, for September 17, 2025

16. Notice of Motion

There are no Notices of Motion for September 17, 2025.

17. Adjournment

269-2025

Moved By Kimberly DeYong

Seconded By Larry Verbeke

That the Essex County Council meeting for September 17, 2025 be adjourned at 7:31 PM.

Carried

Hilda MacDonald,
Warden, County of Essex

Katherine Hebert,
County Clerk