



Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting

Place: Council Chambers, Zoom, streamed live to Facebook
Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025
Presiding Officer: Mayor Greg Henley
Councillor Present: Deputy Mayor Carla Black and Councillors Brenton Colborne, Olivia Canning-Sweet, Padraic Moore, and Chrystal McNutt.
Councillors Regrets: Paul Jones

A quorum was present throughout the meeting.

Staff in attendance: Linda Cloney – CAO, Ruthann Brookins – Manager of Finance, and Stan McDougall - Admin Assistant (recording secretary).

Gallery (media and public) in attendance: Marion Abbott, Giancarlo Piccin, Torben Laux, and Mark Rushton - Hello Oxford/Radio for Hope Centre

1. Call to Order

Mayor Henley called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM and welcomed Marion Abbott, Giancarlo Piccin and Mark Rushton in the gallery.

2. Approval of Agenda, Page 1 – 2

Moved by Councillor McNutt and seconded by Councillor Canning-Sweet, that the agenda of the Regular Council Meeting for April 23, 2025, be approved, as presented.

Motion Carried

3. Presentations

- 3.1 **Asset Management Plan Review** – Matt Delorme, P.Eng., Executive Director with AIM Network, Pages 3 – 33 – Town of Oxford Capital Program

Mayor Henley introduced Matt Delorme, Executive Director with AIM (Atlantic Infrastructure Management) Network to present the Asset Management Plan Review via Zoom to the Council. AIM is a non-profit organization providing training, education and technical assistance to local governments. Aim Networks help communities build capacity for long-term service planning that considers service levels, risk and investment.

Matt has been working closely with the Town of Oxford for the past several years on Oxford's Asset Management Plan.

A copy of the presentation is filed with the Council Package.

3.2 Draft Water Rate Study – Gerry Isenor with G. A. Isenor Consulting Limited and Blaine Rooney with Blaine S. Rooney Consulting Limited. Pages 34 - 87 – Water Rate Study, Page 88 – Water Utility Comparison of Water Rates

Mayor Henley introduced Gerry Isenor with G.A. Isenor Consulting Limited and Blaine Rooney with Blaine S. Rooney Consulting Limited to present the Water Rate Study to the Council.

Blaine and Gerry have been working together on water rate studies for over 12 years and have prepared water rate studies and represented most of the Water Utilities at public hearings before the Nova Scotia Regulatory and Appeals Board.

Blaine provided an overview of the process of how water rate studies are performed and how water rates are set in Nova Scotia.

- Blaine discussed that the Council must approve the water rate study before the study can begin.
- The last study was conducted in 2022. Due to the needs of the Capital Plan, in relation to the Asset Management Plan, a rate study is recommended to increase the rates to replace aging infrastructure.

- Fire protection as well as supply of water is all part of the water rate study. Oxford is unique in that one commercial entity utilizes most of the water supplied by the Town of Oxford.

Gerry provided the Council with a presentation on the Water Utility Water Rate Study.

- If rate study is conducted, new rates would not be available until October 2025.
- Gerry provided an overview of the capital water budget, expenditures, depreciation fund levels, as well as the forecasted amount of money required over the next several years including fire protection and water supply.
- Fire protection allows for the supply and maintenance of fire hydrants and reservoirs. Oxford Frozen foods use a large portion of fire protection water supply during a short-term demand period each year.
- The remainder of the funds required are divided among the rate payers by using a capacity ratio and the number of rate payers once fire protection is deducted.
- A comparison of the amount of water sold was presented which indicated that there is a reduction in the amount of water that Oxford Frozen Foods utilizes over the past few years resulting in decrease in revenues as processes change in their conservation of water usage.
- The projected rate increases, if the water rate study moves forward, for all pipe sizes and rate payers was discussed with an average of 17 – 56% increases depending on the connection size which includes base and consumption charges. The largest increases are in the 4” and 6” pipe size for the first year. In the following years, the rates level out if not decrease slightly towards 2027/28. Until the rate study is completed and new rates set in October 2025 at the earliest, there is a forecasted loss in water revenue for 2025/26.
- Lastly, the schedule of fees and rules and regulations were reviewed with the Council. None of the schedule of fees has changed in the proposed rate study.

- The Rules and Regulations of the proposed rate study had one change. For broken water meters, a separate rule to bill rate payers based on previous year's records has been removed.

Blaine discussed with the Council the process that happens after the rate study has been approved. Members of the public are allowed to attend with pre-registration to speak at the hearing. Also, letters are permitted to be sent in for questions.

Blaine and Gerry reviewed the table of rates to compare Oxford with several other communities in Nova Scotia, which indicated that Oxford is still less than the median rates in Nova Scotia. Communities with larger customer bases, more commercial users will have smaller rates compared with others. It was reviewed that several communities that have much higher water rates compared with the Town of Oxford. Other communities in Nova Scotia are about to enter a rate study in coming months.

**4. Approval of Minutes – Regular Council Meeting – March 26, 2025
Special Council Meeting – April 9, 2025**

Pages 89 - 91 – March 26, 2025, Pages 92 - 93 – April 9, 2025

Approved by



Mayor Greg Henley, on April 23, 2025

5. Business

5.1 RFD - Oxford Water Utility application to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board – motion - As per presentation from 3.2

Linda reviewed with the Council that in consideration of the presentation Council was given on the Draft Water Rate Study under section 3.2, the Town of Oxford would need to start the application to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board as soon as possible to begin new proposed rates on October 1, 2025. With the presentation of both the Asset Management Plan and Draft Water Rate Study, the necessity for changes for water, water rate services and fire protection seem to be necessary.

Moved by Councillor McNutt and seconded by Councillor Moore that the Town of Oxford Water Utility apply to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board for changes in its rates for Water and Water Service, Fire Protection to the Town of Oxford and changes to its rules and regulations for customers served by the utility, as set out in the Water Rate Study prepared by G. A. Isenor Consulting Limited in association with Blaine S. Rooney Consulting Limited.

Motion Carried

5.2 RFD – Accessibility Report Card and Action Items List (services for review, research and planning), Pages 94 - 97 – Achievement Report Card Pages 98 - 102 – Action Items List

As per the current Town of Oxford Accessibility Plan, one of the items that the Accessibility Committee would create based on the work of the Accessibility Plan is an Accessibility Report Card, which was to be presented to the Council on March 31, 2025. The Accessibility Report Card is to be a public document and posted on the Town of Oxford Website once approved by the Council. The Accessibility Report Card is known as the Accessibility Achievement Report Card.

Linda reviewed with the Council some of the highlights of the report card.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Black and seconded by Councillor McNutt that the Town of Oxford approve the Town of Oxford Accessibility Plan Achievement Report Card and post it on the Town's website as a public document as it is presented.

Motion Carried

6. Correspondence

6.1 Letter from Becky Druhan, Attorney General and Minister of Justice - re: Adapting the Additional Officer Program, Pages 103 – 104

Linda reviewed the letter with the Council addressed to Mayor Henley regarding the Additional Officer Program which helps address policing in the Province of Nova Scotia.

6.2 Letter from Honourable John Lohr, Minister of Municipal Affairs, to NSFAM – re: 12 months notice 2026-2027, Pages 105 – 106

Linda reviewed the letter with the Council which gives 12-month yearly notice under the MGA (Municipal Government Act), of any provincial legislation, regulation or administrative actions that could have the effect of decreasing revenue or increasing the required expenditures of municipalities for the 2026-27 fiscal year. Staff are monitoring this for upcoming changes.

7. In-Camera

7.1 acquisition, sale, lease and security of municipal property

At 7:13 PM it was moved by Councillor McNutt and seconded by Councillor Canning-Sweet to go in-camera to discuss the acquisition, sale, lease and security of municipal property.

Motion Carried

At 7:54 PM it was moved by Councillor Canning-Sweet and seconded by Councillor McNutt to come out of in-camera and resume the Regular Council Meeting.

Motion Carried

A Site Plan for 4812 Main Street had been applied for by Mr. Blake for a 4-unit townhouse at PID 25388208, a mixed-use zone. Under this zone, townhouses are permitted through Site Plan Approval. This process is outlined in the Municipal Government Act under Sections 231 and 232.

After reviewing the application, the proposal was approved, and notice was provided to every property owner within 30 metres of 4812 Main Street. The 14-day appeal period ended on Friday, April 4th.

One appeal was received and considered, and no further correspondence had been received.

Based on the application, and the information provided, a site visit was conducted and recommended that this development be allowed to

proceed with a required storm water management plan to obtain permits.

Moved by Councillor Colborne and seconded by Councillor McNutt that Council approves the site plan approval for 4812 Main Street as presented.

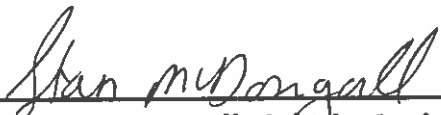
Motion Carried

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:58 PM



Greg Henley, Mayor, Chair



Stan McDougall, Admin Assistant

05-28-25

Date Approved