

**Township of South-West Oxford
Council Minutes
May 6, 2025**

Members Present:

Mayor: Mayor David Mayberry, Paul
Councillors: Buchner (Ward 1), Peter Ypma
(Ward 2), Valerie Durston (Ward 3),
George Way (Ward 4), Jim Pickard
(Ward 5), Craig Gillis (Ward 6)

Members Absent:

None.

Staff Present:

Mary Ellen Greb, CAO/Deputy Clerk
Julie Middleton, Clerk/Deputy CAO
Brooke Crane, Treasurer
Adam Prouse, Works Superintendent
Shane Caskanette, Fire Chief & CEMC
Brad Smale, Chief Building Official
Nicole Chambers, Legislative Services and
Records Management Coordinator

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Mayor David Mayberry and a quorum was present.

Motion to Accept Agenda

Resolution No. 1 Moved by Craig Gillis
Seconded by Paul Buchner

RESOLVED that the regular meeting agenda for the
May 6th, 2025 meeting of council be approved, as
amended.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

None.

Minutes

April 15th, 2025 - Regular Council Meeting Minutes

Resolution No. 2 Moved by Jim Pickard

Seconded by Peter Ypma

RESOLVED that the regular minutes of the April 15th, 2025 council meeting be approved.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

Business Arising from the Minutes

CL 24-2025: Business Arising from the Minutes of April 15th, 2025

Clerk Julie Middleton provided Council with a report to provide them with an overview of the staff actions arising from the minutes of the last Council meeting.

Resolution No. 3 Moved by George Way
Seconded by Valerie Durston

RESOLVED that the Council of the Township of South-West Oxford receive report CL 24-2025 Summary of Staff Actions Related to Business Arising from the Minutes of April 15th, 2025 as information.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

Delegations and Appointments

9:05 a.m. - [Committee of Adjustment Hearing Agenda](#) - Development Planner Laurel Davies Snyder

- Minor Variance Application A03-2025 submitted by Woodstonian Cattle Inc. (Kees Overzet) for property located at 524120 Curry Road
- Minor Variance Application A04-2025 submitted by Mt. Elgin Developments Inc. for properties located within the Mount Elgin Heights Subdivision (Phase 6)

Resolution No. 4 Moved by Craig Gillis
Seconded by Valerie Durston

RESOLVED that the Council of the Township of South-West Oxford move into Committee of Adjustment to consider minor variance applications A03-2025 submitted by Woodstonian Cattle Inc. (Kees Overzet) for property located at 524120 Curry Road and A04-2025 submitted by Mt. Elgin Developments Inc. for properties located within the Mount Elgin Heights Subdivision (Phase 6) at 9:05 a.m.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

Rob Walton provided Council with an update on the Township's stormwater management planning, including the completion of an evaluation of projected future costs and the development of a proposed draft by-law. The intent of the by-law is to establish a long-term funding strategy for stormwater maintenance, shifting from reliance on the Drainage Act to a tiered fee structure as outlined in the staff report. Under the new system, all property owners would contribute their share through monthly fees, rather than being billed individually when work is needed under the Drainage Act. This approach would replace the current assessment-based billing model and help avoid large, unexpected expenses for residents.

He noted that although leaving the system under the Drainage Act is an option, it would require costly engineering assessments and result in property owners receiving lump-sum bills when maintenance is carried out. Collecting fees over time was recommended as a more sustainable and manageable approach.

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DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

She also reviewed recommendations for rural development and commented on the challenges surrounding D-zoned parcels of land. One such parcel in Mt. Elgin, originally allocated as part of 25 acres for employment use in South-West Oxford, is now viewed as problematic due to nearby residential growth and resulting noise complaints. Ronda emphasized the importance of smart growth and aligning employment land with infrastructure, particularly along the Highway 401 corridor.

She also raised concerns about Oxford County's current restriction limiting employment on farms to two individuals who do not live on-site (for on-farm diversified uses), which she noted is not a provincial policy requirement and is difficult to enforce. She suggested there are more effective, business-friendly ways to manage these uses, and has shared these thoughts with County planning staff.

Councillor Way acknowledged the difficulty of supporting rural development while preserving farmland. Ronda agreed, stating that it is an ongoing challenge to balance pro-development and pro-agriculture values. She noted that when inquiries come in from outside the area, they first direct people to appropriately zoned properties rather than encouraging development on farmland.

Councillor Ypma reiterated concerns about the Mt. Elgin parcel, pointing out that although it is zoned for development, its viability is questionable. Mayor Mayberry added that secondary planning will be discussed in more detail next month and noted that the Township's lack of ownership of potential development lands limits its ability to make land shovel-ready. Mayor Mayberry thanked Ronda for her presentation.

10:00 a.m. - Ted Comiskey - Rotary Club of Ingersoll re: funding for food warehouse for those in need

Ted Comiskey appeared before Council to share information about a new Rotary Club initiative to support food security in Oxford County. The Rotary Club of Ingersoll has leased the gymnasium on the CAMI property to convert it into a food warehouse that will serve food charitable organizations across the County. The facility requires approximately \$120,000 in repairs, including work on the roof, furnaces, plumbing, and mold removal. Volunteers have already contributed to cleanup and painting, and about \$60,000 has been raised so far. Comiskey asked if South-West Oxford could consider contributing \$5,000 to \$10,000 toward the project.

The warehouse will serve as a central, clean, and safe location to store food—including fresh produce, pending the addition of refrigeration—for distribution to various local organizations. Councillor Ypma noted the goal is to reduce duplication of efforts by bringing different food support groups together under a shared system. The Mayor expressed support for the concept, recognizing its potential to benefit the entire county. Council discussed the importance of understanding whether Township contributions would go toward capital or operating expenses, and emphasized the need to assess the facility's long-term budget, including ongoing maintenance costs. CAMI has committed to covering some costs, and the Rotary Club will be responsible for heating and water expenses. Staff will prepare a follow-up report for Council consideration.

10:15 a.m. - Rebecca Smith, Director of Human Services re: Oxford County Housing Strategy Presentation

Rebecca Smith, Director of Human Services, provided an overview of the Oxford County Housing Strategy, noting a steady rise in homelessness over recent years. While the strategy is not intended as a direct solution to homelessness, it represents the County's broader direction and is a community-driven initiative involving consultation with multiple partners across the system. A key priority is acquiring property to create a community support centre that will include emergency shelter beds, supportive housing, and transitional housing, all aimed at delivering more stable, wraparound supports. The Woodstock Hospital will operate a treatment centre, and the County is working with local agencies to coordinate services and reduce system silos. A working group will be established to support this collaboration.

In response to a question from Councillor Durston, Ms. Smith confirmed that while a specific property is not yet secured, the process is underway. An ad hoc committee of County Council members is also recommended to assist with implementation. Councillor Ypma expressed optimism but acknowledged the complexity of the issue and asked about access to services for residents outside of Woodstock. Ms. Smith noted that some temporary housing is available in Tillsonburg, and the long-term goal is to reduce reliance on emergency shelters by ensuring proper support systems are in place. Funding will include contributions from both the County and the City of Woodstock through its "Building Faster" funding, and the provincially funded HART hub will support the initiative.

Ms. Smith also addressed recent changes to daycare funding, reporting that Oxford's allocation of \$10-a-day childcare spaces has been cut by approximately 75%, from over 600 to 169. This reduction does not reflect local demand, as over 3,000 children are currently on the waitlist. The County is advocating to the Ministry to reconsider the allocation and will continue to work with the province on funding through 2026. While capital subsidies for construction are not currently available, there is limited funding for furnishing facilities. Updates will be communicated to Council as more information becomes available regarding child care funding.

Marie Russell re: Participation in Partners for Climate Protection (PCP)

Marie Russell addressed Council regarding the County's participation in the Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) program and the broader climate action initiatives led by Oxford County. She expressed concern that, while PCP membership is free, implementing its measures can carry significant costs, which she believes are not aligned with the top priorities identified by residents in the County's recent budget engagement survey. Mrs. Russell noted that environmental sustainability ranked 17th out of 26 priorities in the

survey and argued that residents are not asking for global climate policies like those promoted by the PCP. She urged Council to withdraw from the program, emphasizing the rising property taxes over the past five years, particularly at the County level, and the importance of focusing on core local issues that matter most to residents.

Mayor Mayberry responded by acknowledging the complexity of the issue, particularly in reference to the County's \$13 million investment in a green fleet. He noted that electric vehicles, while expensive upfront, often incur lower fuel and maintenance costs, potentially making them cost-neutral or even cost-saving in the long term. The Mayor cautioned against using the fleet investment figure in isolation and spoke to the broader responsibility of governments to provide leadership and make decisions for the long-term benefit of the community—not merely follow popular opinion. He expressed concern about the growing tendency to frame issues in oppositional terms and stressed the need for collaboration and a shared vision.

Mrs. Russell concluded by reiterating that Oxford County has not received loans or grants through the PCP program and again encouraged Council to focus on immediate, local needs.

** Council took a ten-minute break at 11:10 a.m.*

Staff Reports

BD 06-2025: Chief Building Official Introductory Report

Chief Building Official Brad Smale provided Council with an introductory report and update, marking the transition of the CBO role from contracted services to an in-house position. Mr. Smale provided an overview of a number of projects to be undertaken by the CBO over the next few months. Discussion took place among members of Council regarding changes to the Ontario Building Code which came into effect on January 1st, 2025 and new fire safety requirements for large agricultural buildings.

Resolution No. 7 Moved by Craig Gillis
 Seconded by Paul Buchner

RESOLVED that the Council of the Township of South-West Oxford receive report BD 06-2025: Chief Building Official Introductory Report as information.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

CL 25-2025: Follow-Up Report – Proposed Sale of a Portion of Henrietta Street Road Allowance

subject to final confirmation by survey, and on condition that the lands be consolidated with 3 Raglan Street;

subject to final confirmation by survey, and on condition that the lands be consolidated with 3 Raglan Street;

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CL 26-2025: Follow-Up: Keeping of Chickens in Residential Zones

Clerk Julie Middleton provided Council with a report to provide them with a summary of background information related to the keeping of chickens in residential zones, and to recommend a series of conditions that may be applied to requests for exemption to the Township's Animal Care and Control By-law to permit backyard chickens in residential areas, consistent with the direction of Council and recent by-law amendments in the City of Woodstock. Discussion took place among Council in relation to the need for residents to reapply should they wish to replace a chicken.

Resolution No. 9 Moved by Craig Gillis
 Seconded by Valerie Durston

RESOLVED that the Council of the Township of South-West Oxford receive report CL 26-2025: Follow-Up: Keeping of Chickens in Residential Zones as information;

AND FURTHER THAT Council provide direction to staff regarding the continuation of the current process for considering by-law exemption requests for the keeping of chickens in residential zones on a case-by-case basis;

AND FURTHER THAT Council confirm the conditions to be applied to all by-law exemption requests related to the keeping of chickens in residential zones as follows:

- A maximum of six (6) hens shall be permitted per residential property; roosters shall not be permitted.
- One (1) chicken coop and associated run shall be permitted per property.
- The total footprint of the chicken coop and run shall not exceed 10 square metres (108 square feet).
- The height of any chicken coop or enclosure shall not exceed 3 metres (9.84 feet).
- Chicken coops or enclosures shall not be permitted in the front yard or interior side yard of a property, as defined in the Township's Zoning By-law.
- Chicken coops and runs must be located a minimum of:

- 3 metres (10 feet) from any property line;
and
- 22.86 metres (75 feet) from any residential dwelling on an adjacent property.
- Coops and runs must be constructed of materials with openings no greater than 19 mm (¾ inch), must include a roof to prevent escape and mingling with wild fowl, and must be secured against predators.
- Chickens must be kept for personal use only; the sale of eggs, manure, or additional chickens shall not be permitted.
- The coop and run must be maintained in a clean, sanitary condition, with all waste properly composted or disposed of in accordance with municipal waste guidelines.
- The keeping of chickens must not result in a nuisance due to noise, odour, unsanitary conditions, or the attraction of pests.
- Owners shall be advised that should any complaints be received by enforcement staff regarding noise, odour, waste disposal, or chickens wandering off the property, the Township may issue an order requiring the removal of the chickens and the revocation of the exemption.

Discussion on the motion:

Discussion took place regarding the conditions outlined above and the need to consider an appropriate method to dispose of dead chickens in residential zones.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

** Council took a break for lunch at 12:12 p.m. and reconvened at 12:53 p.m.*

FD 01-2025: Fire & Emergency Services 2024 Year-End Report

Fire Chief Caskanette provided Council with an overview of Fire Services activity in 2024. In response to an inquiry from Councillor Ypma, he commented on the time commitment required for new recruits to complete Firefighter I and II certifications through the RFSOC training program, which takes approximately six months and 150–160 hours, plus exams.

Council discussed the challenges in retaining volunteer firefighters. It was noted that broader trends in volunteerism are affecting recruitment and retention. Councillor Ypma suggested that the fire service's military-style structure might contribute to these issues. He and Councillor Way both emphasized the importance of recognizing long-serving members.

Resolution No. 10 Moved by Jim Pickard
Seconded by Valerie Durston

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

Treasurer Brooke Crane provided Council with a report to provide them with the annual income statement and the cumulative kilowatts of power generated by the solar panels installed on the rooftop of the Salford Community Centre in 2013. Clerk Julie Middleton will present this information at the next Environment and Energy Innovation Committee Meeting.

RESOLVED that the Council of the Township of South-West Oxford receive report TR 04-2025: Solar Panel Project Salford Community Centre - 2024 Activity as information.

Discussion Items

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Resolution No. 12 Moved by Jim Pickard
Seconded by Craig Gillis

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

CAO Mary Ellen Greb and Treasurer Brooke Crane will be attending a webinar regarding the financial implications of Strong Mayor Powers and will provide a report back to Council on this topic. Mayor Mayberry suggested that Council wait for more information in this regard before taking a strong position either way in relation to Strong Mayor Powers.

CAO Mary Ellen Greb and Clerk Julie Middleton will be attending AMO in August.

#1 - Oxford County Council Report - April, 2025

#3 - Public Notice Oxford County Waste Management Facility

#4 - Oxford Residents Urge Council to Reconsider PCP Participation

#5 - Township of Zorra Resolution re: Strong Mayor Powers

#6 - Town of Tillsonburg Resolution re: Strong Mayor Powers

#7 - Town of Essex Resolution re: opposition to the proposed expansion of Strong Mayor Powers

#8 - Town of Aylmer Resolution re: Opposition to Expansion of Strong Mayor Powers

#9 - Municipality of North Middlesex Resolution re: Parry Sound position Strong Mayors

#10 - Town of Petawawa Resolution re: Strong Mayor Powers

#11 - Greater Napanee Support Resolution re: Strong Mayor Powers

#12 - Town of Kingsville Resolution re: Strong Mayor Powers

#13 - Township of Rideau Resolution re: Strong Mayors Powers

#14 - Town of Amherstburg Letter to the Premier re: Opposition to Strong Mayor Powers

#15 - Town of Saugeen Shores Letter re: Strong Mayor Powers

#16 - Town of Deep River Resolution re: Strong Mayor Powers

#17 - Municipality of Bluewater Resolution re: Strong Mayor Powers

#18 - Municipality of South Huron supported the attached correspondence from the Town of Saugeen Shores re: Strong Mayor Powers

#19 - City of Sarnia Resolution re: Carbon Tax

#20 - Township of Otonabee-South Monagan Resolution re: Proposal to End Daylight Savings Time in Ontario

#21 - Township of Larder Lake Resolution of Support re: the Sovereignty of Canada

#22 - Champlain Township Resolution re: Surveillance and Monitoring of Heavy Vehicles in Ontario

#23 - Town of Georgina Resolution re: Salt Management

#24 - Prince Edward-Lennox and Addington Social Services Committee Resolution re: Ontario Works Financial Assistance Rates

#25 - Township of Puslinch Resolution re: Amendment to Subsection 29(1.2) Ontario Heritage Act

#27 - City of Cambridge re: Request the Redistribution of the Provincial Land Transfer Tax and GST to Municipalities for Sustainable Infrastructure Funding

RESOLVED that the Council of the Township of South-West Oxford send a letter of support in relation to consent agenda items #19 - City of Sarnia Resolution re: Carbon Tax and #20 - Township of Otonabee-South Monagan Resolution re: Proposal to End Daylight Savings Time in Ontario.

Resolution No. 14 Moved by Craig Gillis
Seconded by Valerie Durston

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

May 6th, 2025 - Accounts Payable Report

RESOLVED that the following Accounts be approved for payment:

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DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

By-laws and Agreements

- *By-Law No. 34-2025 - To appoint persons to the Sweaburg Parks and Recreation Committee*
- *By-Law No. 35-2025 - To provide the maintenance of Municipal Drains in 2024*
- *By-Law No. 36-2025 - To authorize the execution of an agreement with Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (Beachville Conservation Area)*
- *By-Law No. 37-2025 - To provide for the levying of taxes for the year 2025*
- *By-law No. 38-2025 - To amend Township of South-West Oxford Zoning By-law (ZN 4-23-15 - Oxford Reformed Christian School)*

Resolution No. 16 Moved by Jim Pickard
 Seconded by George Way

RESOLVED that the following By-Laws be introduced and that they be read a first and second time:

- By-Law No. 34-2025 being a by-law to appoint persons to the Sweaburg Parks and Recreation Committee
- By-Law No. 35-2025 being a By-law to provide the maintenance of Municipal Drains in 2024
- By-Law No. 36-2025 being a By-law to authorize the execution of an agreement with Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (Beachville Conservation Area)
- By-Law No. 37-2025 being a By-law to provide for the levying of taxes for the year 2025
- By-law No. 38-2025 being a By-law to amend Township of South-West Oxford Zoning By-law (ZN 4-23-15 - Oxford Reformed Christian School).

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

Resolution No. 17 Moved by George Way
 Seconded by Paul Buchner

RESOLVED that By-Laws 34-2025 to 38-2025 inclusive be read a third time and finally passed, and that the

The Engage and Inform Committee participated in the Act on Litter Day yesterday and collected approximately 130 kg of garbage. The SWOX Township Fair will take place in Mount Elgin on Saturday, May 24th.

The Long Point Region Conservation Authority (LPRCA) meeting is scheduled for tomorrow evening. The Dereham Centre Hall Board will host its annual BBQ on June 17th starting at 5:00 p.m. The Mount Elgin Parks and Recreation group completed a park clean-up a few weeks ago, and basketball nets will be installed this spring.

Sweaburg hosted a successful Easter Egg Hunt. The ball diamond has been resurfaced and is ready for use, with 120 kids registered to play ball this season. The ROEDC meeting was held last Friday. The Environment and Energy Innovation Committee will meet tomorrow. The annual Sweaburg Fish Fry is scheduled for June 7th, 2025.

The meeting will be closed to the public to discuss subject matter that is:

- (i) a trade secret or scientific, technical, commercial, financial or labour relations information, supplied in confidence to the municipality or local board, which, if disclosed, could reasonably be expected to prejudice significantly the competitive position or interfere significantly with the contractual or other negotiations of a person, group of persons, or organization;
- (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 (Execulink Contract).

RESOLVED that Council hold a closed meeting in order to discuss a matter pertaining to:

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(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 (Execulink Contract).

Resolution No. 20 Moved by Paul Buchner
Seconded by Craig Gillis

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

By-Law No. 39-2025 - To confirm all actions and proceedings of Council (May 6th, 2025)

RESOLVED that By-law 39-2025 being a By-law to confirm the proceedings of Council held Tuesday, May 6th, 2025 be read a first, second and third time this 6th day of May, 2025.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

Resolution No. 22 Moved by Jim Pickard
Seconded by George Way

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DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

CLERK: Julie Middleton

MAYOR: David Mayberry

This document is available in alternate formats upon request.

APPROVED