



## **COUNCIL MEETING**

### **Meeting Minutes: December 14, 2025**

This meeting was held in Town Hall and was livestreamed on YouTube.

#### **(1) CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Mayor Andrew Zebian called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Andrew Zebian  
Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell  
Councillor John Andrew  
Councillor Samantha Hamilton  
Councillor Cate Savage  
Councillor Rob Baker  
Councillor Cathy Maxwell

STAFF: Chris McNeill, Chief Administrative Officer  
Victoria Martin, Deputy Clerk

Mayor Andrew Zebian respectfully acknowledged that Kentville is on the traditional and unceded land of the Mi'kmaq People. The Town honours their deep connection to this land, past, present, and future; and also recognizes and honours the contributions and heritage of African Nova Scotians whose ancestors have shaped and enriched this community for generations.

Mayor Andrew Zebian extended warm holiday greetings on behalf of council and staff, wishing everyone a happy and healthy new year. He reflected on an extraordinary year for Kentville, noting a renewed sense of momentum, community spirit, and optimism. His key highlights included:

- Saving the Centennial Pool in partnership with the province.
- Significant downtown infrastructure upgrades.
- Supporting Kings County Academy's lunch program.
- Collaborating on a regional recreational facility and exploring a new Kentville rink.

Mayor Andrew Zebian shared a personal highlight from Apple Blossom and expressed gratitude to CAO Chris McNeill for his leadership since joining six months ago. He praised the strength and collaboration of the community, council, staff, and partners, emphasizing pride in Kentville. Special thanks were given to staff for their dedication and professionalism, recognizing them as the heart and soul of the town. He concluded with wishes for a joyful holiday season and a bright year ahead.

#### **DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

None.

#### **(2) APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

It was moved by Councillor Cathy Maxwell, seconded by Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell that the agenda of December 15, 2025, be approved as presented.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### **(3) APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

##### **(a) November 24, 2025, Council Meeting Minutes**

There being no changes, the minutes were approved.

#### **(4) INFORMATION REPORTS**

##### **(a) Destination Management and Marketing Organizations (DMMO) – Genevieve Allen Hearn, Valley REN**

Background: The DMMO concept emerged from extensive consultations during the STAR Tourism Strategy (2020–2023), including 27 in-person sessions and 150 survey responses. The tourism industry requested an entity to support regional needs and sustainable growth.

Purpose of DMMO: A collaborative, industry-led body to brand and market the region as a destination. Manages visitor experience, tourism assets, and connects municipalities, businesses, and communities. Complements existing business improvement districts (BIDs), focusing on destination-level marketing.

Funding Model: Recommended starting with a marketing levy and membership model. Municipal funding not requested initially; levy proposed at up to 3% on registered accommodations per Nova Scotia Municipal Government Act (Section 75A). Exemptions include medical stays, long-term accommodations (>30 days), emergency evacuations, student residences, and accommodations under \$20 daily rate.

Current Status: Industry consultations show sufficient buy-in for a marketing levy. Brand strategy and assets (website, itinerary app) are in development to ensure readiness. Annapolis Valley is the second-largest tourism region in Nova Scotia but lacks a DMMO.

Examples & Best Practices: St. John's DMMO model highlighted (4% levy, visitor resources, event support). Over half of Nova Scotia municipalities have a marketing levy; most others are implementing one. Other regions have successful DMMOs funded by levies and municipal contributions.

Discussion:

Councilor Savage asked about responses from other municipalities and integration of Kentville Business Community (KBC). Genevie confirmed positive engagement from West Hants and Glooscap First Nation; other councils pending. KBC would collaborate similarly to its role in economic development, supporting campaigns and events.

Councilor Maxwell asked about involvement of community economic development, recreation department, and trail associations. Genevie confirmed partnerships with Trails Coalition and municipalities for tourism infrastructure gap analysis.

Next Steps: Municipal staff to review and recommend whether to proceed with a marketing levy. Continued stakeholder engagement and consultation. Development of levy bylaw, service agreement, and remittance software if approved.

## **(5) RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **(a) Bylaw 202 - Reduced Taxation (second reading)**

It was moved by Councillor John Andrew, seconded by Councillor Cate Savage that Council give second reading to Bylaw 202 respecting Reduced Taxation.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### **(b) Bylaw 203 - Sewers (second reading)**

It was moved by Councillor Cate Savage, seconded by Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell that Council give second reading to Bylaw 203 respecting Regulation of Connecting and Discharging to Town Sewer System.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**(c) Pre-Approval of Equipment Purchase – Salt Truck**

It was moved by Councillor John Andrew, seconded by Councillor Cathy Maxwell that Council approve up to \$400,000 for the purchase of a replacement single axle dump truck complete with dump body and plow and wing gear with delivery and payment not expected until late fall 2026-27.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**(d) Kentville Police Service - Police Constable Position**

It was moved by Councillor Cate Savage, seconded by Councillor Samantha Hamilton that Council approve continuation of a one FTE Constable position in the amount of \$89,031 within the 2027-28 Operating Budget, and further approve the addition of one FTE Constable position in the amount of \$92,815 within the 2028-29 Operating Budget, for the purpose of establishing two one-year full-time contract positions for Atlantic Police Academy graduates.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**(e) Policy G34 - Repeal Temporary Development Officer**

It was moved by Councillor Cate Savage, seconded by Councillor Cathy Maxwell that Council repeal Policy G34 - Temporary Development Officer.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**(f) Policy G60 - Repeal Styrofoam (Expanded Polystyrene) Products Restriction**

It was moved by Councillor Cate Savage, seconded by Councillor John Andrew that Council repeal Policy G60 - Styrofoam (Expanded Polystyrene) Products Restriction.

**MOTION CARRIED with Mayor Andrew Zebian, Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell, Councillor Rob Baker, Councillor Cathy Maxwell, Councillor Samantha Hamilton, and Councillor Cate Savage voting in favour, and Councillor John Andrew voting against.**

**(g) Policy 104 - Public Consultation**

It was moved by Councillor Cate Savage, seconded by Councillor John Andrew that Council approve Policy 104 - Public Consultation.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**(h) Policy 105 - Expenses and Hospitality**

Councillor Cate Savage asked if under section 6A the allocation for professional development (for council, staff, and community committee members) would be one lump sum or three separate line items. CAO Chris McNeill responded that allocations differ with Council having its own amount and Committees/commissions (e.g., Police Commission) having separate accounts. Depending on the nature of the committee, there may or may not be additional funds in the budget.

Councillor Savage asked about section 6B, regarding FCM (Federation of Canadian Municipalities) and whether it is included in one line item or separate from other training (e.g., NSFM, courses). CAO Chris McNeill responded that the current system has FCM budgeted under one line item and other training budgeted separately. This approach will remain unless council directs otherwise.

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell, seconded by Councillor John Andrew that Council approve Policy 105 - Expenses and Hospitality.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**(i) Policy 106 – Proclamations**

It was moved by Councillor Cate Savage, seconded by Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell that Council approve Policy 106 - Proclamations.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**(j) Heritage Advisory Committee - Proposed Heritage Designation of Six Properties**

It was moved by Councillor Cathy Maxwell, seconded by Councillor Rob Baker that Council give consideration to adding the following six heritage sites to its Registry of Municipal

Heritage Properties, and prior to doing do, provide the required notice to each property owner:

- Heritage Centre (Former CN Rail Station) – 66 Station Lane
- Cornwallis Valley Rail Bridge (north of Shannex)
- Dominion Atlantic Rail Bridge (north of Curling Club)
- Main Street Station (Former Cornwallis Inn) – 325 Main Street
- Stagecoach Inn Properties (Multiple Addresses)
- Oak Grove Cemetery – 95 Main Street

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**(k) Redesignation & Rezoning Application – 153 Belcher Street (PID 55265250)**

It was moved by Councillor Cate Savage, seconded by Councillor John Andrew that Council give first reading to amend the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law to redesignate and rezone 153 Belcher Street (PID 55265250) from Residential / One and Two Unit Dwelling (R2) to Commercial / Highway Commercial (C2) to permit the relocation of an existing dental clinic.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**(l) Housing Diversity and Community Balance in the General Commercial (C1) Zone – Supplemental Update (first reading)**

Councillor Rob Baker asked if since the maximum of 12 units or sleeping rooms per lot, does anything above requires a development agreement; and if since there is a 60-meter separation between program-based housing uses, can multiple programs (e.g., supportive housing, emergency housing) can coexist on the same site. Director Darren Shupe explained that multiple programs can operate on the same site; the 60-meter separation applies between different sites.

Councillor Cate Savage mentioned that she supports moving the amendment forward to a public hearing and emphasized that minor changes can be made after public input, but significant changes would require restarting the process with examples of minor changes being typos, and small adjustments (e.g., 60m to 50m) and significant changes being changing zoning from R3 to R1.

Councillor Cathy Maxwell expressed reservations about placing certain housing types in residential areas (R3 zones) due to proximity to children and therefore cannot support the amendment based on these concerns.

It was moved by Councillor Cate Savage, seconded by Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell that Council give first reading to the following amendments to Kentville's Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw:

**AMEND:**

**D.1 Draft Municipal Planning Strategy Policies**

**5.14 Program-Based Housing**

**Policy RS-28:** It shall be the intention of Council to recognize Program-Based Housing—including Supportive Housing, Transitional Housing, and Emergency Shelters—as residential uses providing lodging with structured supports.

**Policy RS-29** It shall be the intention of Council to enable Program-Based Housing as-of-right within the Medium Density Residential (R3) Zone, subject to the Land Use By-law standards that ensure the form, scale, and intensity of development are compatible with surrounding neighbourhoods.

**Policy RS-30:** It shall be the intention of Council to Include standards within the LUB limiting occupancy, establishing minimum separation distances, and requiring buffering, residential form, and appropriate site design. Larger or specialized projects may be considered by Development Agreement where warranted by scale or service complexity.

**D.2 Draft Land Use By-law Framework**

**R3 Zone – Add to Permitted Uses:**

- Program-Based Housing (Supportive, Transitional, Emergency Shelter)

**Part 5 Residential Zones**

**5.1 General Provisions for All Zones**

**5.1.14 Site Plan Criteria for Program-Based Housing Developments**

- a) Maximum 12 units or sleeping rooms per lot (see definition in Appendix A);
- b) Minimum 60 m separation between Program-Based Housing uses;
- c) Residential form and scale consistent with surrounding dwellings;
- d) No exterior signage identifying client type or program;
- e) General criteria in accordance with Section 5.1.12 of this By-law.

**MOTION CARRIED** with Mayor Andrew Zebian, Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell, Councillor Rob Baker, Councillor John Andrew, Councillor Samantha Hamilton, and Councillor Cate Savage voting in favour, and Councillor Cathy Maxwell voting against.

### **(m) Nominating Committee Report**

Councillor Cate Savage expressed appreciation to the nominating committee for refreshing committee assignments and highlighted changes, including Councillor Maxwell joining Regional Sewer and adjustments to Finance and Investment Advisory Committees. She requested consideration to remain on the Board of Police Commissioners for the next two years, noting prior experience and interest and acknowledged that making an amendment would require a motion and seconder, but was hesitant to displace another member. She ultimately decided to leave the matter for now.

Mayor Andrew Zebian explained the nominating committee's approach to diversify assignments and balance expertise across committees. He emphasized the effort to rotate members for broader experience.

Councillor Cathy Maxwell advocated for diversity on the Police Commission, noting the current composition is entirely female.

Councillor John Andrew thanked Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell for guidance on new committee responsibilities and appreciated the challenge and opportunity to learn beyond areas of expertise. He recognized the complexity of fitting members into committees and expressed willingness to adapt.

**It was moved by Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell, seconded by Councillor Cathy Maxwell that Council approve the following appointments to Committees and Police Commission effective January 1, 2026, to December 31, 2027:**

**Finance and Audit Committee:**

**Councillor John Andrew  
Councillor Rob Baker  
Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell**

**Bursary Committee:**

**Councillor Rob Baker  
Councillor Cate Savage  
Alexander Faye  
Laurie Bolland**

**Investment Committee:**

**Councillor Cate Savage  
Councillor Rob Baker  
Councillor John Andrew**

*Council Meeting Minutes, December 15, 2025*

*Approved January 27, 2026*

*Page 8*

**Planning Advisory Committee:**

**Councillor Cate Savage**  
**Councillor John Andrew**  
**Councillor Cathy Maxwell**  
**Scott Hearn**  
**Jakub Ziolkowski**  
**Louis Comeau**

**Water Commission:**

**Councillor Samantha Hamilton**  
**Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell**  
**Councillor Cathy Maxwell**  
**Mayor Andrew Zebian**

**Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility:**

**Isaac Melanson**  
**Bernie Zinck**  
**Matilda Jararuse**  
**Kait Bowser**  
**Kim Clark**

**Police Commission:**

**Councillor John Andrew**  
**Councillor Samantha Hamilton**  
**Penny Hart**  
**Kim Clark**

**Valley Regional Services:**

**Mayor Andrew Zebian**  
**Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell, Alternate**

**Kentville Business Community:**

**Councillor Cathy Maxwell**  
**Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell, Alternate**

**Annapolis Valley Regional Library:**

**Councillor Samantha Hamilton**  
**Councillor John Andrew, Alternate**

**Annapolis Valley Trails Coalition:**

Councillor Cathy Maxwell

**Kings Point-to-Point:**

Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell

Councillor Samantha Hamilton, Alternate

**Kings Regional Sewer:**

Councillor Cathy Maxwell

Councillor Rob Baker, Alternate

**Kings Regional Emergency Management Organization:**

Councillor Samantha Hamilton

Councillor Cate Savage, Alternate

**Valley Regional Enterprise Network:**

Councillor Rob Baker

Councillor John Andrew, Alternate

**MOTION CARRIED** with Mayor Andrew Zebian, Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell, Councillor Rob Baker, Councillor John Andrew, and Councillor Cathy Maxwell voting in favour, and Councillor Cate Savage, and Councillor Samantha Hamilton voting against.

**(n) Lease of former Kentville Railway Station, 66 Station Street**

It was moved by Councillor Cate Savage, seconded by Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell that Council enter into the proposed 5-year lease agreement with Kentville Historical Society dates December 15, 2025, for 66 Station Lane, bearing PID #55496673.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**(6) COUNCIL REPORTS**

Mayor Zebian noted that council members' monthly reports were included with the agenda in the meeting documents. He asked if there were any comments or questions on them and Councillor John Andrew acknowledged missing the email requesting reports. He assumed there would be no December meeting based on past practice and only realized the oversight after seeing another councillor's email. Due to timing and family commitments, he was unable to prepare the report but plans to include the missed items in his next report.

**(7) PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments made at this time.

*Council Meeting Minutes, December 15, 2025*

*Approved January 27, 2026*

*Page 10*

**(8) CLOSED SESSION**

It was moved by Councillor Cathy Maxwell, seconded by Councillor Cate Savage that Council move into closed session at 5:53 p.m.

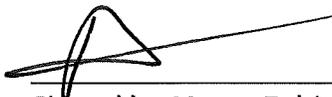
**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

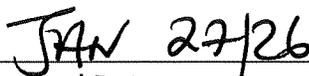
It was moved by Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell, seconded by Councillor John Andrew that Council move back into open session at 6:38 p.m.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**(9) ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:39 p.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed by Mayor Zebian

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Approval Date

