



SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

Meeting Minutes: January 12, 2026

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 4:30 p.m.

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

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

REGRET: Councillor John Andrew

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Councillor Samantha Hamilton declared a conflict of interest with item 3.a. Operating Agreement – Kentville Volunteer Fire Department.

Councillor Cate Savage declared a conflict of interest with item 3.b. Sale of Land – F.W. Robinson Property.

(2) APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

It was moved by Councillor Rob Baker, seconded by Councillor Cathy Maxwell that the agenda of January 12, 2026, be approved as presented.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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(3) NEW BUSINESS

a. Operating Agreement – Kentville Volunteer Fire Department

Councillor Samantha Hamilton declared a conflict of interest and left her seat to join the public.

Mayor Andrew Zebian thanked CAO Chris McNeill and the CAO of the Municipality of the County of Kings for their collaborative work over the past several months.

Council was advised that the Town of Kentville and the Municipality of the County of Kings entered into a 10-year operating agreement with the Kentville Volunteer Fire Department approximately ten years ago. The agreement has now expired. As provided for in the original agreement, Council issued one year's notice of its intent to renew under revised terms.

Due to staff turnover in all organizations, negotiations took longer than anticipated. A new draft operating agreement has now been prepared and is substantially aligned with agreements currently in place with other Kings County fire departments.

Key changes include:

- Removal of outdated or unnecessary provisions, including extensive procurement language, which has been simplified and replaced with a single procurement clause;
- Increased clarity and cost certainty for all parties.

Key Terms of the Proposed Agreement

- Term: 10 years
- Capital Funding: Guaranteed rate of 4.5 cents for capital funding over the 10-year period
- Operating Funding:
 - Shared between the Town of Kentville and the Municipality of the County of Kings;
 - Based on a rolling three-year average considering number of calls, kilometers driven, and related metrics;
 - While exact annual costs will vary, future costs will be known in advance for budgeting purposes.

The agreement provides financial predictability to both municipalities and the Fire Department.

Governance and Oversight Changes

- Annual Public Meetings: Removed, as long-term financial certainty reduces the need and risks associated with post-purchase public approval of major capital expenditures.
- Joint Fire Committee: Discontinued due to the clarity of the funding formula.

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- Kentville will continue to participate in county-wide fire department meetings focused on policy, operations, and advocacy.

Consultation and Approval Process

- The draft agreement was shared with the Kentville Volunteer Fire Department, and meetings were held to review its contents.
- Minor revisions were made following these discussions.
- Council was informed that approvals are still required from:
 - The Kentville Volunteer Fire Department; and
 - The Municipality of the County of Kings.
- The agreement is not yet a public document until all parties approve it.
- Any substantive changes will be brought back to Council for further consideration.

Councillor Cate Savage sought clarification on financial oversight and segregation of duties provisions. CAO Chris McNeill explained that in smaller organizations, segregation of duties requires enhanced board oversight. Key controls include:

- Separation between invoice preparation and cheque signing;
- Separation between purchasing and payment authorization.

The Fire Department will be required to document compliance with these requirements and provide a purchasing policy reflecting provincial procurement standards.

Councillor Cate Savage requested clarification regarding procurement thresholds under the Public Procurement Act. CAO Chris McNeill confirmed that the referenced threshold of approximately \$134,000 is set by provincial legislation and applies to large capital purchases such as fire apparatus.

Councillor Rob Baker asked whether the agreement had been negotiated with the Kentville Volunteer Fire Department and whether its executive supports presenting it to their membership. CAO Chris McNeill confirmed this was his understanding.

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell, seconded by Councillor Cate Savage that Council enter into the proposed 10-year operating agreement with Kentville Volunteer Fire Department and Municipality of the County of Kings, effective April 1, 2026.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Councillor Samantha Hamilton came back to her seat after the vote on item 3.a.

- b. Sale of Land – F.W. Robinson Property

Councillor Cate Savage declared a conflict of interest and left her seat to join the public.

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CAO Chris McNeill advised Council that the Town owns a vacant parcel of land adjacent to Town Hall, commonly referred to as the former FW Robinson property. The property has remained vacant for several years. Following discussion and review, Council previously determined that the property is surplus to municipal needs and directed staff to pursue a sale for positive community use. An Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued several months ago. Since that time, staff received and evaluated submissions from interested developers.

Staff are recommending acceptance of the proposal submitted by Left Side Investments, subject to the terms and conditions outlined in the draft Purchase and Sale Agreement.

At this stage:

- The agreement has not yet been finalized or executed by all parties.
- As a result, it is not yet a public document.
- Upon Council approval and execution by the purchaser, the agreement will become public and available for review.

Council was advised that it has been fully briefed on all terms and conditions of the proposed agreement.

The proposal includes:

- A mixed-use development, incorporating both residential and commercial components;
- A development timeline, requiring:
 - The developer to obtain a development permit within one year; and
 - Construction to commence within a defined period following approval.

CAO Chris McNeill noted that the proposed development:

- Represents a positive redevelopment of a prominent downtown site;
- Will contribute to increased residential housing supply;
- Will add commercial space in the downtown core;
- Is expected to result in increased assessment and economic activity for the Town of Kentville.

Council thanked staff for their work on the file and acknowledged the potential benefits of the proposed redevelopment of the former FW Robinson property.

It was moved by Councillor Cathy Maxwell, seconded by Councillor Rob Baker that Council authorize the sale of 374-376 Main Street, Kentville, bearing PID #55267371, submitted under RFP-2025-001, according to the terms and conditions related to the offer of purchase submitted by Left Side Investments and the Purchase and Sale Agreement entered into on December 23, 2025.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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Councillor Cate Savage came back to her seat after the vote on item 3.b.

(4) ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Councillor Cathy Maxwell, seconded by Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell that the meeting be adjourned at 4:43 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.



Signed by Mayor Zebian

Feb 23 126

Approval Date

