



SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

Meeting Minutes: March 9, 2026

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

PRESENT: Mayor Andrew Zebian
Councillor Samantha Hamilton
Councillor Rob Baker
Councillor Cathy Maxwell
Councillor John Andrew

STAFF: Chris McNeill, Chief Administrative Officer
Victoria Martin, Deputy Clerk
Wanda Matthews, Director of Finance

REGRETS: Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell
Councillor Cate Savage

(1) CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Andrew Zebian called the meeting to order at 6:11 p.m. He 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.

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None

(2) APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

It was moved by Councillor John Andrew, seconded by Councillor Cathy Maxwell that the agenda of March 9, 2026, be approved as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

Special Council Meeting Minutes, March 9, 2026

Approved March 23, 2026

Page 1

(3) NEW BUSINESS

a. Approval of 2026-2027 Capital Budget

Director Wanda Matthews presented the Town's proposed Capital Budget for municipal assets and sanitary sewer services. The water budget will be presented separately, pending the outcomes of an upcoming rate study and meetings scheduled for early April, which may affect future budgeting. The proposed capital budget focuses on:

- Renewing aging infrastructure
- Sustaining core services
- Maintaining affordability
- Aligning with Council's Strategic Priorities (2025–2029)

2026–2027 Capital Budget

- Total request: \$10.52 million
- Allocation aligned to strategic priorities as follows:
 - Investing in Infrastructure: Just over \$3 million
 - Investing in Growth and Development: \$2.535 million
 - IDEA-related initiatives: \$3.6945 million
 - Operational assets: Balance allocated to equipment and assets required to maintain core service levels

Five-Year Capital Plan (Total: \$47.66 million)

Major components include:

- Recreation facilities: Approximately \$10 million
- Town Hall accessibility and renovations: \$2.5 million
- Active Transportation project completion: \$1.125 million
- Donald E. Hiltz Connector Road: \$2 million
- Flood mitigation: \$8.937 million (approximately 50% of the five-year budget)
- Remaining funds are allocated to equipment, streets and roads, and sanitary sewers.

Financial Impact & Approval

- Senior leadership and the CAO are requesting approval to proceed with Year 1 funding (\$10.52 million).
- Debt servicing impacts have been reviewed and will remain within a low-risk range, with no significant impact on the Town's overall financial health.
- Funding for subsequent years is for planning purposes only, with formal approvals to occur in the applicable fiscal years.
- Certain future capital items may return to Council for early approval to allow adequate lead time for procurement and planning.

Council members expressed strong support and appreciation for the proposed capital budget and the process used to develop it:

Special Council Meeting Minutes, March 9, 2026

Approved March 23, 2026

Page 2

- **Councillor Rob Baker** emphasized the importance of “walking the talk” by aligning budget decisions with Council’s stated strategic priorities. He noted that the budget clearly reflects those priorities and thanked staff and directors for their collective work, describing the progress as rewarding and meaningful for the Town.
- **Councillor Cathy Maxwell** thanked staff and the broader team for their efforts, noting that in her nine years on Council, this was the first budget she had seen that truly aligned with Council’s strategic priorities. She expressed that the alignment and delivery on Council discussions was significant and greatly appreciated.
- **Councillor John Andrew** echoed previous comments, highlighting the strong continuity between Council’s strategic thinking and how funding is being allocated. He noted that this made the process positive and effective.
- **Councillor Samantha Hamilton** also expressed support, stating that the budget process was collaborative and well executed, and congratulated staff on a well-done budget.

It was moved by Councillor Rob Baker, seconded by Councillor Cathy Maxwell that Council approve the Town of Kentville 2026–2027 Capital Budget (General Fund and Sanitary Sewer) in the total amount of \$10,520,900, effective April 1, 2026. AND that Administration be authorized to proceed with the capital projects included in the approved 2026–2027 Capital Budget, subject to any conditions or limitations established by Council. AND that any incomplete 2025–2026 capital projects not already included in the 2026-2027 Capital Budget be carried forward with their approved 2025–2026 budgets.

MOTION CARRIED

- b. Adoption of the 2027-2031 Capital Investment Plan

It was moved by Councillor John Andrew, seconded by Councillor Samantha Hamilton that Council adopt the Town of Kentville Capital Investment Plan (CIP) for 2027–2031 for planning purposes. AND that Administration be authorized to undertake long-term pre-planning activities for future-year capital projects identified in the CIP, as required. AND that annual capital budgets will be brought forward to Council for consideration and approval as part of each year’s capital budget process. AND that the CIP be used to support eligibility and planning requirements associated with federal and provincial funding programs.

MOTION CARRIED

Mayor Andrew Zebian thanked Town staff and the CAO for their work on the capital budget, noting that after participating in six budget cycles, this was the first to fully align with Council's stated priorities. The mayor recognized the significant effort involved, particularly in the context of broader provincial and external challenges and expressed pride in the work completed by staff.

Key outcomes highlighted included plans for:

- An accessible Town Hall
- A new recreational centre, potentially in partnership with the Town of Wolfville and the County of Kings
- Stormwater and infrastructure upgrades, along with other capital improvements

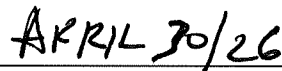
The budget process was described as the best experienced to date by the mayor, resulting in a strong and well-aligned budget. The remarks concluded with appreciation and thanks to staff for their dedication and work.

(4) ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:21 p.m.



Signed by Mayor Zebian



Approval Date