



COUNCIL MEETING

Meeting Minutes: March 23, 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 5:00 p.m.

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

STAFF: Chris McNeill, Chief Administrative Officer
Victoria Martin, Deputy Clerk
Dave Bell, Director of Engineering and Public Works
Wanda Matthews, Director of Finance
Darren Shupe, Director of Planning and Development

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.

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

(2) APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Two supplementary documents were added under 5.a, Mayor's report.

It was moved by Councillor Rob Baker, seconded by Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell that the agenda of March 23, 2026, be approved as updated.

MOTION CARRIED

(3) APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

(a) February 23, 2026, Council Meeting Minutes

There being no changes, the minutes were approved.

(b) March 9, 2026, Special Council Meeting Minutes

Edit from "his" to "her" on page 3. The minutes were approved as updated.

(4) RECOMMENDATIONS

(a) Bylaw 204 - Partial Tax Exemption (second reading)

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell, seconded by Councillor Cate Savage that Council give second reading to Bylaw 204 respecting Partial Tax Exemption.

MOTION CARRIED

(b) Recommended Sundry tax write off

Councillor Cate Savage asked whether, after a write-off, there is still an attempt to collect the outstanding amount, noting that pursuing recovery through small claims court could be costly. She then sought clarification on whether collection efforts continue despite not using small claims.

CAO Chris McNeill confirmed that the Town does continue to attempt collection of written-off amounts. He advised that small claims court is typically not used for small balances, as the cost of recovery would exceed the amount owed and noted that other collection methods may still be pursued where appropriate.

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell, seconded by Councillor John Andrew that Council approve writing off outstanding accounts receivable including interest, totaling \$1,963.60 related to customer account – Kevin Davison.

MOTION CARRIED

(c) Investment Advisory Services Contract Extension

Councillor Cathy Maxwell asked how long TD has managed the Town's investment portfolio. Staff and Council initial response suggested the portfolio had been managed for approximately five to six years. It was then clarified that the National Bank had managed the portfolio approximately 20 years ago. Further clarification noted that Chris McRae has been associated with the portfolio for approximately 18–20 years. It was ultimately clarified that TD has managed the Town's investment portfolio since approximately 2017–2018.

It was moved by Councillor Cate Savage, seconded by Councillor Rob Baker that Council approve a seven (7)-month extension of the investment advisory services agreement with TD Wealth, extending the term to October 31, 2026.

MOTION CARRIED

(d) Regional Sewer Budget

Director Dave Bell provided an overview of the Kings Regional Sewer Commission operating and capital budget:

- Noted that the Town of Kentville is one of four partners in the regional sewer system, along with Kings County, the Village of New Minas, and PepsiCo Canada.
- Confirmed that the proposed 2026–2027 regional operating and capital budget totals \$2,942,700, representing an overall increase of approximately 8% (\$218,000) from the prior year.
- Kentville's share is \$1,537,770, an increase of approximately \$113,500, based on Kentville's 52.2% system usage.
- Advised that the proposed regional budget aligns with Kentville's approved sanitary sewer budget assumptions, including an anticipated 8% year-over-year increase.
- Noted ongoing risks related to power costs, historical overruns, reduced water consumption affecting revenue, and the age of the regional infrastructure.
- Indicated that additional sewer rate reviews and potential increases are anticipated in future years due to system upgrades and capital needs.

Councillor John Andrew asked whether options have been explored for pre-treatment of commercial and industrial wastewater, noting that lagoon-based systems are best suited for residential waste. Director Dave Bell confirmed that industrial waste can be treated at the existing lagoon system due to front-end pre-treatment infrastructure. He explained that changes in screening practices in recent years reduced maintenance

Council Meeting Minutes, March 23, 2026

Approved April 27, 2026

Page 3

costs but allowed more solids into the system, contributing to operational issues. He advised that screening sizes have recently been reduced again to improve removal of organics and explained that monitoring equipment has been installed at key industrial sites to improve data on wastewater strength and volume. He noted that a regional pre-design study is underway to assess long-term solutions, including system upgrades, expansion options, and growth projections. Finally, he advised that locating a separate treatment facility would be highly challenging due to environmental, land-use, and regulatory constraints.

Councillor Cate Savage raised concerns about the sustainability of ongoing rate increases, noting that Kentville's contribution to the regional system has more than doubled over the past six years. She cited increasing capital costs (including desludging) and historical trends of regional budget overruns. Director Dave Bell confirmed that recent sewer rate increases were implemented as short-term corrective measures and that the April 1 adjustment will rebalance base charges. He explained that sewer revenues are sensitive to water consumption, and conservation efforts reduce revenue without reducing fixed regional costs. He noted that current consumption levels may result in insufficient revenue to fully cover Kentville's regional allocation, even with the 8% increase. Finally, he advised that another internal sewer rate review may be required if projected revenues are not met during the fiscal year.

Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell asked how regional sewer operating cost overruns are managed and whether reserves exist to offset overruns. Director Dave Bell confirmed that the regional system has little to no operating reserve. He advised that operating overruns are billed directly to partner municipalities, typically in the following fiscal year. He explained that while capital (depreciation) reserves are increasing, these funds are not available to offset operating overruns. He noted concerns regarding the capitalization of desludging costs, which function largely as maintenance rather than true asset creation and identified power consumption as a major driver of recent overruns, particularly the operation of aeration blowers to mitigate odour issues. Finally, he advised that Kentville maintains its own reserve to manage potential annual overruns, which may be approximately \$75,000 or more in the current year.

It was moved by Councillor Cathy Maxwell, seconded by Councillor John Andrew that Council approve the 2026/27 Regional Sewer Budget in the amount of \$2,942,700 of which the Town of Kentville's share is \$1,537,770 (52.2%) of which \$929,550 is Operating expenses and \$608,220 is Non-Operating, Principal & Interest charges on both short- & long-term debt from Capital improvements.

MOTION CARRIED

Council Meeting Minutes, March 23, 2026

Approved April 27, 2026

Page 4

(e) Large Scale Housing Housekeeping Amendments (second reading)

It was moved by Councillor Cate Savage, seconded by Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell that Council give Second Reading to the proposed amendments to the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law related to the Large-Scale Housing and Community Development framework, as outlined in Appendix A of the staff report.

MOTION CARRIED

(f) Rezone 160 Main Street (second reading)

It was moved by Councillor John Andrew, seconded by Councillor Cate Savage that Council give Second Reading to the proposed map and text amendments to the Land Use Bylaw, to permit a change of use within an existing building and to rezone 160 Main Street (PID 55246573) from the One and Two Unit Dwelling (R2) Zone to the Medium Density Residential (R3).

MOTION CARRIED

(g) OHS Policy Statement

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell, seconded by Councillor Cate Savage that Council approve the Occupational Health and Safety Policy Statement.

MOTION CARRIED

(h) Bylaw 300 – Repeal Idling Control (second reading)

It was moved by Councillor Cate Savage, seconded by Councillor Cathy Maxwell that Council give second reading to Bylaw 300 - Idling Control Bylaw 77 Repeal.

MOTION CARRIED

(i) Bylaw 301 Chapter 99 - Repeal Smoke-Free Public Place (second reading)

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell, seconded by Councillor Rob Bakert that Council give Second Reading to Bylaw 301 - Repeal of Bylaw 99 Respecting Smoke-free Public Place.

Council Meeting Minutes, March 23, 2026

Approved April 27, 2026

Page 5

MOTION CARRIED

(j) Council Committee and Commission Appointments

It was moved by Councillor Cate Savage, seconded by Councillor Rob Baker that Council amend its previously approved motion of December 15, 2025, appointing Councillor Samantha Hamilton to Kings Regional Emergency Management Organization, and Councillor Cate Savage as Alternate, by removing the “, Alternate” after the word Savage.

MOTION CARRIED

(k) Withdrawal from Valley Regional Enterprise Network (REN)

Councillor Cate Savage expressed support for the work currently being undertaken at the regional level and agreed that coordinated intervention and collaboration are necessary. She noted that Town of Kentville has established its own strategic priorities and emphasized the Town’s leadership role. She indicated hope that, as regional capacity is sustained, the County of Kings may assume responsibility for some residual impacts resulting from municipal partners who have chosen to withdraw.

It was moved by Councillor John Andrew, seconded by Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell that Council provide 24 months’ notice to Valley Regional Enterprise Network that it wishes to withdrawal from the Inter-Municipal Service Agreement entered into on May 5, 2023.

MOTION CARRIED

(l) Valley Region Solid Waste-Resource Management Authority-Guarantee

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell, seconded by Councillor Cathy Maxwell that Council approve the guarantee resolution for Valley Region Solid Waste-Resource Management in the amount of \$ 34,717.

MOTION CARRIED

(5) 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.

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell, seconded by Councillor John Andrew, that Council move into closed session at 5:34 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED

(6) CLOSED SESSION

(a) Municipal Government Act - Section 22(2)(c) – Personnel Matter

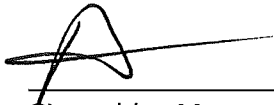
RETURN FROM CLOSED SESSION

It was moved by Councillor Rob Baker, seconded by Councillor John Andrew, that the meeting return from closed session at 6:14 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED

(7) ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:14 p.m.



Signed by Mayor Zebian

APRIL 27/26

Approval Date

