



SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

Meeting Minutes: April 13, 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
Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell
Councillor Cate Savage

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

REGRETS: Councillor John Andrew

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Andrew Zebian called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None

(1) APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell, seconded by Councillor Cathy Maxwell that the agenda of April 13, 2026, be approved as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

Mayor Andrew Zebian took a few moments to talk about the draft operating budget. He noted that the community is experiencing some of the highest population growth in decades, with an increase of approximately 13% over six years. While this growth

brings opportunity, it has also placed significant pressure on aging municipal infrastructure, including roads, sidewalks, water, sewer, and stormwater systems.

He acknowledged that historic underinvestment has resulted in several major infrastructure needs arising simultaneously, requiring a shift from short-term fixes to long-term, sustainable investment.

The proposed budget reflects this responsibility and includes increased funding to address infrastructure renewal, long-term planning, and financial sustainability. To support these priorities, the average household impact is estimated at approximately \$8–\$10 per month, depending on assessment. He emphasized efforts to balance rising costs with affordability, including strengthening the low-income tax exemption program.

Key investments highlighted include accessibility upgrades to municipal facilities, continued support for housing development (including affordable and mixed-market options), and a significant regional recreation investment through a proposed new recreation facility and arena replacement. Continued investment in parks, trails, and public spaces was also identified as essential to quality of life.

He also outlined a strengthened approach to economic development, including expanded accessibility supports for businesses, improved coordination with council priorities, and the establishment of a Business Advisory Committee reporting directly to council. The budget was described as a responsible response to growth, reflecting a commitment to proactive planning, long-term investment, and building a resilient community for the future.

(2) NEW BUSINESS

a. Approval of 2026-2027 Operating Budget

Councillor Cate Savage thanked Mayor Andrew Zebian for the introductory remarks on the budget and noted that without the proposed adjustment, the Town would face an operating shortfall of approximately \$330,000. She emphasized the importance of investing in Kentville's future and highlighted the usefulness of the Director of Finance's presentation, particularly the budget and taxation highlights that explain what the proposed four-cent rate increase means for the average homeowner. She encouraged residents to review the budget materials and the Mayor's remarks before Council proceeds with the motion.

Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell expressed full support for the 2026–2027 Town of Kentville operating budget. She stated that the budget aligns with Council's strategic plan and responds to continued population growth. She acknowledged rising costs beyond municipal control and noted that Council has direct control over only about 25%

Special Council Meeting Minutes, April 13, 2026

Approved April 27, 2026

Page 2

of the operating budget. She highlighted constraints on revenue growth, including that over 60% of properties are capped at a 2.6% assessment increase and identified significant increases in fixed costs, including education, transit, debt servicing, and collective agreements. She noted that the budget supports major priorities such as the regional recreation centre and arena replacement, the Donald E Hiltz Connector, and ongoing stormwater management. She concluded and described the budget as balanced, responsible, and reflective of thoughtful leadership, and stated pride in supporting it.

Councillor Cathy Maxwell thanked CAO Chris McNeill and municipal staff for their work in preparing the budget. She expressed satisfaction that the budget meets the needs of Kentville residents and noted that the budget allows the Town to maintain current service levels while also moving forward with new and replacement infrastructure. She emphasized that these investments are vital to supporting the Town's future growth and thanked staff and Council colleagues for their efforts.

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Debra Crowell, Seconded by Councillor Rob Baker that Council approve the proposed 2026-2027 operating budget for Town of Kentville reflecting revenues and expenditures of \$20,595,007, with the following tax rates:

Residential and Resource Base Rate of \$1.4662, Fire Area Rate of \$0.045, and Kentville Water Utility Hydrant Rate of \$0.0564 per \$100 of assessment and

Residential Rural Base Rate of \$0.853 and Fire Area Rate of \$0.045 per \$100 of assessment for PID#'s 55263586, 55434419, 55248652, 55248645, 55248660; and

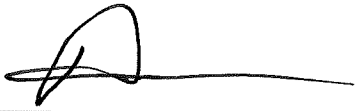
Commercial Base Rate of \$3.3362, Fire Area Rate of \$0.045, Economic Development Area Rate of \$0.115, and Kentville Water Utility Hydrant Rate of \$0.0564 per \$100 of assessment excluding those covered under an *Act Relating to Taxation of Industrial and Commercial Properties in the Annapolis Valley Regional Industrial Park*; and

Commercial Base Rate of \$2.287, Fire Area Rate of \$0.045, Economic Development Area Rate of \$0.115, and Kentville Water Utility Hydrant Rate of \$0.0564 per \$100 of assessment for all properties covered under *An Act Relating to Taxation of Industrial and Commercial Properties in the Annapolis Valley Regional Industrial Park*.

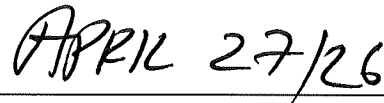
MOTION CARRIED

(3) ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.



Signed by Mayor Zebian



Approval Date