

**REGULAR COUNCIL
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
APPROVED MINUTES**

DATE: February 11, 2026

TIME: 04:30 P.m.

PLACE: Bunbury Room

PRESENT: Steve Gallant, Deputy Mayor
Gordie Cox, Councillor
Ron Dowling, Councillor
Jill Chandler, Councillor
Jeff Macdonald, Councillor

REGRETS: Jody Jackson, Councillor

PRESENT: Jeremy Crosby, CAO
Kim O'Connell, Director of Finance & Technology
Wendy Watts, Business & Community Engagement Manager
Dale McKeigan, Director of Planning (left at 5:43 PM)
Corporal Matthew Paynter,
Neala Smallman, Recording Clerk

CHAIR: Steve Ogden, Mayor

1. CALL TO ORDER

We acknowledge the land upon which we gather is the unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq, and we pay our respects to the Indigenous Mi'kmaq People of this territory past, present, and future.

Mayor Ogden called the meeting to order at 4:31 PM

2. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No conflict of interest was declared.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councillor Chandler advised that she must leave the meeting at 6:30 PM.

It was moved by Councillor MacDonald and seconded by Deputy Mayor Gallant that the agenda be approved as circulated.

4. MINUTESa) **Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes**

It was moved by Councilor Cox and seconded by Councillor MacDonald that the minutes be approved as circulated.

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

No business was declared from the minutes.

6. PRESENTATIONS FROM THE FLOOR

No presentations.

7. MAYOR'S REPORTa) **Mayor's Activity Report**

January 14 – February 11, 2026

January 14

- Chaired the monthly Town Council Meeting.

January 15

- Met with MLA Rob Lantz.
- Attended the Infrastructure Committee Meeting.

January 18

- Represented the Town of Stratford at the World Religion Day event.

January 21

- Participated in the Federal Funding Announcement for the Community Wellness Centre.
- Interviewed by journalists from *The Guardian* newspaper and CBC.
- Attended the Finance Committee Meeting.
- Participated in a meeting of the Provincial Immigration Partnership Council.
- Interviewed by a journalist from CTV.
- Attended the Intergovernmental Affairs, Engagement and Accountability Committee Meeting.

January 22

- Participated in a meeting of the Federation of PEI Municipalities (FPEIM) Board of Directors.

January 28

- Chaired the monthly Committee of the Whole Council Meeting.

January 29

- Met with Mark Ledwell.
- Attended the Heritage Committee Meeting.
- Attended the Chamber of Commerce Excellence in Business Awards Ceremony.

February 3

- Participated in a Budget Meeting with Town Staff and Council.

February 4

- Attended the Stratford Business Mixer.

February 5

- Participated in the Diversity and Inclusion Committee Meeting.
- Helped with the flag-raising ceremony with the Black Cultural Society of PEI to mark Black History Month.
- Met with representatives from the Crossroads Fire Company.

February 8

- Attended Vietnamese Lunar New Year celebrations.

February 9

- Met with MLA Jill Burridge.
- Held meetings with residents and Town staff.
- Continued to oversee day-to-day business and internal affairs of the Town.

Discussion:

There were no further questions or discussion following the mayor's report.

8. CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER**a) Report**

- Attended and Participated in the Monthly Planning Board Meeting.
- Along with the Mayor and Deputy CAO we met with members of the Cricket group to discuss their Crickey Association.
- Chaired biweekly Department Head meetings to coordinate Town and Utility projects, advance corporate initiatives, and address day-to-day operational issues.
- Along with the Director of Planning attended a meeting with council to discuss the official plan and zoning development bylaw review.
- Participated in a conference call interview with Business View Magazine to discuss town initiatives and community priorities.
- Participated, alongside the Mayor and Deputy CAO, in a meeting with a Conservative leadership candidate Rob Lantz to discuss Town initiatives and community priorities.
- Met with the Director of Planning and a developer regarding a potential business park land purchase.
- Met with Sustainability and Finance Staff to discuss changes to the 2026/2027 budget.
- I attended a meeting with the Bell mobility representative to discuss changes to the agreement for the potential installation of a communication tower on town owned land.
- Attended a meeting with a Meals on Wheels representative to discuss the placement of a freezer to facilitate food storage for Stratford delivery operations.
- Attended and participated in multiple 2026–2027 budget meetings with Department Heads.
- I attended and participated in the monthly Town Council meeting.

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- I attended a meeting with Planning staff to discuss proposed changes to the next draft of the Zoning and Development Bylaw.
 - Attended, along with the Community and Business Engagement Manager, a meeting with members of the Native Council of PEI and Gender-Based Violence Prevention to discuss their programs and initiatives.
 - I attended and participated in the bi-monthly Intergovernmental Affairs and Accountability meeting.
 - Along with the Infrastructure Project Manager, we met with residents regarding the installation of a back-up power supply at the Bayside sewer lift station.
 - Participated in a meeting with the Deputy CAO and administrative staff regarding updates to the file management system.
 - Along with the Director of Planning, met with representatives of the Gray Group to discuss upcoming developments planned for 2026.
 - Attended the Federal funding announcement for the Community Campus Health and Wellness Facility, a key step in the overall implementation of the Community Campus lands.
 - Participated in the staff Lunch & Learn series led by the Canadian Mental Health Association (PEI Division), which offered guidance and strategies for managing burnout at work and in daily life.
 - I Attended an HR meeting to discuss our new personnel policy.
 - Along with Technology and Infrastructure staff, attended a meeting with Neuron Communications to discuss a new lock technology that can be accessed with a fob or smartphone, without the use of batteries or electricity, for remote buildings and gates.
 - Chaired the monthly staff meeting.
 - Along with Infrastructure and Recreation staff, we attended a meeting to discuss the progress of the new Waterfront Pavilion building.
 - I attended and participated in the monthly committee of the whole meeting.
 - Participated, alongside the Mayor and Deputy CAO, in a meeting with a Conservative leadership candidate Mark Ledwell to discuss Town initiatives and community priorities.
 - Participated in the annual Chamber of Commerce President's Excellence Awards and had the pleasure of sitting with Wedell Taylor's Garage, Stratford, who received the Workplace Excellence Award.
 - Along with the Deputy CAO we had are monthly touch base call with
 - Along with the Deputy CAO, attended our monthly virtual meeting with Cordell Johnson, Atlantic Representative for the Federal Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, to discuss future funding for the Health and Wellness Facility.
 - Attended a meeting with Sustainability staff to discuss new initiatives, including funding for a tree planting and a preservation bylaw.

In addition, I have organized and led meetings with staff, developing detailed agendas and providing relevant materials for various committee discussions to ensure everyone stays informed. I've also assessed infrastructure projects, reviewed planning-related issues and the proposed changes to the official plan and zoning and development bylaw, and managed various HR files. I have handled correspondence, responding to emails and letters from residents, stakeholders, government officials, and other relevant parties.

Discussion:

Following CAO Crosby's report, Councillor MacDonald asked what the expected start date is for the Waterfront Pavilion. CAO Crosby advised that the project is expected to begin in the spring. New renderings will be presented at the next Committee of the Whole meeting. The kitchen layout has now been finalized, with a few adjustments made to doors and entryways. Color renderings will be available so the committee can clearly see the full building layout and continue discussions about how the pavilion will be used in the future.

Councillor Cox asked whether members of the Cricket Association had been advised about a potential future move out of Tea Hill. CAO Crosby clarified that they had not met with the full association, but only with a few members regarding internal matters.

At this time Mayor Ogden took a moment to note a tragic event that occurred in British Columbia and acknowledged that municipalities across the country are affected by the news. He expressed condolences on behalf of Council to the families and communities impacted and requested a moment of silence. Following the moment of silence, the mayor advised that the municipal flag would be lowered to half-mast the following day, in keeping with practices across the country.

9. SAFETY SERVICES

a) **Report**

The report was included in the agenda package for council to review.

Discussion:

Councillor MacDonald noted that while there was a recent request for a crosswalk at the Bunbury–Mason Road intersection, Ward 2, Councillors have long advocated for a crosswalk along Stratford Road south of the Blue Church. Councillor MacDonald asked that the Safety Services Committee keep this long-standing request in mind and noted he would follow up by email.

Councillor Dowling clarified that the earlier request for the Bunbury–Mason Road site was not for a new crosswalk but for overhead pedestrian-activated beacons to replace the current flag system at the existing crosswalk. The Director has already started to contact the province to request this upgrade.

Councillor Dowling suggested that, if no similar request has been made for the Stratford Road location, Director Woodard could also contact the province regarding that intersection. Councillor Dowling encouraged Councillor MacDonald to send an email, copying Director Woodard, so staff can confirm what requests have already been submitted and proceed with contacting the province if necessary. Councillor Dowling agreed that the intersection requires a safe crosswalk.

Councillor Chandler added her support for Councillor McDonald's concerns, noting that on Stratford Road there is a crosswalk near Marion Drive but not another until Kinlock Beach, leaving a stretch of roughly three kilometers without a safe crossing. She noted that pedestrians still cross there and that the lack of sidewalk-to-sidewalk connections is no longer an adequate reason to avoid a crosswalk. She suggested exploring solutions to create connections so residents can cross safely.

Deputy Mayor suggested that the Town should consider phasing out the use of pedestrian crossing flags and transitioning to overhead beacon lights, noting their greater effectiveness, particularly in low-visibility conditions such as darkness, fog, or rain. He remarked that concerns have been raised about drivers not noticing the flags near the Mason Road crossing. Deputy Mayor proposed that the Town work with the province to upgrade two or three crosswalks per year and suggested discussing this strategy further with Director Woodard and the Minister of Transportation.

CAO Crosby noted that the Town can bring such requests forward, but they must be raised well in advance of both the provincial and municipal budget cycles. He added that the Town should avoid committing to pay for multiple upgrades per year, as the province has already been converting several crosswalks on its own. Regarding Stratford Road, he reiterated that past discussions identified the lack of a landing or sidewalk on the opposite side as a barrier under Department of Transportation standards. However, he stated that it may be possible to install a landing in certain locations to allow for a safe crossing, and that the matter can be revisited.

Councillor Chandler added that Council had previously discussed a potential active transportation route or sidewalk on Rosebank, which has been a line-item for some time and could provide the needed landing for a safe crossing. She noted that on Stratford Road, once past Marion Drive, there is no safe pedestrian crossing.

CAO Crosby noted that if the discussion concerns the Keppoch Road area, some progress has already been made there. He added that there are several locations under consideration and that a crossing near Glen Cove has also been discussed. He will ask Director Woodard to follow up.

Mayor Ogden noted that this issue falls between Safety Services, the Infrastructure Committee, and the province. He noted the need to clarify committee recommendations on sidewalks or landing pads and to understand provincial requirements. He added that he recently met with MLA Burrige and will raise the matter at their next meeting, and that provincial staff will also need to be involved.

b) **Street Light Report**

Councillor Dowling reported that the Strawberry Hill lantern bulbs are currently being replaced with LED bulbs. During this transition, residents may notice some variation in lighting. The focus for now is on resolving an issue with bulbs turning on and off, and the infrastructure itself will be addressed at a later stage.

c) **RCMP Report**

Corporal Paynter reported that Stratford RCMP handled 332 occurrences in January, with 315 founded or under investigation, an increase from December and similar to January 2025. Traffic enforcement accounted for 178 occurrences (56%), resulting in 53 tickets and 70 warnings. Police also responded to one driving while disqualified, one flight from police, and one driving while prohibited incident.

There were four break-and-enters, two at the same address which resulted in charges, and 11 fuel-theft reports, all deemed unfounded. Police completed 22 STEP files and three check stops.

The Joint Enforcement Team conducted a targeted stop that led to two arrests and the seizure of fentanyl, crystal meth, and cocaine. One individual was charged with multiple trafficking and weapons-related offences. Corporal Paynter noted it was a busy month. Despite increased call volumes, the detachment was short-staffed at times due to block training across the Queens District, with members away for a week at a time. He reported that calls continue to rise, and activity is not slowing down.

Discussion:

A Councillor MacDonald asked whether the recent targeted CDSA arrest was connected to suspected activity in Stratford or simply occurred there. Corporal Painter advised he could not comment in detail because it was not their investigation but confirmed it was a targeted stop, and the individuals involved were known to police.

Councillor MacDonald also asked whether intersection-related violations were concentrated in any particular area.

Corporal advised that the main problem area is the new intersection near Robin's. Many drivers are making an improper shortcut U-turn instead of

using the roundabout. RCMP have focused enforcement there, starting with education, as some drivers were unaware of the proper traffic flow. This remains their main enforcement area.

d) **Humane Society Report**

The report was included in the agenda package for Council to review.

Discussion:

Deputy Mayor reported that residents in Clearview Estates have noted recent coyote sightings and asked what the proper procedure is. He questioned whether such reports should be directed to Animal Control or the PEI Humane Society.

Staff clarified that coyote concerns should not be directed to the Humane Society. Reports should go to the Province through the Department of Wildlife, but only if the animal is showing aggression or abnormal behavior. Normal coyote activity is common and does not need to be reported.

e) **Fire Company Report**

The report was included in the agenda package for council to review.

Discussion:

Deputy Mayor inquired whether there is a cost-sharing arrangement for the new ladder truck among the surrounding fire districts, Crossroads, Johnson's River, Hazelbrook, and Mermaid, and whether there is any provincial contribution.

CAO Crosby indicated that some communities have been sent letters requesting contributions, though it is unclear which have responded. The province may be exploring a loan option, but details of an agreement are not yet known. The CAO noted that Stratford currently funds about 80% of the Crossroads Fire Department's budget, with the remaining 20% coming from the other districts. All communities receive provincial revenue sharing, though smaller communities receive less. Deputy Mayor emphasized that shared service responsibilities should come with shared financial support.

10. RECREATION CULTURE AND EVENTS

a) **Recreation, Culture and Events Committee –**

Key Updates-Committee Meeting – January 22

- Reviewed 2026–27 operating and capital budgets.
- Received updates on:
 - Recreational programming
 - Cultural programming
 - Youth Centre programming
 - Community Campus development
 - Waterfront Park development

Stratford Community Campus

- The Town received **\$10 million in federal funding** through the Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Program.
- Funding represents a portion of the total required capital investment.
- Federal support signals strong confidence in the Campus and the Stratford Wellness Centre vision.
- The Town continues pursuing additional federal and provincial funding.
- Project began in 2018 and has grown into a major community initiative.
- Campus will serve as a hub for recreation, wellness, and community programming.
- Sport fields and active transportation networks expected to be completed and opened **summer 2026**.
- Wellness Centre construction anticipated to begin **fall 2026 or spring 2027**.
- Council and staff remain committed to advancing the project responsibly and collaboratively.

Stratford Youth Centre & Council

- Registrations for the season are now closed.
- 95 youth members enrolled.
- 4 young adults participating on the Youth Engagement Team.

WinterFest

- Planning is underway for WinterFest, scheduled **February 15–16**.
- Anticipated engagement: **50–60 youth volunteers**.
- Youth Centre Leadership Club hosting the **WinterFest Flea Market**:
 - Saturday, February 14
 - 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- Winter Stratford Youth Fest:
 - Sunday, February 15 and Monday, February 16
 - 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Arts Projects

- Artist contracts being finalized for the **Fairy Trail** (spring/summer 2026).
- RFP to be issued for **two public mural locations**.
- Submission deadline: **February 28, 2026**.

Recreation Programs & Activities

- Winter tennis training programs ongoing.
- Pickleball programs at full capacity:
 - 40 participants
 - 4 groups (3 meet twice weekly; 1 meets once weekly)
- Stratford Minor Baseball launching indoor training:
 - Tuesday evenings
 - 8:00 p.m. – 9:15 p.m.

Winter Trail Grooming

- Winter grooming continues at:

- Cotton Park natural gravel trails
- Fullerton's Park gravel trails
- Paved active transportation networks remain cleared for year-round activity.
- Weather fluctuations have caused minor grooming delays.
- Overall trail conditions remain good and safe for public use.
- Town remains committed to year-round outdoor recreation.

Outdoor Rinks

- Outdoor rinks located at Pondsides Park and Bunbury Park.
- Fluctuating weather has impacted ice quality and limited usable days.
- Pondsides Park:
 - Open consistently since January 2.
- Bunbury Park:
 - Lost ice surface after recent warm temperatures.
- Staff continue to monitor, restore, and maintain ice surfaces for skating, hockey, and ringette, weather permitting.

Discussion:

Councillor Cox reported that the Atlantic Pickleball Club is nearing completion and looks excellent. The owners are pleased with the progress and the cooperation from Council and staff. A Maritime tournament in April is nearly full.

Councillor Cox noted concerns about false information circulating about membership prices. He clarified that senior memberships start at \$45/month and include access to a seniors' lounge and café discount. Misinformation has discouraged some residents, but he expects this will improve once the public can tour the facility.

Councillor Chandler acknowledged Councillor Cox's role in helping bring the pickleball facility to Stratford. She noted that while Council is pleased to have the facility in the community, it is a private business, and discussion of its pricing should occur in appropriate forums. She stated that this meeting is not the proper venue for addressing the company's fee structure.

Mayor Ogden stated that the matter will be discussed at Committee of the Whole to ensure accurate information is directed appropriately. He acknowledged the differing views expressed and noted that Council will have the opportunity to address the issue further at that meeting.

11. FINANCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Mayor Ogden noted Councillor Jackson's absence and offered condolences on behalf of Council, staff, and residents to the Jackson and Campbell families on the passing of Rob Campbell, a veteran and respected community member.

Councillor McDonald, presenting the Finance Report in Councillor Jackson's place, thanked the mayor for his remarks and acknowledged the significance of Mr. Campbell's passing to Councillor Jackson and his family.

a) Report

- Staff are working on Budget Files for 2026-27.
- Department managers finalized draft budgets of the Operating and Capital budgets to present to council for their review.

- Department managers and council met on February 3 to discuss the draft operating budget. Department managers and Council will be meeting a few more times this month to prepare a draft budget to present to our residents.
- Proposed draft budget meeting for the residents is March 5, 2026 at 6:30pm.
- Planning and Finance staff met to review GIS permitting program and discuss when Townsuite modules will no longer be needed.
- Jeremy C and finance staff met to discuss the Fire Department and review financial information.
- Stratford Utility bills are due on February 17, 2025.
- Staff are working on finalizing information needed for T4 calculations.
- Recreation and Finance staff are reviewing financial information for the Community Campus.
- Staff are working on government claims and MCEG information.
- Staff are busy with day-to-day items

b) **Financial Statements**

The financial statements were included in the agenda package for council to review.

Discussion:

Councillor MacDonald reported that the Finance Committee is in its busiest period as budget preparation continues. Staff are actively preparing materials, and the committee had a productive meeting with useful feedback on improving the budget presentation, seeking a more reader-friendly, high-level document aligned with the Town's strategic priorities. He also noted disappointment that two utility funding applications were denied, despite earlier provincial encouragement to apply. Given Stratford's growth and aging utility infrastructure, he stressed the need for provincial and federal support to complete essential upgrades, including closing the utility loop. He emphasized the importance of Council presenting a united front as follow-up with provincial officials continues, noting that reliable water and wastewater services are core municipal responsibilities.

Mayor Ogden noted that the utility funding issue has been raised with the area MLAs, who indicated the applications will be revisited in the Province's March review, with hope for a positive outcome.

Councillor MacDonald added that, given the likelihood of a provincial election in 2026, residents should ensure that essential utility infrastructure becomes a key election issue. He emphasized that adequate water and wastewater infrastructure is critical for community growth, particularly in the east end, where development is limited due to insufficient servicing. He stressed that these major projects exceed the Town's annual operating capacity and require strong, coordinated advocacy to provincial officials.

12. PLANNING DEVELOPMENT AND HERITAGEa) **Report**

The report was included in the agenda package for council to review.

b) **Permit Summary**

The permit summary report was included in the agenda package for council to review.

Councillor MacDonald provided a brief report, advising that January was a quiet month for development activity, with approximately **\$82,000** in building permits issued, typical for the first month of the year and lower than January 2025, which included a major commercial project. Despite the modest permit numbers, planning staff remain very busy with ongoing work on the Official Plan and Zoning & Development Bylaw review, as well as continued progress on the short-term rental file. Their efforts were noted and appreciated.

13. INFRASTRUCTUREa) **Report**

The report was included in the agenda package for council to review.

14. COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Nil.

15. SUSTAINABILITYa) **Report****Sustainability Committee Update**

- **No meeting in February**; updates provided by staff.

Residential Tree Planting Program

- 6th season now open.
- Residents can apply for **one large native tree** for their front yard for **\$50**.
- Applications available at the **Town Centre** and **Town website**.
- 50 trees available.
- Now open to **all residential property owners**, even if they previously participated or already have trees.
- **Priority** still given to households with **no existing trees** and **first-time participants**.

Climate Ready Infrastructure Service (CRIS)

- Town accepted into the new **CRIS** program.
- Program experts will complete a **climate and energy assessment** of the Town Centre.
- Assessment valued at **~\$20,000**, provided **at no cost to the Town**.
- Aim: improve building climate readiness and energy efficiency.

Business Community

- Successful **business mixer** held on February 4.
- **Business survey** open until February 6.

- Next event: **facilitated meeting on February 19** with business community to discuss needs, preferred activities, and potential associations.
- Additional updates to come.

Diversity & Inclusion

- Diversity & Inclusion Sub-Committee met on **February 5**.
- Discussed **upcoming municipal elections** and plans to promote **volunteer committee opportunities**.

b) **Transit Report**

The report was included in the package for council to review.

Discussion:

Mayor Ogden congratulated staff on a successful business mixer and ongoing work on the business survey, PEI Connectors partnership, and the funding secured for a net-zero feasibility study for the community campus. He also noted the positive impact of the *Think Stratford* radio advertisements.

The CAO added that staff are pursuing funding for a new tree-planting and preservation bylaw, which will soon come to Council for review.

Councillor Chandler reported that the business mixer was well attended and created meaningful networking opportunities. She looks forward to the upcoming facilitated discussion with local businesses. She also highlighted insights gathered at the Greater Charlottetown Chamber of Commerce dinner, where business representatives identified challenges such as staff housing and transportation issues the Town can help address through continued engagement.

The mayor emphasized the importance of consulting businesses, noting that tax dollars collected from them should be spent in ways that most effectively support their needs. Council agreed that ongoing engagement should also include businesses not yet located in Stratford to better understand what might attract them to the community.

The mayor concluded by noting that Stratford resident **Blair MacLauchlan** was honored at the Greater Charlottetown Chamber of Commerce's Excellence in Business Awards Gala. He commended Blair, his wife Donna, and the MacLauchlan family for their significant contributions to Stratford, the province, and the country. He noted Blair's success in growing a small operation into a regional contracting company capable of undertaking major engineering projects and expressed pride in the family's ongoing commitment to the community.

16. **INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

a) **Report**

The Intergovernmental Affairs & Accountability Committee met on January 21st with some of the following highlights:

- Updates were shared with the committee on transit agreement negotiations, the Official Plan and Zoning & Development Bylaw, and infrastructure funding of projects (Community Campus and Waterfront pavilion)
- Staff are beginning the 2026 collection of Key Performance Indicators data and will updating the website once all of the information is collected and updated. The previous data can be viewed anytime by the general public through the Town's website.
- Town staff and representatives of council have continued to hold regular meetings with MP Kent MacDonald, MLA's Burrige and Redmond, and had meetings with both candidates for the PC party leadership.
- The IAA committee had a lengthy discussion about the upcoming municipal elections and provided staff with some great ideas on campaigns, material and activities that could be incorporated over the coming months to encourage participation of both voters and candidates.
- Staff shared year end data on engagement and highlighted that:
- A Transgender Day of Remembrance post on Facebook generated the most engagement in 2025 with 192,876 impressions, 1,609 total engagement, 1,555 reactions, 16 comments, 38 shares.
- The top performing posts that generated the most likes were:
- Facebook: #1 Poppy Project (re: Anna Duffy), #2 Absen's mural, #3 Transgender Day of Remembrance
- Instagram: #1 Absen's mural, #2 LaLa Art mural, #3 a coyote post
- When comparing the Town's post frequency and engagement we are outperforming competitors (backend comparison to other government agencies that are built into the reporting of data). The Town posted 116.6% more than competitors and maintained post engagement was 44.1% higher than competitors (great ROI).
- When comparing 2025 to 2024:
- 3.2% more posts in 2025
- Impressions went up 666%
- Engagement increased showing that post shares went up by 4.7%; post reactions & likes by 27.8%; followers increased by 8.1%; post video views increased by 392%; post link clicks increased by 64.1%
- Facebook remains the platform with the most engagement by far for the Town of Stratford

17. INQUIRIES BY MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

Deputy Mayor inquired as to where the town is at with the Zoning and Development Bylaw.

The CAO reported that, following public meetings held before Christmas, staff and Council have been working on a second draft of the Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw.

Feedback from residents and stakeholders has been incorporated, and Council is currently submitting comments on the revised draft and updated map. Follow-up meetings will be scheduled soon, with a second public meeting expected within the next month. The CAO noted that the new draft includes significant changes from the first.

The mayor emphasized that Council will take the time needed to ensure the updated Official Plan meets expectations and gains broad community support.

18. OTHER COMMITTEES

a) Stratford Seniors Complex

- Staff are meeting with IT staff to prepare for installation of security cameras within building and outdoor area.
- Repairs were done to exterior light fixtures.
- McDearmid's has been in to repair a few stoves and the dryer.
- 2026 Budget has been approved by CMHC.
- Staff are contacting people on the waiting list to arrange viewing of the vacant unit in the building.
- Staff have been communicating with parking lot and walkway snow contractors over timing of the snow clearing.
- Staff and the Management Committee are reviewing the Management Committee Policy for potential updates.
- There are currently 37 people on the waiting list.

Discussion:

Councillor Cox asked about the Town's short- and long-term plans for seniors' housing and whether constructing a new facility could be financially feasible. He suggested examining potential revenues versus construction, operating, and maintenance costs to determine whether a new complex could become viable over time.

Deputy Mayor stated they are contacting people on the waiting list to view the vacant unit. They noted that adding another seniors' facility would require Town-owned land, such as in the business park or along the highway and would need to be planned through the budget process. Given limited funds, it's unclear whether a new building is currently feasible.

Councillor Cox noted that land along the Trans-Canada Highway has been identified as a strong potential site for additional seniors' housing. He expressed concern that, after several years of discussion, progress remains slow and emphasized the need for a clearer short- and long-term plan. He highlighted the growing need for low-income seniors' housing, noting many residents rely solely on OAS and CPP without private pensions. He stressed that a new facility would be a "win-win" for the community but will require financial support from provincial and federal partners. He also noted that clearer provincial definitions of "affordable" housing would help advance the project.

19. APPOINTMENTS TO THE COMMITTEESa) **Resolution - SS001-2026 – Appointment of Directors to the Cross Roads Rural Community Fire Company**

Moved by Councillor Ron Dowling
 Seconded by Councillor Jeff MacDonald

WHEREAS the Town of Stratford has a right and responsibility to appoint seven members to the Board of Directors of the Crossroads Rural Community Fire Company; and

WHEREAS it is desirable to have new persons appointed each year to represent the Town on the Fire Company Board.

BE IT RESOLVED that the following persons be appointed to serve on the Board of Directors of the Cross Roads Rural Community Fire Company for the year 2026:

Town Council Representative

- Councillor Ron Dowling

Community Representatives:

- Carol-Anne Duffy
- Leigh Jenkins
- Rick Richard
- Bernadette Milner
- Dave Swan
- Neil Webster

CARRIED 5-0

b) **Resolution - CW001-2026 – Committee Member Appointments**

Moved by Councillor Jeff MacDonald
 Seconded by Councillor Jill Chandler

WHEREAS Council has established a number of Standing Committees and Sub-committees in the Council Procedural Bylaw, Bylaw # 47, to advise and assist Council in its deliberations; and

WHEREAS the Bylaw provides for the appointment of residents and stakeholders by Council to provide public input to Council in its deliberations.

BE IT RESOLVED that the following residents be appointed to the respective Standing Committees and Sub-committees for the remainder of a two-year term ending on November 30, 2026, as follows:

Finance & Technology Committee

Diversity & Inclusion Sub-Committee

Heritage Sub-Committee

- Kerri Morris
- Don Scott

CARRIED 5-0

20. PROCLAMATIONS

a) Nil

21. OTHER BUSINESS

22. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 6:14 PM

Steve Ogden, Mayor

Jeremy Crosby, CAO

Neala Smallman Recording Clerk

Approved on: _____