



**The Corporation of the Township of Norwich  
Council Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday February 10, 2026  
Regular Council Meeting**

**In Attendance:**

**Council:**

Mayor Jim Palmer  
Councillor Toews  
Councillor DePlancke  
Councillor Gear  
Councillor Couwenberg

**Staff:**

Matt Smith, Chief Administrative Officer  
James Johnson, Treasurer/Deputy CAO  
Kimberley Armstrong, Director of Corporate Services/Clerk  
Derek Van Pagee, Director of Fire and Protective Services  
Ken Farkas, Director of Operations  
Jason Simpson, Director of Building Services/Chief Building Official  
Dirk Kramer, Deputy Chief Building Official/Drainage Superintendent  
A.J. Wells, Manager of Medical Services  
Sean McCoy, Deputy Clerk/Planning Coordinator

**1. Call to Order**

The regular session of the 2022-2026 Council of the Township of Norwich was held in the Council Chambers, Norwich, commencing at 9:00 a.m. with Mayor Palmer presiding.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

Resolution #1

Moved by Karl Toews, seconded by Lynne DePlancke:

That the Agenda be accepted as presented.

Carried

**3. Public Recognition / Presentations**

None.

**4. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest**

None.

**5. Adoption of Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)**

**5.1 January 27, 2026 – Community Grants**

**5.2 January 27, 2026**

Mayor Palmer advised that item 5.6 in the Minutes for the Community Grants meeting includes a reference to “Durham” that should be corrected to “New Durham”.

Resolution #2

Moved by Lynne DePlancke, seconded by Karl Toews:

That the following Minutes of the Township of Norwich Council be adopted as printed and circulated:

January 27, 2026 – Community Grants

January 27, 2026

Carried

**6. Public Meetings / Hearings**

**6.1 The Municipal Act**

None.

**6.2 The Drainage Act**

The Mayor advised that as per Section 42 of the Drainage Act, R.S.O. 1990, as amended, this Public Meeting is being constituted to consider the Engineers Report for the Frain Drain 2025 Improvement.

All owners and agencies were sent notification of the meeting to consider the reports on January 21, 2026.

The Mayor asked those in attendance with respect to this application to please sign the attendance sheet at the door.

**6.2.1 Consideration of Engineers Report**

**Re: Frain Drain 2025**

**Report DR 2026-05**

Mr. Mike DeVos, P. Eng., Spriet Associates London Limited, provided an overview of the proposed improvements to the Frain Drain. He explained that the 100 year old drain is undersized by current standards and not in good condition. The request to improve the drain will be achieved by replacing it with new tile in a very similar location, with minor variations to avoid a septic bed, also abandoning a portion due to a reduction in the watershed. Outlet to the JC Topham drain will be improved with maintenance and deepening at the end of the pipe. Mr. DeVos further explained that catch basins would

be installed along the drain route to capture surface water. Although the capacity of the drain was going to be increased, it would still be a low flow system necessitating overland path of travel for large water events, just at a reduced volume and duration.

In response to questions from Council, Mr. DeVos explained that the exact age of the drain was unknown but it is estimated to have been built between 1900 and 1910, confirming it to be a clay tile drain.

Mr. David Topham, 385192 Highway 59, commented that he had concerns regarding costs of boring under Highway 59 instead of digging, considering sections of the road had been dug out for other projects. Mr. DeVos commented that the County indicated preference with boring which may limit frost and heave impacts as well as complications with closing the road for construction. He clarified that the costs are the responsibility of the County and not the assessed land owners.

#### Resolution #3

Moved by Karl Toews, seconded by Lynne DePlancke:

That Report DR 2026-05, Consideration of the Frain Drain 2025, be received as information;

And that in accordance with Sections 44 to 46 of the Drainage Act, Council of the Township of Norwich hereby adopts Spriet Associates London Limited Engineer's report dated November 20, 2025, referred to as the "Frain Drain 2025";

And that Provisional By-law 09-2026 be given first and second reading;

And that the Clerk be directed to distribute copies of the Provisional By-law and Notice of the time and place of the first sitting of the Court of Revision to the affected parties pursuant to Section 46(2) of the Drainage Act;

And that a date of March 10, 2026, be set for the first sitting of the Court of Revision.

Carried

#### **6.3 The Planning Act** None.

#### **6.4 Other** None.

#### **7. Delegations**

##### **7.1 Betty Kerr**

##### **Re: Speed at the Intersection of Quaker Street and Highway 59**

Ms. Betty Kerr expressed concerns with the current speed limit on Highway 59 from the 50 km per hour limit at the north end of the Village of Norwich to 1 km north of Quaker

Street. She expressed concerns about speeding motorists and the history of accidents at and near the intersection of Highway 59 and Quaker Street. She also expressed concerns about safety issues for cyclists and pedestrians. Ms. Kerr suggested that a 60 km per hour speed limit would make it easier for trucks to clear the intersection and make it safer for residents to walk or bike in the area.

There was Council discussion and questions regarding the potential open house for members of the public to raise concerns about traffic issues and discuss potential solutions, speed enforcement by the police, and potential processes for recommending a speed limit reduction to the County.

**Resolution #4**

Moved by Shawn Gear, seconded by Adrian Couwenberg:

That the Delegation of Betty Kerr, regarding Speed at the Intersection of Quaker Street and Highway 59, be received as information.

Carried

**Resolution #5**

Moved by Shawn Gear, seconded by Adrian Couwenberg:

That Council hereby request that the County of Oxford consider changing the speed limit on County Road 59 from the northern limit of the Village of Norwich to 1000 metres north of Quaker Street from 80 kilometres per hour to 60 kilometres per hour, instead of the current proposal to reduce the speed limit to 70 kilometres per hour.

Carried

**8. Correspondence**

**8.1 Oxford Community Foundation**

**Re: Retirement of Louise Wardrop**

**8.2 Township of Southgate**

**Re: Bill 68 – Changes to the OMERS Act**

**8.3 Municipality of Markstay Warren**

**Re: Closure of Sudburys LifeLabs**

**Re: Correspondence to MPP regarding LifeLabs Closure**

**8.4 Town of Fort Frances**

**Re: Call on Province to Establish an Ontario Airport Capital Assistance Program**

**Resolution #6**

Moved by Adrian Couwenberg, seconded by Shawn Gear:

That the Correspondence as listed in Agenda Item 8.1 to 8.4 be received as information;

And further that Council supports items 8.2, 8.3 and 8.4.

Carried

**9. Committee Minutes**

**9.1 Norwich BIA**

**Re: Meeting Minutes – December 2, 2025**

**Re: Meeting Minutes – January 6, 2026**

Resolution #7

Moved by Shawn Gear, seconded by Adrian Couwenberg:

That the following Committee Minutes, be received as information:

Norwich BIA

Re: Meeting Minutes – December 2, 2025

Re: Meeting Minutes – January 6, 2026

Carried

**10. Reports**

**10.1 Fire and Protective Services**

**10.1.1 2025 Year End Report**

**Report FP 2026-02**

There was Council discussion and questions regarding fire department response to medical calls, including lift assists and more serious trauma, and automatic emergency call features in cellular devices.

Resolution #8

Moved by Lynne DePlancke, seconded by Karl Toews:

That Report FP 2026-02, 2025 Year-End Report, be received as information.

Carried

**10.1.2 Monthly Activities – January 2026**

**Report FP 2026-03**

Resolution #9

Moved by Lynne DePlancke, seconded by Karl Toews:

That Report FP 2026-03, Monthly Activity Report – January 2026, be received as information.

Carried

**10.2 Building Services**

**10.2.1 Monthly Activities - January 2026**

**Report BB 2026-03**

In response to questions from Council, Mr. Simpson explained that the new webpages for the building department were through the Township website. He also advised that the new permitting software is active and current submissions are in the new system.

Resolution #10

Moved by Karl Toews, seconded by Lynne DePlancke:

That Report BB 2026-03, January 2026 Building Services Activity, be received as information.

Carried

**10.2.2 Monthly Activities – January 2026**

**Report DR 2026-04**

Resolution #11

Moved by Adrian Couwenberg, seconded by Shawn Gear:

That Report DR 2026-04, January 2026 Activity Report, be received as information.

Carried

**10.2.3 Tender Results for the Chant Drain Improvement 2025**

**Report DR 2026-06**

Resolution #12

Moved by Adrian Couwenberg, seconded by Shawn Gear:

That Report DR 2026-06, Tender Results for Chant Drain Improvement 2025, be received as information;

And that Council of the Township of Norwich award the drain construction to Robinson Farm Drainage Limited for the tendered price of \$130,275.00;

And that Council enter into Contract Agreement By-law 11-2026, subject to third and final reading of Provisional By-law 54-2025 (Chant Drain Improvement 2025) and after the statutory time for filing appeals as prescribed by the Drainage Act has expired.

Carried

**10.3 Operations**

**10.3.1 Monthly Activities – Public Works – January 2026**

**Report OP 2026-04**

There was Council discussion and questions about the total costs of the grader engine repair build, cold patching, snow lifts and sidewalk clearing.

Resolution #13

Moved by Shawn Gear, seconded by Adrian Couwenberg:

That Report OP 2026-04, Public Works Monthly Report – January 2026, be received as information.

Carried

### **10.3.2 Monthly Activities – Parks and Facilities – January 2026**

#### **Report OP 2026-05**

Resolution #14

Moved by Lynne DePlancke, seconded by Karl Toews:

That Report OP 2026-05, Parks and Facilities Monthly Report – January 2026, be received as information.

Carried

### **10.4 Financial Services**

#### **10.4.1 Foot Care Clinic**

##### **Report MED 2026-02**

There was Council discussion and questions regarding when Stonebridge can start the service, rental costs after the trial period, the number of patients that can be seen in a day, and the potential for adding additional days if there was demand for it.

Resolution #15

Moved by Karl Toews, seconded by Lynne DePlancke:

That Report MED 2026-02, Foot Care Clinic, be received as information;

And that Council authorize a four-month trial of the proposed foot care clinic at no-cost to Stonebridge Community Services.

Carried

### **10.5 Corporate Services**

#### **10.5.1 Township of Norwich Chamber of Commerce**

##### **Re: Request for waiver of rental fees for the Annual Awards Night**

Resolution #16

Moved by Lynne DePlancke, seconded by Karl Toews:

That the request from the Chamber of Commerce for a waiver of rental fees for the Chamber of Commerce Awards Night be received as information;

And further that Council grant \$497.20 from Council's Discretionary Fund towards the April 15, 2026 rental fee for the Chamber of Commerce Awards Night.

Carried

**10.5.2 To Assume a Land Dedication into the Municipal Road System – Quaker Street  
Report CS 2026-03**

Resolution #17

Moved by Adrian Couwenberg, seconded by Shawn Gear:

That report CS 2026-03, To assume a land dedication into the Township Road System – Quaker Street, Norwich, be received as information;

And further that Council give consideration to passage of By-law 10-2026 to assume lands into the Township Road System.

Carried

**10.5.3 Councillor Couwenberg – Notice of Motion (January 27, 2026)**

**Re: Request for review of by-law restrictions on height and size of accessory structures**

Councillor Couwenberg provided an overview of his motion requesting a review of accessory structure provisions within the Township Zoning By-Law due to the volume of planning applications related to this matter.

Mr. Smith explained that the current by-law provisions are from 2003 and that Ms. Hartley, Planner for the Township of Norwich, has started researching comparable local municipalities.

Resolution #18

Moved by Shawn Gear, seconded by Adrian Couwenberg:

Whereas, the Township of Norwich has received many applications to the Committee of Adjustment for minor variances to the Zoning By-law related to the height of accessory structures and the permitted lot coverage of houses and accessory structures; and

Whereas, the Committee of Adjustment has generally approved structures that go beyond the current limits in the Zoning By-law for both height and lot coverage; and

Whereas, Council of the Township of Norwich wishes to enable more buildings to be constructed 'as of right', without requiring a minor variance application.

Therefore, be it resolved that Council of the Township of Norwich hereby direct staff to bring forward a report that summarizes the nature of the variances requested and

approved by the Committee of Adjustment in the last twelve months related to the height of accessory structures and lot coverage; and

That the report also include a summary of the existing limits in the Township by-law in comparison to the limits in neighbouring communities; and

That the report make recommendations where appropriate on changes to the Township's Zoning By-law to permit increased height for accessory structures and lot coverage.

Carried

#### **10.5.4 Councillor Couwenberg – Notice of Motion (January 27, 2026)**

##### **Re: Request the general ledger be provided to Council monthly**

Councillor Couwenberg provided an overview of his motion requesting that staff provide the monthly expenditures to Council for review to provide more information to support budget decisions.

There was Council discussion and questions regarding the practice of providing purchase summaries within Ontario municipalities, the information included in the current monthly variance reports, what information to include in the purchase summaries, challenges for Council when making financial decisions, and the benefits of seeing cumulative costs over the course of a year to be better informed during budget deliberations.

Mr. Smith reviewed an example of a monthly transaction summary from Chatsworth as a potential template.

Resolution #19

Moved by Adrian Couwenberg, seconded by Shawn Gear:

Whereas, Section 224 of the Municipal Act states that the role of Council includes ensuring that controllership policies and practices are in place, ensuring the accountability and transparency of the operations of the municipality, and maintaining the financial integrity of the municipality; and

Whereas, Council of the Township of Norwich has adopted a Purchasing of Goods and Services Policy that delegates authority to municipal staff to make purchases under specific thresholds; and

Whereas, Council wishes to maintain oversight of those purchases as a way to ensure accountability, transparency and financial integrity.

Therefore, be it resolved that Council of the Township of Norwich hereby direct staff to include a list of the payments posted to the General Ledger on the Council agenda once per month.

Carried

**10.6 Chief Administrative Officer**

**10.6.1 ROMA Conference 2026**

**Report CAO 2026-05**

Resolution #20

Moved by Karl Toews, seconded by Lynne DePlancke:

That Report CAO 2026-05, ROMA Conference 2026, be received as information.

Carried

**10.6.2 Council Chambers Staff Desks**

**Report CAO 2026-06**

There was Council discussion supporting Option 1 from the report. There was further discussion requesting staff get a quote to build a lectern that would be in keeping with the style of the desks.

Resolution #21

Moved by Lynne DePlancke, seconded by Karl Toews:

That report CAO 2026-06, Council Chambers Staff Desks, be received for information;

And that Council direct staff to proceed with Option 1, to create two new staff desks from the existing furniture;

And that Council authorize the transfer of \$9,750 plus the Township's non-refundable portion of HST from the Administrative Equipment reserve to fund the associated expense.

Carried

**10.6.3 Gravel Road Conversion Policy**

**Report CAO 2026-07**

Mr. Smith provided an overview of the Report advising that the working group did not come to a unanimous decision, however, mostly agree on the principles and determination by test holes. There was Council discussion and questions regarding options for construction methods to prepare road bases for surface treatment, long-term benefits of the gravel road conversion program, the reasoning for including some items of consideration in the scoring matrix, ditching requirements and recurring soft spots on some gravel roads.

Staff clarified that soft spots are often not in the same locations and move around depending on the location of water under the roadways. Staff further clarified that this policy is applicable to tar and chip, not asphalt works.

In response to Council questions, staff advised that there is approximately 1.5 million in the gravel road reserve and based on the test holes and application of the draft policy, Council may consider works to Firehall and Beaconsfield Road for this year.

Mr. Smith advised that the purpose of including the construction options in the policy is to identify a threshold for when certain construction methods are to be used. This information can then be used as a starting point for budgeting and construction planning. He further explained that a third option may be added to the policy if Council wishes.

Resolution #22

Moved by Adrian Couwenberg, seconded by Shawn Gear:

That Council direct staff to amend the Gravel Road Conversion Policy to include a third construction method, whereby 4in Granular B is added to sections of road where test holes show an existing base of between 12 inches and 16 inches, instead of digging out those sections entirely;

And that the policy be brought back to Council for final approval at the next meeting.

Carried

#### **10.6.4 Short Term Disability Policy**

**Report CAO 2026-08**

Resolution #23

Moved by Shawn Gear, seconded by Adrian Couwenberg:

That report CAO 2026-08, Short Term Disability Policy, be received for information;

And that Council of the Township of Norwich hereby adopt the updated Short Term Disability Policy;

And that Council direct staff to apply for the Employer Premium Reduction Program based on the updated policy;

And that Council authorize the CAO to make any additional minor policy changes as required by the Canada Revenue Agency in order for the Township to qualify for the Employer Premium Reduction Program.

Carried

#### **11. Notice(s) of Motion**

None.

**12. Closed Session**

None.

**13. By-Laws**

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>No. 59-2025</b> | <b>To Provide for Drainage Works - Vermeersch Branch (Palmer Drain) 2025 (Third Reading)</b> |
| <b>No. 09-2026</b> | <b>To Provide for Drainage Works – Frain Drain</b>   |
| <b>No. 10-2026</b> | <b>To Assume a Land Dedication into the Municipal Road System – Quaker Street</b>            |
| <b>No. 11-2026</b> | <b>Chant Drain Improvement 2025 Contract Agreement</b>                                       |
| <b>No. 12-2026</b> | <b>To Confirm All Actions and Proceedings of Council</b>                                     |

**13.1 First and Second Reading of the Following By-laws**

Resolution #24

Moved by Adrian Couwenberg, seconded by Shawn Gear:

That the following By-law as listed, be introduced and taken as read a first and second time:

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| No. 09-2026 | To Provide for Drainage Works – Frain Drain                                |
| No. 10-2026 | To Assume a Land Dedication into the Municipal Road System – Quaker Street |
| No. 11-2026 | Chant Drain Improvement 2025 Contract Agreement                            |
| No. 12-2026 | To Confirm All Actions and Proceedings of Council                          |

Carried

**13.2 Third Reading of the Following By-laws**

Resolution #25

Moved by Adrian Couwenberg, seconded by Shawn Gear:

That By-laws 59-2025, 10-2026, 11-2026, and 12-2026 as listed, be taken as read a third and final time and passed and signed by the Mayor and Clerk and the Corporate Seal be affixed thereto.

Carried

**14. Adjournment – 12:30 p.m.**

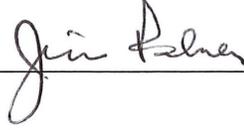
Resolution #26

Moved by Lynne DePlancke, seconded by Karl Toews:

That this Council do now adjourn.

Carried

These minutes adopted by way of Resolution No. 2 as approved by Council at its meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2026.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jim Palmer  
Mayor

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kimberley Armstrong  
Director of Corporate Services / Clerk