

WHITEWATER REGION COUNCIL SUMMARY



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 14, 2026

Here is a summary of the Regular Meeting of the Council on **January 14, 2026**. Full agendas can be found here: <https://whitewaterregion.civicweb.net/Portal/>. The video is available on our YouTube page. This summary does not constitute the official record of the meeting and approved Minutes should be consulted for that purpose.

Mayor's Message

Mayor Nicholson reported that since the December 2025 Regular Meeting of Council, he has attended several meetings, including Special and Budget Committee meetings. He noted that four members of Council will be attending the Rural Ontario Municipal Conference (ROMA) from January 18 to 20, where delegations are scheduled with several ministries to address rising OPP costs, economic development opportunities at the former Tominco Mine site, access to primary care, rural infrastructure funding, and highway safety.

He also advised that the Minister of Seniors and Accessibility will be recognizing Whitewater Region as an Ontario Age-Friendly Community. Mayor Nicholson further noted that budget and financial planning remains a key priority, with ongoing Budget Committee work focused on developing a sustainable long-term capital plan and continued review of the Asset Management Plan and Transportation Master Plan.

Public Meeting

A public meeting was held for two zoning amendments to hear comments and receive information from the public regarding proposals in accordance with the Planning Act. Council approved a site-specific zoning amendment for 622 Westmeath Road to implement revised rear yard setbacks associated with approved lot creations and to protect nearby natural heritage features. Council also approved a site-specific zoning amendment on Olmstead-Jeffrey Lake Road to permit a reduced setback from an Extractive Industrial Reserve zone as a condition of an approved severance, with both applications found to be consistent with provincial and county planning policies.

Library Board

Council approved the revised by-law to update the membership of the Whitewater Region Public Library Board following a recent vacancy. The update ensures the Board remains compliant with the Ontario Public Libraries Act and maintains the required minimum number of members.

Contact: Ivan Burton, CAO
iburton@whitewaterregion.ca Ext. 124

Emergency Management

Council approved the Emergency Management Annual Program Review and amendments to the Township's Emergency Response Plan. The updates ensure continued compliance with provincial legislation and include revisions to the Hazardous Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA) and the addition of a Cyber Incident Emergency Plan to strengthen emergency preparedness.

Contact: Ivan Burton, CAO
iburton@whitewaterregion.ca Ext. 124

Community Services

Council received information on the 2025 Community Recreation Grant update, which highlights expanded youth programming made possible through new partnerships, increased in-kind facility use, and additional funding. The grant supported summer camps, PA Day programs, and ongoing fall activities, with only a few cancellations due to low registration. Staff recommend continuing these partnerships and increasing the grant allocation for 2026 to meet growing program needs.

Contact: Stephanie Plebon, Manager of Parks & Recreation
splebon@whitewaterregion.ca Ext. 143

Corporate Management & Legislative Services

Council approved amendments to the Township's Procedural By-law to update definitions, adjust the order of business, and revise regular meeting times to allow for daytime meetings. The changes are intended to improve transparency, support effective Council operations, and promote work-life balance for staff, with no financial impact.

Council approved the sale of a portion of an unopened road allowance at Coulonge Lake, declaring the lands surplus to municipal needs and authorizing the transaction for a lot addition. Council also approved a by-law to stop up and close the road allowance, enabling the sale to proceed in accordance with municipal policy.

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Finance and Administration

Council approved the 2026 Operating, Capital, and User Fee Budgets, supporting the recommendations of the Budget Committee and adopting the Mayor's budget. The approved budget reflects a total levy increase of 5.8%, including a 1.6% operating levy increase and a 4.2% capital levy increase to support asset management and infrastructure reinvestment, along with a 5% water rate increase and a 4% sanitary rate increase. The budget also supports continued multi-year financial planning and the development of a sustainable long-term capital plan.

Contact: Kurtis McGonegal, Treasurer
kmcgonegal@whitewaterregion.ca Ext. 138

Announcements

Members of Council announced the following:

- Councillor Tabbert highlighted that the Forster's Falls Winter Carnival is scheduled for January 24, 2026.
- Councillor Trimm reminded residents that Pub Night in Westmeath is scheduled for Friday, January 16th with food, darts, cards, music, and more.

Additional information:

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Neil Nicholson, Mayor
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