

WHITEWATER REGION COUNCIL SUMMARY



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 6, 2026

Here is a summary of the Regular Meeting of the Council on **May 6, 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 Address

Mayor Nicholson reported that he attended 21 meetings and events over the past period, including a County Council meeting, two committee meetings, and a special session to review the County's Master Transportation Plan. His engagements also included the Upper Ottawa Valley Chamber of Commerce AGM, as well as a tour of Magellan Aerospace with the local MPP, Warden, CAO, and officials from the County and the City of Pembroke to gain a better understanding of its operations and production.

The Mayor also highlighted several notable achievements within the business community. Wilderness Tours Bike Park was recognized as "Best Bike Business" in the region by Ontario Highlands, while Kenny's Store received the Outstanding Independent Award for 2026, one of just 35 small businesses recognized across Canada. In addition, both the Beachburg and Cobden Fairs were awarded \$20,000 each through the Experience Ontario grant program to support their continued success.

Mayor Nicholson addressed ongoing flooding concerns in the area. It has been over two weeks since water levels began to rise, significantly impacting areas of the community, particularly those on private roads. Meetings with the Ministry of Natural Resources are ongoing, and the Ottawa River Regulation Planning Board continues to manage water levels resulting from the northern melt. Flood warnings have been extended for an additional two weeks and may continue beyond that.

Residents are reminded that sandbags remain available at the Westmeath Public Garage. The Township is working closely with Renfrew County Paramedics to conduct wellness checks and assist with evacuations if necessary, while also coordinating with partner agencies to provide ongoing support. More information and updates are available on the website.

While some municipal services have been affected, Township operations remain active and continue to respond throughout this flooding event.

Presentations

Council marked National Volunteer Week by presenting Bonnie Helferty with the Whitewater Region Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of her outstanding contributions to the community. Bonnie has dedicated 24 years to the Cobden and District Food Bank, more than 50 years to organizing the Cobden Santa Claus Parade, and has led the local Terry Fox Run since 1999.

Corporate Management & Legislative Services

Council received the 2025 Integrity Commissioner Annual Report for information. The report noted no complaints, inquiries, or costs in 2025, and provided updates on Strong Mayor Powers and potential provincial changes to municipal codes of conduct and accountability frameworks.

Contact: Ivan Burton, CAO
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Community Development

Council approved the removal of Part-Lot Control for Lots 8 and 9 on Plan 49M-30 and Lot 5 on Plan 49M-9 to allow for lot reconfiguration on Meadowview Drive. The changes will enlarge adjacent lots to better accommodate septic systems and improve compliance with zoning requirements, supporting safe and appropriate residential development.

Contact: Mackenzie Baird, Planner/EDO
mbaird@whitewaterregion.ca Ext. 122

Public Works

Council received the 2025 Annual Landfill Monitoring Reports for the Ross and Cobden Waste Disposal Sites. The reports confirm the active Ross site is operating in compliance with environmental requirements with an estimated 33 years of remaining capacity, while the closed Cobden site remains stable with no environmental concerns, and ongoing monitoring will continue.

Council received the draft Waste Management By-law for review and directed staff to amend the User Fees and Charges By-law and the 2026 Operating Budget to evenly distribute the new fee for Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional recycling services. The updated by-law modernizes waste management regulations, enhances diversion and environmental practices, and introduces a municipally delivered recycling program for non-residential properties not covered under provincial regulations, helping reduce the financial impact on small businesses.

Contact: Lane Cleroux, Manager of Public Works
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Finance & Administration

Council received the draft Debt Management Policy for review. The policy establishes a framework for responsible and sustainable use of debt to finance capital infrastructure, including defined limits, financial targets, and approval processes to support long-term financial stability and asset management planning. It will be brought back for approval to the May 20th meeting.

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Additional information:

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