

**Village of Haines Junction
Regular Council Meeting Minutes
February 11, 2025**

Present:

Deputy Mayor McPhie
Councillor Busche
Councillor Mackinnon
Mayor Strand (via Zoom)

Absent:

CAO Fairbank

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm

Acknowledgement of Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Traditional Territory

Deputy Mayor McPhie acknowledged that we are on the traditional territory of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations

Adoption of Agenda

#43-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT the agenda be adopted as amended with the following additions:

- Update 9b to Housing Needs Assessment Report (there is no Report to Council to accompany the report)

Motion #43-25 was **CARRIED**.

Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

Adoption of Minutes of Regular and Special Council Meetings

Council Meeting Minutes January 22, 2025

#44-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT the minutes of the regular Council meeting of January 22, 2025 be adopted as amended:

- Page 10 - Letter from Sally Hogan – change to Ms. Hogan may not have been informed about the work that was completed by the Lions.

Motion #44-25 was **CARRIED**.

Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes January 29, 2025

#45-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT the minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting of January 29, 2025 be adopted as presented.

Motion #45-25 was **CARRIED**.

Proclamations

Delegations

St. Elias Chamber of Commerce – Stimulating Community Investment Project

Presentation (Michael Pealow):

- The purpose of this delegation is to share with Council a quick summary of the report that was received from the Chamber’s consultants.
- Thanks were expressed to previous Council for providing a letter of support for this project, which helped the Chamber get funding to hire the consultants.
- The project was initiated in response to the business community’s interest to explore what can be done to address underdeveloped and derelict properties in the community.
- These properties reflect poorly on the community and can pose environmental hazards. They tie up lands that could hold potential for investment to benefit the community and its economy.
- The consultant investigated 30 properties (noting there are more than 30 underdeveloped/derelict properties in the community) to learn why they are un/underdeveloped or derelict.
- Good news:
 - Haines Junction’s property taxes, zoning and permitting are competitive to other communities and conducive to investment
 - Properties that were studied all have access to electricity, water and sewer (noting not all underdeveloped/derelict properties in the community do)
- Barriers:
 - Business feasibility – Whitehorse is so close that it affects whether or not there is enough to sustain a business that could be developed on one of these properties.
 - Cost of construction – It is hard to bring a project forward because costs of construction are really high, and financing costs are fairly high right now as well.
 - Property availability – We have lots of commercial properties, but few are for sale. Owners are hesitant to price them because they don’t know what they’re worth. It is easier not to list at all. This affects people looking to start up businesses, as it is hard to know how to plan for costs and get financing because there is no information about the commercial real estate market.
- Key takeaways: It is the role of the municipality and the Yukon government, but mostly the municipality, to set the tone for an investment environment. How can this tone be set?
 - Demolition of derelict properties – The municipality needs to step up and show leadership by dealing with the old pool/curling rink
 - Surplus property sales – As the Village did recently with properties on Shakwak street, there is opportunity to sale properties that the Village doesn’t have near term plans for that could help get the market flowing. YG is also sitting on lots in town that could be put on the market.

- Business development incentives – For example, offer discounts at the land fill or tax reductions for a certain number of years when a property is being developed
- Curtail idle land returns – address people who have bought properties and are sitting on them and will keep sitting on them because it doesn't cost anything to hold properties (e.g. property and vacancy taxes, maintenance bylaws). Raising property taxes spurs people to put properties on the market.
- Acquire un/underdeveloped and derelict properties (and rehabilitate to a state where someone can do something with them if necessary) and put up for sale
- Promote Haines Junction as a place to invest
- How can this be resourced?
 - Sale of surplus vacant lots can be injected into economic development
 - Apply for funding from territorial and federal programs
 - Community bonds – there may be people interested in co-purchasing properties for the purpose of getting them sold and developed
 - Future taxation – the municipality is making very little on taxes on vacant properties. Once properties are developed, tax revenues increase which is better for the municipality overall
- Stimulating the development of vacant/derelict properties is good for the community as it will increase the number of services and opportunities for the people who live here.

Mayor Strand joined the meeting via Zoom at 7:12 pm.

Discussion:

- A conference was held in Haines Junction some time ago called Windows of Opportunities. These reports tend to sit on a shelf and get dusty and we never look back at them. It would be interesting to go back and look at the report from this conference to see if we are even close to where they said that we would be in 40 years time.
- Public comment: A member of the Board for the Chamber of Commerce resigned because this report was not shared with members before it was presented to Council. This member didn't agree with this report.
 - The Chamber Board approved sharing the report with Council.
 - The member disagreed with a specific section of the report; believe there was some misunderstanding about whether this section was promoting foreign investment.
- Public comment: Further to and in support of the previous comment, members of the Chamber of Commerce have not received any communication about this report from the Chamber Board. This report has no sponsorship from the membership of the Chamber of Commerce. Members have not had any opportunity to review or discuss the report with the Chamber Board. The Chamber is negligent in their operations and authority in this regard.

Public Hearings and Public Input Sessions

- Public comment: At the January 29, 2024 Committee of the Whole, Council discussed establishing a waste management committee. Several weeks are required to establish a

committee since the Municipal Act requires this to be done by bylaw. Don't see this on tonight's agenda. Would like Council to consider establishing an interim temporary working group -- composed of local residents, staff and ideally one member of Council -- to work on a reopening plan for the free store. This temporary group can be formed while Council considers establishing a committee that residents have been asking for.

- There is a RTC that seeks direction from Council on next steps on public input on tipping fees, which does reference a working group, so this is on tonight's agenda.
- There are a range of options Council can consider between forming a committee by Bylaw or just establishing a working group. A Committee is required if Council is delegating decision-making authorities, which can only be delegated through by-law. If a working group is providing advice or recommendations to Council, then no bylaw is required; this can be formed by a motion.

Old Business

RTC – Attendance at January 31, 2025 Chief/Mayor's Forum

CAO Presentation:

- The Chief/Mayors Forum was originally scheduled for January 31st but was deferred due to weather. It is now being held on February 19th in Whitehorse.
- In order for Council members to be remunerated for travel/expenses, the Council Remuneration Bylaw requires meeting attendance be passed by motion. This report seeks this motion.

#46-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT Mayor Diane Strand will be attending the February 19, 2025 Chief/Mayor's Forum in Whitehorse on behalf of the Village of Haines Junction.

Motion #46-25 was **CARRIED**.

Housing Needs Assessment Report

CAO Presentation:

- Last summer, a series of public engagements were held by Cityscapes Consulting on behalf of the Yukon Housing Corporation.
- This is the first of a new generation of housing needs assessments. The methodology has been updated and there is full transparency on the information collected and used to inform the assessment.
- The assessment takes a holistic look at housing supply issues within the community and potential remedies. Firsthand reports, gained from community engagement, were integral to informing the report and its recommendations.
- Council is encouraged to set time aside within the strategic planning process to discuss this report.

Discussion:

- The have noted the population of Haines Junction at 872, and also say the population of Haines Junction will be at 872 in 2031. One other stat said that were at a population of 1,000 if we take in the surrounding area. As we move into our strategic planning it will be helpful for Council to know the true statistics.
 - The report uses two different metrics for population. One is the population within the municipal boundary, the other is the service area for the community.
- The report says that we addressed short-term rentals (STRs) within our Zoning Bylaw; but this was taken out. Prior Council decided to address STRs in a specific STR bylaw and not within the Zoning Bylaw.
- Many of the recommendations of this report are being addressed by the work the Village is doing with funding from the Housing Accelerator Fund.

#47-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT the Housing Needs Assessment be received and filed and revisited during Council's upcoming strategic planning sessions.

Motion #47-25 was **CARRIED**.

New Business

Accounts Payable to February 22, 2025

Materials provided: Municipal Accounts Payable to February 22, 2025

Discussion:

- Has any progress been made in following up with ATCO on our billing?
 - Council passed a motion directing staff to draft a letter for Council's signature to seek clarification on the seemingly exorbitant billing on the arena. This is on our motion tracker and a draft letter will be coming to Council soon.
- The accounts payable notes the Haines Junction Volunteer Fire Department attendance was paid at the incorrect rate. Was this for last year?
 - Yes. The HJVFD filled out their honoraria using a prior year's rate. This wasn't identified until after the honoraria was paid.

#48-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT the Municipal Accounts Payable to February 22, 2025 be approved as presented.

Motion #48-25 was **CARRIED**.

Awarding of 2024 Donated Refundables Funds

CAO Presentation:

- There is a typo in the first paragraph – it should read Junction Arts and Music, Creative Junction and the Haines Junction Parents Association.
- Staff recommend to proceed with splitting the full sum of the donated refundables from last year between the three applications.

Discussion:

- This report doesn't address the recent requests from members of the community to divert the donated refundables funding to the free store.
 - Staff recommend that since these groups rely on this funding, it would be disruptive to their year-to-year operations to re-allocate this funding at this late date.
 - Given the dollar values involved, and the fact that there will be a deep dive on the free store later this evening, staff recommend that other funds be made available for the free store, at Council's direction.
- We extended the deadline to January 15th thinking this would result in more applications, but we ended up with fewer groups applying for funds. Is there a reason that fewer groups applied this year? Is there something more the Village can do to encourage more groups to apply?
 - Staff haven't had the chance to follow up with groups that applied last year and didn't apply this year. Don't imagine that extending the deadline resulted in any hardship. Staff can follow up with these groups and find out why they didn't apply this year.
 - It is possible that some of these groups applied for the Lotteries funds and didn't need to apply for more funding.
 - Groups have applied in the past, are aware that this opportunity is out there, this isn't brand new, so don't think we need to be doing more to get the word out.

#49-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT available funds of \$5275.35 be evenly distributed to the following three successful applicants: Junction Arts and Music, Creative Junction, Haines Junction Parent Association, thereby awarding each group \$1,758.45.

Motion #49-25 was **CARRIED**.

RTC – Fire Chief Staffing Options

CAO Presentation:

- Following direction from Council, staff dug a little deeper into options for filling the vacant Fire Chief position.
- It is challenging to find someone who is willing to volunteer to be the Fire Chief of our Volunteer Fire Department. The regulatory environment is much more stringent than it used to be, and alongside this the potential for liability if processes are not in place to

ensure regulatory compliance. The job has become increasingly demanding and administratively burdensome.

- Option 1: Status quo -- The Village assumes risks in operating a fire department without a Fire Chief. In this situation, there is limited or no capacity to document training and maintenance records to prove people are operating safely.
- Option 2: Split administrative and expert functions into two positions - Splitting duties of Fire Chief into separate positions can be considered. It can be hard to find both of these skillsets in one individual.
- Option 3: Hybrid, full-time position - Some smaller communities, including Watson Lake and Dawson, have transitioned to staffing a paid Fire Chief. As this is not a full-time job in a small community, these folks are also responsible for Bylaw Enforcement and Emergency Management. This model is common in other small municipalities across Canada.
- Option 4: Advocate for singular Yukon Fire Service with local community stations – This model would be similar to the Yukon Emergency Medical Services and would be a long-term goal that could be advocated for through the Association of Yukon Communities (AYC).
- Presently our volunteer fire fighters voluntarily donate their honoraria into a fund that has been set up in case there is a loss of life -- these funds would be given to the families. These funds are not being donated for gear, the department has capital dollars in the budget that has not been spent because there hasn't been anyone in a leadership role to spend the money.

Discussion:

- Would Options 2 and 3 increase the municipality's insurance, but decrease the insurance rates for homeowners in the community?
 - Regardless of which of these two options are chosen, if the Fire Chief position is staffed the cost of insurance will go down for all structures including the Village's insurance rates.
- We will need to have more discussion on the advocacy piece through AYC. The Yukon is likely not the only jurisdiction facing these challenges. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities may have more capacity to assist with advocacy work and to take on this role nationally. A Yukon Fire Service could be quite expensive, where does the actual fiduciary responsibility lie? At the end of the day should Yukon government be providing funds to help offset these costs?
 - Staff can explore options for funding.
- The recommendation in the report is for Council to consider this in their strategic planning exercise; given this is a priority, what else can be done in the interim to prepare for these discussions? Shall we schedule a CoW?
 - Because this is a personnel discussion, an in-camera discussion is needed. This was also requested by the former Fire Chief.
 - More research needs to be done on the funding aspects. The RTC notes salary costs, but there are other costs associated with this as well.
 - We were told that initially there will be a lot of administrative work to catch up but this will lessen once this work has been completed.

#50-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT staff to set up in-camera session with Martin and Bruce to further discuss options for staffing the Fire Chief position.

Motion #50-25 was **CARRIED**.

#51-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT the Fire Chief staffing options report be received and filed pending additional discussion during Council's upcoming strategic planning session.

Motion #51-25 was **CARRIED**.

#52-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT staff explore what options may be available for funding to support the Volunteer Fire Department.

Motion #52-25 was **CARRIED**.

RTC – Next steps on public input on tipping fees

CAO Presentation:

- Council reviewed feedback from the public engagement session on tipping fees at their Committee of the Whole meeting on January 29, 2025.
- This report summarizes potential next steps to move forward on recommendations that were received from the public.

Discussion:

- What needs to be done to establish a working group? Would like to ensure there are clear terms of reference and a timeline for the tenure of the working group that would further explore all of these next steps.
 - A draft term of reference for a community advisory group are included in the in-camera portion of the agenda. It is in the in-camera because it includes honoraria and other staffing considerations.

#53-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT staff will:

- Work with YG to research the purchase of a composting unit
- Work with AYC to seek support from YG with ELVs
- Continue to work with local contractors on options to address grubbing/ stripping

- Share data on tipping fees and volume of materials entering the facility six months following the enactment of tipping fees on March 5, 2025 to support decision-making on potential adjustments to the fee schedule.
- Bring forward an amended Consolidated Municipal Fees Bylaw to reduce the by-volume residential waste from \$60/m³ to \$20/m³.

Motion #53-25 was **CARRIED**.

Letter of Support – Kluane Mountain Bluegrass Festival (KMBF)

Discussion:

- The letter, as drafted, does not address the concerns that were brought up by the community at our earlier meeting regarding fires, parking, dogs, and noise after 11pm.
 - This request for a letter of support is to support organizers in seeking funding for the 2026 festival. We provide this letter every year.
 - The concerns mentioned have been addressed within the permit for the 2025 festival.

#54-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT the letter of support for the 2026 Kluane Mountain Bluegrass Festival be accepted as presented.

Motion #54-25 was **CARRIED**.

RTC – Heating Fuel

CAO Presentation:

- Heating fuel is on of several annual tenders issued in 2025 for which we received no bids. Our typical next step is to move to a direct award or sole source process.
- Source Motors has provided reliable heating fuel services to the Village in the past at a discounted rate. Circumstances prevented them from getting a bid in on time this year.
- Administration would like to proceed with establishing a sole source contract with Source Motors. Staff are still negotiating the details.
- Staff would like to provide an update by email within a few days regarding the final price that is negotiated and seek approval via email.

Discussion:

- The heating fuel tender is separate from the vehicle/equipment fuel tender. We did receive bids under the vehicle/equipment fuel tender.

#55-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT the heating fuel contract be sole sourced to Source Motors pending Council's approval of an email from staff with the final details.

Motion #55-25 was **CARRIED**.

Letter of Support – Boys and Girls Club (late addition)

Discussion:

- The Boys and Girls Club is seeking a letter of support for a collaborative, pan-territorial application to the Arctic Inspiration Prize for \$500,000.
 - Mayor Strand declared a conflict of interest as she sits on the Selection Committee and removed herself from any decision-making on this request. Mayor Strand left the meeting while this request was being discussed.
- This project aims to develop a Northern Territories Youth and Community Strategy. The project spans all three territories and has to do with strengthening choices and outcomes for youth. The project is modelled on the BGC Yukon's Territorial Youth Strategy.
- We provided funding to the Boys and Girls Club over the past few years. Did we receive reports on what they accomplished with this funding?
 - They presented to prior Council after last summer season.
 - The camp was run well, they did share a report with data on the summer camps.

#56-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT staff prepare a letter of support for the Northern Territories Youth and Community Strategy for their application to the Arctic Inspiration Prize for Council's review and signature.

Motion #56-25 was **CARRIED**.

Bylaws – Reports, Readings and Adoption

RTC – Repeal Bylaw #174-03-A Landfill User Fees Bylaw and Schedule 9 of Bylaw #343-19

CAO Presentation:

- This bylaw is obsolete with the passage of the Waste Management Cost Recovery and Sorting Requirements Bylaw #415-24

#57-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT Due to the adoption of Bylaw #415-24, the Waste Management Cost Recovery and Sorting Requirements Bylaw on September 24, 2024 which establishes a new tipping fee structure, the following are repealed:

- Bylaw #174-03-A Landfill User Fees Bylaw
- Schedule 9 of Bylaw #343-19.

Motion #57-25 was **CARRIED**.

RTC and Draft Bylaw #421-25 2025 Municipal By-Election (Councillor)

CAO Presentation:

- The purpose of this bylaw is to establish the by-election for the Councillor position recently vacated by Councillor Strand due to her election as Mayor Strand.
- Council requested that this election be expedited. The Municipal Act typically stipulates 30 days to pass between providing notice of an election and the date of nomination; the Municipal Act does allow for that date to be reduced by a Council motion.

#58-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT the notice of nomination to fill the Council vacancy begin earlier than 30 days after the Council position was vacated on February 3rd 2025, as required in the Municipal Act.

Motion #58-25 was **CARRIED**.

59-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT Bylaw #421-25 to regulate the 2025 Municipal By-Election (Councillor) be deemed read for the first time.

Motion #59-25 was **CARRIED**.

#60-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT Bylaw #421-25 to regulate the 2025 Municipal By-Election (Councillor) be deemed read for the second time.

Motion #60-25 was **CARRIED**.

Correspondence

Letter from Chief Joe - CAFN

Discussion:

- This letter from Chief Barb Joe congratulated Diane on being elected as Mayor of the Village of Haines Junction.

#61-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT the letter from Chief Barb Joe be received and filed.

Motion #61-25 was **CARRIED**.

Council Reports and Notice of Motions

Councillor McPhie

- There was a great turnout for U13 Minor Hockey on January 24th, 25th and 26th. Hotels and restaurants were full. It was great to see that many teams in town again. Councillors Mackinnon and Busche also attended.
- Lift Your Spirits was hosted by Champagne Aishihik on January 28th. This is a day for CAFN elders and citizens to access free haircuts, manicures, pedicures from local service providers and who otherwise can't access these services.
- Attended General Assembly in Takhini. There were lots of questions on tipping fees and the pool.
- CAFN organized Brian Trottier, from the NHL Hall of Famer and seven-time Stanley Cup Winner, to be in town on the 13th. There will be a free dinner and an opportunity to try on his Stanley Cup rings.

Councillor Busche

- Attended hockey tournament. Assisted Lions Club with putting on a spaghetti dinner for around 200 people. It was great weekend.

Councillor Mackinnon

- Attended community market on Sunday.

Deputy Mayor Strand

- Along with Councillors, attended a very fruitful meeting with MLA Istchenko.
- Received a phone call from MP Brendan Hanley. With parliament being prorogued, he is wanting to come and have a discussion with Council.
- Had a meeting with Dave Joe, Dave Fairbank and Chief Joe.
- Extended congratulations to minor hockey for their tournament.

Questions from the Public

Question: Have new taxes on vacant lots been put through yet?

- No, more discussion is needed. Nothing will happen this year.

Question: There is different information on the Village website than there is in the package regarding the Municipal By-Election. In one place it is #421-25 and in another place it is #421-24. The deadline for nomination day is listed as both Wednesday February 26th and the 19th. Does this affect the validity of the bylaw that was just passed?

- There is a typo, the Bylaw should be numbered #421-25.
- As far as the dates there was a change made after the information was first posted. It has been updated on the website and on Facebook pages and in the bylaw documents. The only place it hasn't been changed was in the emailed version of the council package that was sent out before the change was made. This change was just made in the past 2-3 days.
- The bylaw that is in the package that Council had reflects the change.

Comment: A working group would be very useful for something like re-opening the free store where it is quickly established and has a very clear objective. There is a worry about this being used in the long term because the Municipal Act are pretty clear on all that defines a committee and the responsibilities of each party. Recommend a term of one year and with clear objectives that can define the collaboration between Council and the members. Appreciate Council has the last say on the Committee's priorities but would be helpful if the Committee could bring forward priorities for Council to choose from. There is a clear desire from the population to reopen the free store as soon as possible and to ensure staff make sure that they feel involved and are not having their jobs taken over, which is why the working group should include staff, council and citizens together.

Comment: Several years ago, when there were several Committees, some Committees did stagnate. At that time many Committees were open-ended. At the time Council discussed having sunset clauses for Committees so as to not burden another Council. This means that the longest period of time for a committee would be the tenure of the Council that established the Committee.

Question: At the last Committee of the Whole meeting to do with the landfill, it was mentioned that a meeting with YG was scheduled for February 7th to discuss the composting unit. Did this meeting occur?

- The meeting did occur, and there was no clear resolution on the question as to whether YG would assume full responsibility for the cost of the composting unit. This is an ongoing discussion.

Motion to Close Meeting to the Public

#62-25 It was moved and seconded
THAT the meeting be closed to the public at 8:45 pm.

Motion #62-25 was **CARRIED**.

Motion to Reopen Meeting to the Public

#63-25 It was moved and seconded
THAT the meeting be reopened to the public at 10:15 pm.

Motion #63-25 was **CARRIED**.

#64-25 It was moved and seconded
THAT the meeting be extended past 9:00 pm.

Motion #64-25 was **CARRIED**.

#65-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT staff proceed with establishing a Free Store and Landfill Community Concerns Implementation Advisory Group. Jerry will be appointed as an ex-officio member and Dave and Debby will be members of the working group.

Motion #65-25 was **CARRIED**.

#66-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT a Committee of the Whole be scheduled on March 5th from 1:30 to 3:30 to discuss HR concerns for the landfill and fire department, and as such will be an in-camera meeting.

Motion #66-25 was **CARRIED**.

67-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT the December 2024 RCMP Chief and Mayors Report be received and filed.

Motion #67-25 was **CARRIED**.

Adjournment

#68-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT the meeting be adjourned.

Motion #68-25 was **CARRIED**

Meeting adjourned at 10:19 pm.



Mayor Diane Strand



CAO David Fairbank

