

**Village of Haines Junction
Regular Council Meeting Minutes
April 8, 2026**

Present:	Absent:
Mayor Strand	None
Councillor Busche (via Zoom)	
Councillor Mackinnon	
Councillor Moore	
Councillor Sundbo (via Zoom)	

CAO Fairbank, Recorder L. Sylvain, Sylvain Human Resource Services (not present)

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:58 p.m.

2. Acknowledgement of Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Traditional Territory

Mayor Strand acknowledged that we are on the traditional territory of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations.

3. Adoption of Agenda

#101-26 It was moved and seconded
THAT the agenda be adopted.

Motion #101-26 was **CARRIED**.

4. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

5. Adoption of Minutes of Regular and Special Council Meetings

a. March 25, 2026 Regular Council Meeting Minutes

Discussion:

- No discussion.

#102-26 It was moved and seconded
THAT the minutes of the Regular Council meeting of March 25, 2026 be adopted.

Motion #102-26 was **CARRIED**.

6. Proclamations

There were no proclamations.

7. Delegations

There were no delegations.

8. Public Hearings and Public Input Sessions

None.

9. Old Business

a. Solid Waste Advisory Group – RFQ Engagement and Data Collection Support

CAO Presentation:

- This is a Request for Quotation (RFQ) rather than a full proposal to simplify the process. The purpose of RFQ is to avoid requiring potential contractors to submit lengthy proposals (e.g., 10 pages), which can increase costs.
- The scope of work is clearly defined, and contractors are asked to provide a firm, fixed price for the work. Maximum allowable quotation is set at \$3,000.
- Bid adjustment: points awarded on a scale comparing the lowest bid to other submissions. Selection criteria: contractors may submit a response of up to 300 words explaining why they are well-suited for the task. Aim is to minimize workload for potential proponents. The deadline for submissions is April 16, 2026.

Discussion:

- Council clarified that the \$3,000 maximum budget applies only to the contractor, not including additional event expenses such as snacks, door prizes, or other engagement incentives.
- CAO noted uncertainty about whether food/snacks were intended to be included or if the overall \$5,000 budget. This was discussed at the March 25, 2026 Council Meeting, but no decision was reached.
- Council noted that the Village will cover catering, room rental, and online questionnaire expenses directly.
- Council discussed ideas for attracting participants, e.g., providing incentives or interactive elements like a recycling bin; funds for this could be considered separately if the Working Group wants.

#103-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT Council accept the Request for Quote, as presented, with regards to the Solid Waste Advisory Group, with a maximum budget of \$3,000, excluding GST.

Motion #103-26 was **CARRIED**.

b. RTC – Potential Village Office Renovation (Verbal Update)

CAO Presentation:

- The November 2025 report is updated, largely identical to the previous version, but now includes discussion notes from the last meeting.

- The previous direction was to move away from hiring an architect and instead consider a local contractor or designer for the office renovation schematic design. The CAO expressed concerns about using a local contractor, noting potential problems with continuity in design, construction management, and commissioning.
- Hiring an architectural firm, estimated between \$4,000 and \$7,000, would allow a junior draftsman to produce multiple conceptual layouts for walls, flooring, and ceiling.
- Architects can directly engage mechanical and electrical engineers, ensuring continuity and accountability from design through construction to delivery. They also provide accurate cost estimates early in the design phase, giving Council a clear picture of whether the project is feasible.
- Using a local designer may leave additional work—tendering, construction management, commissioning—falling on staff and may result in less precise costing.
- Overall, the CAO suggested that an architectural firm offers better resource efficiency, accountability, and cost certainty compared to relying solely on a local designer.

Discussion:

- Council noted that while architects provide multiple design options, it will be important for Council to review the proposals carefully to determine the most suitable solution.
- If we don't go through an architect, would we get a less accurate estimate of the total cost compared to using a contractor for the design?
 - They are different approaches. If you direct award to a contractor and pay them to do the design work, you could get a very accurate cost in a design-build arrangement. However, if the goal is to focus on design, explore different options, and get a good overall cost estimate while having flexibility with the design, using an architect is the better approach.
- Are we talking about building individual private offices, or are we considering movable panels to create office space, similar to what Parks uses?
 - It would likely involve some closed offices due to privacy needs for certain staff. However, we are open to innovative ideas. Someone familiar with current commercial construction trends and products could provide a range of options for Council to consider.
- Council noted that based on prior office experiences, removable panel-type configurations could be beneficial, allowing flexibility for meetings, phone calls, and private conversations, while acknowledging that a few staff may still require fully private offices.
- Council suggested that if existing walls are being removed, an engineer might be more appropriate than an architect to assess structural considerations.
 - CAO clarified that there are no load-bearing walls, as the office is steel stud and T-bar construction, allowing for a blank slate. Engineers would primarily be involved with electrical systems and HVAC to ensure proper air balance across spaces.
- How many office spaces are being considered for the renovation?
 - Currently there are four offices. There is room to add more, and planning should account for future needs. The exact number will depend on the final drawings,

but at least two additional offices should be accommodated. Using movable panels could increase flexibility and allow for even more 'future-proofing'.

- There isn't a specific number of offices determined yet?
 - Correct. We would need to plan for at least two more, but the final number depends on the design approach and whether movable panels are used to maximize flexibility.
- Council commented that it is important for administration to have a clear understanding of staff's needs to help guide the design process and prevent unrealistic or unfocused design ideas.
- Council noted that past office redesign experiences can sometimes result in overly ambitious or impractical design expectations and emphasized the importance of keeping the scope realistic.
- Council raised the need to consider potential community perception of office renovations and ensure the project is clearly communicated to avoid misunderstanding or criticism. Council commented that while awareness of public perception is important, the current work represents an initial and necessary step in addressing office space needs.

#104-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT Council direct Administration to engage an architect to complete a preliminary review and conceptual redesign of the municipal office space, including options to increase the number of offices and workspaces and report back to Council with the conceptual design options and Class D cost estimate(s) for Council's consideration with a maximum of \$7,000.

Motion #104-26 was **CARRIED**.

c. (i) RTC - Area 3 Willow Acres Country Residential Expansion

(ii) Draft Concept Plan

(iii) Country Residential expansion Timeline

Project and Asset Manager's Presentation:

- Reported on the Area 3 Willow Acres Country Residential Expansion update, including background, current status, and attachments outlining the concept plan and project timeline.
- Explained that pre-planning work directed in 2021 under the OCP has been completed, while master planning began in late 2023 but has been largely paused since the last Council update in September 2024.
- Indicated that Village staff reviewed an early 2026 draft master plan and provided detailed technical feedback to the Land Development Branch on trails, lot design, development feasibility, and wet/unsuitable areas.
- Emphasized the need for additional field investigation due to concerns that prior assessments were based on unusually dry site conditions.

- Recommended developing a comprehensive information package for future buyers, incorporating lessons learned from other country residential developments, particularly regarding permafrost, water, and septic constraints.
- Stated that a new project charter is required to replace the outdated 2021 version, with clear definitions of roles, responsibilities, communication, dispute resolution, and deliverables.
- Highlighted anticipated community interest and scrutiny given strong demand for country residential development.
- Confirmed that Stantec has proposed restarting master planning work with a preliminary schedule beginning late April.
- Relayed feedback suggesting community engagement be scheduled earlier, ideally near the end of the school year to improve participation.

Discussion:

- How many community engagement pieces are they proposing?
 - One additional community engagement day is proposed. This includes a prior open house in February 2024 for early feedback, plus a proposed internal staff meeting to review expectations and comments, and two in-person visits to Haines Junction by Stantec—one for a site visit and concept plan revisions, and a second for meetings with Council, CAFN, community groups, and a public open house.
- Would putting it a month ahead make a difference in the site visit?
 - The proposed site visit is planned for mid-May and timing is considered important to capture peak thaw conditions when the ground is at its wettest. Advancing or delaying the visit could reduce its value, as earlier timing may still involve heavy snowpack, while later timing may miss peak wet conditions needed to properly assess streams and site conditions.
- Do you anticipate they may say anything about bumping up the community engagement time?
 - Staff noted they can propose adjustments, but timing is constrained by the project restart target of the end of April, leaving limited opportunity to advance work. A public comment was referenced expressing concern that summer timing may reduce participation due to residents being away for seasonal activities such as camping. Staff suggested exploring whether engagement could align with other summer events (e.g., Canada Day or July community activities), while also considering whether to proceed with the original schedule. If the mid-May to mid-July engagement window is maintained, staff will ensure enhanced promotion through standard channels and additional outreach such as posters and expanded advertising.
- Council expressed caution about directing changes that could later be attributed back to Council decisions. Concern was raised about being overly prescriptive in engagement requirements given broader project risks and implications.
 - Staff noted that engagement could potentially be paired with other summer community events but also raised the option of maintaining the current

schedule. They emphasized the importance of ensuring strong communication and outreach if the original timeline proceeds.

- Council referenced past engagement experiences (e.g., landfill consultations held in mid-summer) as examples of well-attended events and suggested that sufficient public interest may support summer engagement. Council also questioned whether seasonal travel significantly limits attendance in Haines Junction.
- Staff noted that outreach would be strengthened through multiple communication channels if proceeding with the proposed mid-May to mid-July window.
- Council added that site conditions can vary significantly year to year and cautioned against placing too much emphasis on timing assumptions alone, citing past fieldwork experiences where conditions changed rapidly within weeks.
- Is there an allowance for a new fire break?
 - No. This was identified in staff comments and noted that, as part of the planning work, it will be necessary to assess whether a new firebreak is required, including cross-referencing with the Community Wildfire Protection Plan. The fire break will need to be negotiated with other branches of Yukon Government (YG).
- The Project and Asset Manager advised that if Council wishes to proceed with the planning work, the next steps include: renewing the project charter and authorizing the Land Development Branch to re-engage with Stantec to continue the master planning process. Near-term work would involve updating the project charter, completing the master plan over the summer into fall, and proceeding with submission and assessment in the fall and winter.
- Council expressed concerns regarding recent experiences with the Community Development Branch and related work. Council requested an opportunity to more thoroughly review the draft master plan and the comments provided by staff, and indicated a desire for an additional review of the draft master plan.
 - The Project and Asset Manager advised that an updated draft will be provided for Council review. The version previously reviewed by staff was an early and incomplete draft with missing sections. As part of Stantec's scope, the concept plan will first be updated, followed by a master plan update and preparation of a complete draft for Council consideration. Staff noted that detailed in-text comments were provided on the initial draft, along with a compiled comment summary tracker that has been shared with YG.
- Council emphasized the importance of being involved early in the planning process to help avoid issues experienced in past projects. Council indicated a desire for more proactive and earlier engagement in future development planning processes.
- Will Council be engaged during the task of drafting the plan and have opportunities to review the concept plan and subsequent versions?
 - Staff confirmed that Council will have two opportunities to review the master plan, including a draft and a final version. Staff noted that the current version is still in a very early stage, and that key elements, such as trails and trail connections, have not yet been fully addressed from previous engagement.

- For Task 3 (Engagement with Council, CAFN, and community), is the intent to gather input and feedback from the community, or to present information on decisions already made?
 - The engagement is meant to be interactive and feedback-oriented. Stantec is proposing a public open house to present the updated concept plan, allowing the community to review the draft, understand the process, and discuss the project. The session is envisioned as a 3-hour drop-in, alongside targeted meetings with interested and impacted groups, such as the Ski Club and Willow Acres residents. Additional online engagement options may also be provided. This is intended to gather input and involve the community, rather than simply inform them.

#105-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT staff continue working with Yukon Government’s Land Development Branch to restart the master plan process and project charter for Area 3 in the Willow Acres subdivision.

Motion #105-26 was **CARRIED**.

d. Road Maintenance Update (verbal)

CAO Presentation:

- The community is entering its annual breakup conditions. Public Works has engaged contractors in addition to mobilizing internal crews.
- There are differences in road maintenance between gravel roads and Bituminous Surface Treatment (BST) roads, where aggressive scraping can damage the road surface. Crews are working to remove ice where feasible and reduce impacts such as rutting and uneven surfaces. Efforts are focused on maintaining safe and passable road conditions during thaw.
- All appropriate resources are being allocated, with no constraints on necessary response efforts. Acknowledged that breakup conditions are inherently unpredictable and challenging each year.

Discussion:

- Council noted that Mayor Strand could update the community in her regular Facebook video update to explain processes.

10. New Business

a. Accounts Payable to April 8th, 2026

Discussion:

- None.

b. Trans Canada Trail Grant Approval (Verbal Update)

Project and Asset Manager's Presentation:

- The Village received a \$2,500 Trans Canada Trail grant for a Trail Day event. The funding is slightly higher than originally anticipated.
- The event will focus on a small-scale community trail maintenance activity in June (aligned with Trail Day on June 1). Similar smaller trail care initiatives have been done in previous years.
- It is proposed that an RFP be issued for a community group to organize and host the event. A stipend/honorarium would be provided to the selected group. Staff will develop a basic scope of work (e.g., signage painting/maintenance, trail cleanup, garbage pickup). Event logistics (e.g., barbecue or activities) would be led by the hosting community group. This approach reflects limited staff capacity to coordinate the event internally.

Discussion:

- Are you thinking of something like the highway cleanup events?
 - Yes. The funds can be split between trail materials (like paint, patching, or equipment), event costs such as a barbecue, and potentially a small payment (e.g., \$500) to the hosting group, with Council deciding how to allocate the funds.
 - **Action:** CAO noted that a Report to Council will be drafted with more details before the RFP goes out.

#106-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT the Trans Canada Trail Grant Approval Letter be received and filed.

Motion #106-26 was **CARRIED**.

c. RTC – Council Guide to Direct Awards Contracts and Procurement Policy Revisions

CAO Presentation:

- Report is presented for information, with a draft resolution included for Council consideration. A direct awards guidance document was developed in response to Council's request and appended to the report; additional procurement research identified potential updates needed to the 1994 Competitive Bidding Policy.
- The intent is to provide context and support future Council discussion on procurement modernization.
- The key resolution is to adopt the "decision lens" for direct awards as a reference for future decisions. The policy outlines four rationales for direct awards: existing agreements, emergencies, sole-source suppliers, and prior due diligence by another government level. The document includes guiding questions for Council prior to proceeding with a direct award.
- A quick reference sheet summarizes procurement thresholds and clarifies Council and administration roles and responsibilities.

Discussion:

- The “prior due diligence” lens for direct awards is not something previously encountered and does not commonly appear in decision-making frameworks. It was noted that accepting another organization’s due diligence as sufficient is not typically seen in standard procurement models. Can you elaborate?
 - While not universal, this approach is used in the Yukon, particularly where another government (e.g., Yukon Government) has already completed a procurement process and holds the contract. In such cases, additional work may be added through a provisional or extension clause, meaning the Village is not directly awarding a new contract but rather piggybacking on an existing one where due diligence and tendering have already been completed. This approach can be used for efficiency, such as when a contractor is already mobilized for work and additional scope is added under the existing government contract.
- Was there previously a discussion about including a justification for sole-source contracts?
 - Yes, the current procurement bylaw includes sole-source provisions where only one supplier can reasonably provide the goods or services. An example would be crushed gravel, where typically only one supplier is available in the Yukon region, making a sole-source procurement appropriate under that rationale.
- Council suggested that sole-source justification could be a brief standalone, one-page document outlining scenarios such as gravel supply or situations where multiple suppliers exist but one is selected due to factors like quality or suitability.
 - CAO clarified that any direct award or sole-source request is required to come forward to Council through a report with clear rationale under the procurement bylaw. The “decision lens” document is intended to accompany those reports as an evaluation tool for Council to assess whether the justification meets established criteria. It is not a separate approval pathway, but rather a framework to ensure consistency, transparency, and accountability in how procurement decisions are reviewed and supported.

#107-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT Council receive the Direct Award Decision Lens for information and direct staff to initiate a comprehensive review of the Competitive Bidding Process Policy (05-94) within the calendar year.

Motion #107-26 was **CARRIED**.

#108-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT Council continue its meeting past 9:00 p.m.

Motion #108-26 was **CARRIED**.

11. Bylaws – Reports, Readings and Adoption

a. Bylaw #343-19 Consolidated Fees Bylaw (Animal Control Fees) – Amendment #9

Discussion:

- No discussion.

#109-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT bylaw 441-26, Consolidated Municipal Fees Bylaw #343-19 Amendment #9, be read for the first and second time on the 8th day of April, 2026.

Motion #109-26 was **CARRIED**.

12. Correspondence

a. Human Values Day (VoHJ Incoming Correspondence Policy, attached)

Discussion:

- No discussion.

#110-26 It was moved seconded

THAT the Human Values Day Request be received and filed.

Motion #110-26 was **CARRIED**.

b. Freedom of Colours Club

CAO Presentation:

- This week Council received a delegation request from this group.

Discussion:

- Council noted that this falls within CCARE funding, which this group received.
- Council mentioned that it does not meet with individual groups to discuss funding. However, it is open to meeting with this delegation to hear from them.

#111-26 It was moved seconded

THAT staff provide a Report to Council reviewing the intention behind CCARE and individual funding requests.

Motion #111-26 was **CARRIED**.

#112-26 It was moved seconded

THAT the Freedom of Colours Club letter be deferred to the April 22nd, 2026 Council Meeting.

Motion #112-26 was **CARRIED**.

13. Council Reports and Notice of Motions

Councillor Busche

- No report was provided.

Councillor Mackinnon

- Met with the CCARE Committee and the awards will be made public soon.
- The next Council meeting on April 22nd, 2026 will be her last in-person meeting. She will likely attend the May 13th, 2026 meeting via Zoom, then won't be attending meetings until July or August, 2026.

Councillor Moore

- Sitting in for Councillor Sundbo on April 9th, 2026 at the first Shakwak Meeting. Also, one member has had to remove themselves from the Committee.

Councillor Sundbo

- Will be travelling on April 14, 2026, and will be returning to Haines Junction shortly thereafter.

Mayor Strand

- On March 31st, 2026, she was interviewed by Leonard Linklater on the CBC Radio Mid-day Café show and was also video interviewed in Haines Junction. Leonard and she discussed the difference between being Mayor and Chief.

14. Questions from the Public

There were no questions from the public.

15. Motion to Close Meeting to the Public

a. Haines Junction RCMP Report – March 2026

b. HR discussion

#113-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT the meeting be closed to the public at 9:16 p.m.

Motion #113-26 was **CARRIED**.

16. Motion to Reopen Meeting to the Public

#114-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT the meeting be reopened to the public at 9:36 p.m.

Motion #114-26 was **CARRIED**.

#115-26 It was moved seconded

THAT the Haines Junction RCMP Report be received and filed.

Motion #115-26 was **CARRIED**.

17. Adjournment

#116-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT the meeting be adjourned.

Motion #116-26 was **CARRIED**

Meeting adjourned at 9:37 p.m.



Mayor Diane Strand



CAO David Fairbank