

**Village of Haines Junction
Regular Council Meeting Minutes
July 9, 2025**

Present:

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

Absent:

CAO Fairbank, Recorder Ogden

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm

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

Adoption of Agenda

#232-25 It was moved and seconded

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

- 15d. Add Joint Council Meeting Agenda Items

Motion #232-25 was **CARRIED**.

Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

- Councillor Sundbo indicated that he is on the accounts payable for this week.

Adoption of Minutes of Regular and Special Council Meetings

Council Meeting Minutes June 25, 2025

Discussion:

- Page 6 third bullet from the top should read "Council also expressed that the agreement for sale should accurately identify whose responsibility it is to ensure surveys are completed e.g. either the seller or the purchaser."
- Page 6 second last bullet should read "Support was expressed to take responsibility for the survey of all the lots, including the unsold lot prior to I being offered for sale."

#233-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT the minutes of the Regular Council meeting of June 25, 2025 be adopted as amended

Motion #233-25 was **CARRIED**.

Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes June 25, 2025

Discussion:

- Add Councillor Sundbo attended via Zoom

#234-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT the minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting of June 25, 2025 be adopted as amended

Motion #234-25 was **CARRIED**.

Proclamations

Delegations

Public Hearings and Public Input Sessions

Old Business

RTC – Free Store and Landfill Community Concerns Advisory Group Next Steps

CAO Presentation:

- In January, a public engagement was held that identified community concerns about the landfill and the free store.
- This public engagement led to the creation of the Free Store and Landfill Community Concerns Advisory Group with a 3-month terms of reference to address re-opening of the Free Store. The group was also asked to recommend five priority issues that require additional committee work.
- A new advisory group is proposed. A one-year term from July 2025 to June 2026 is suggested, with final recommendations to be submitted to Council by August 2026.
- Honoraria for monthly meetings for 6 members will cost \$7,000.
- Draft terms of reference were presented. Returning members from the previous committee may continue if interested.

Discussion:

- Would like to see this advisory group discuss the maintenance and replacement plans for the compactor, under #5 – Broader waste management issues – in the advisory group's proposed scope of work.
- Are previous committee members available / interested in continuing?
 - Staff will let Council know if we don't have minimum 5 members interested in going forward and need to canvass for additional members.

- Thanks were extended to the previous committee members for all the work they put into re-opening the free store. Staff asked to extend thanks to advisory group members via a letter to each member, the Echo etc.

#235-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT Council approve the establishment of the Solid Waste Management Advisory Group per the Terms of Reference in the Council Agenda Package, including a review of the compactor, and that staff proceed with confirming membership and scheduling the first meeting in July 2025 and sending a letter of thanks to all members.

Motion #235-25 was **CARRIED**.

RTC – Fire Chief Staffing

Policy/Communications Manager Presentation:

- The intention of this RTC is to close the loop on all the conversations that have taken place to date on the staffing of the Fire Chief position.
- Council put this decision on hold pending doing a deeper dive into the budget and gaining a better understanding of the Village's financial position, which included a review of the Financial Sustainability Report commissioned by Council. Council also expressed a desire to receive more detailed briefings on large capital items before finalizing any refinements to the 2025 budget. So, there is still work to do budget-wise.
- In the meantime, staff wanted to flag that we are getting to the edge of our ability to support the HJFVD members from both a technical and a leadership perspective. While we've been able to assist with improving record keeping and addressing priority policy issues, we are worried that we could slide back into being in non-compliance with WCB requirements.
- Leadership is needed to mobilize members to implement the training and medical assessment program. We also feel it would be better for an incoming Fire Chief to finalize the revised Fire Department Bylaw and Standard Operating Procedures, so they can put their stamp on how they want to lead the crew.
- Even though the budget is not finalized in terms of identifying what Council wants to do this year with some of the large capital items, given the healthy financial position the Village is in, and also considering the need for this position to make progress not only on the Fire Department but also with bylaw enforcement and emergency management from a risk management perspective, staff recommend proceeding with recruiting a Manager of Protective Services.

Discussion:

- Concerns were expressed that there are too many functions associated with this position for it to be successful. Could work on the emergency management plan be contracted

out? Will it be hard to recruit someone with background in all these areas? Would it be possible to just recruit a Fire Chief, and add the other functions in later?

- If we recruited just a Fire Chief it would be a part-time job, which would be more difficult to recruit.
- For municipalities that are the size of the Village of Haines Junction, it is common for these three functions to be combined into one role. Watson Lake, Dawson City, Fort Simpson and Inuvik, amongst other small communities, all staff Managers of Protective Services.
- As municipalities grow, these functions expand into a larger team. For example, Watson Lake (pop. 1200) has a bylaw officer that reports to their Manager of Protective Services.
- Currently these functions all fall to the CAO.
- An important tool for this position will be to have a risk matrix and for the incumbent to focus on addressing the areas of greatest risk as a way of prioritizing their workload.
- There is a salary range for Manager Level positions, if the incumbent is an underfill in some aspect of the position then the salary will reflect that.
- The non-union staff bylaw will need to be amended to include this position.

#236-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT Council direct staff to begin the process of recruiting a Manager of Protective Services

Motion #236-25 was **CARRIED**.

RTC – Grass Cutting

Policy/Communications Manager Presentation:

- Staff have begun work on the Level of Service Framework and are mapping out the big picture perspective how defining a level of service relates to asset management and budgeting. This work will help this kind of conversation greatly. This can be brought to the next Council meeting to give a Council a sense of what this looks like.
- At the last Council meeting concerns were expressed about the amount of grass cutting that staff have been able to get done so far this season.
- There are two factors that affect the level of service we've been able to provide so far this season.
 - Relative priority – some responsibilities that Public Works have during summer months are must-dos, like flushing the sewer system and dealing with the well pump failure (which required considerable staff time).
 - Capacity – staff resources are less than what they were five years ago. Available resources are allocated to high priority tasks first, unfortunately this can affect service levels for lower priority tasks like grass cutting.

- Right now Public Works staff are ensuring grass is cut before big events, are making sure the highway corridor is cut per advice from the COs to address the bear issues, and ensuring the grass is cut around the convention centre as needed.
- If we expand the level of service beyond what we currently do, staff recommend setting service standards by zone e.g. residential zones, commercial zones etc.
- It is unclear whether a contractor in town would be available and have the equipment needed to do additional work. Bringing on additional staff capacity may not make sense given the time remaining in our short grass cutting season.
- Staff recommend sticking with the status quo for the remainder of this year. Now that the pump issues have been resolved, there is probably more capacity to cut grass at the level that we are used to seeing around town.

Discussion:

- Desire expressed to ensure we address prior to 2026 grass cutting season.
 - Ensure the level of service policy that defines where and when to cut is ready prior to the start of the season.
 - Increase seasonal staff capacity for grass cutting by hiring summer students
- What machinery needs repair or replacement?
 - We have a newer mower with only 100 hours on it that isn't fit for purpose that could be surplus.
 - The old mower, if put to a lot more use, will need hydraulics replaced. This is expensive and likely it would make more sense to just buy a new mower.
- Regarding mowing of the highway corridor, if YG wants more mowing done, are they covering the costs of additional staff time and new equipment?
 - YG covers most of the labour costs to mow the highway corridor once per year. This takes 3 staff about a week to complete. They are recommending we do this twice a year to discourage foraging by bears. We have reached out to request an increase in funding to support this work.
 - Add this topic to the election readiness discussion –if YG wants this done, they should cover the costs of two mowings as well as the needs for upgraded equipment.
 - Mowing of the highway corridor began in 2018 or 2019. Since this time the Village paved the Pine Lake trail, encouraging its use and perhaps creating some responsibility to ensure the trail is as safe as possible.
- Council expressed support for setting service level standards by zone, recognizing this is a conversation best deferred until discussions around the broader service level framework are initiated.

#237-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT Staff maintain status quo for the remainder of this grass cutting season and to consider establishing service levels by zone for the 2026 grass cutting season.

Motion #237-25 was **CARRIED**.

New Business

Accounts Payable to July 9, 2025

#238-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT the Municipal Accounts Payable to July 9, 2025 be received and filed.

Motion #238-25 was **CARRIED**.

RTC – SWMF Hydrocarbon Spill Update

CAO Presentation:

- This is an update to the previous report to Council made in April, 2025
- 150L of used oil contaminated 28m3 of soil.
- The contaminated soil at the facility has been removed.
- Total cost of clean-up was \$12,957 not including Village staff or equipment time.
- Recommendations were made for the purchase of equipment, from the Public Works Equipment Reserve, that would be more appropriate for handling special waste.

Discussion:

- It is important that staff are trained and certified to run equipment.
 - The operator had thousands of hours of experience running the equipment used when the accident occurred.
- How much would the new equipment be used on a weekly basis? Would a rental or a local contractor make more fiscal sense?

#239-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT the RTC on the Hydrocarbon Spill Update be received and filed.

Motion #239-25 was **CARRIED**.

RTC – Septic Receiving Station

CAO Presentation:

- This RTC is for information.
- The Septic Receiving Station was installed by YG, and paid for by YG, at the Public Works Yard. This system can detect the presence of hydrocarbons and if they are detected, the system will automatically close the valve and not accept the deposit.

- Residents experienced sewage odor. Attempts to alleviate the smell were ineffective. As a result, septic trucks have since been unloading directly into the lagoon.
- Moving the SRS to the lagoon would address a low probability/high consequence risk.
- Much of the estimated \$1.1M costs involved with moving the SRS are associated with installing phase 3 electricity at the lagoon.
- A case could be made to YG to fund this.

Discussion:

- When the SRS was installed in the Public Works Yard, engineers at the time were adamant that this would be a suitable location. Council had raised concerns, along with residents and were assured that this was the best place for this. For this reason, the Village should not have to be responsible for costs to relocate the system.
- Add this discussion to the list of items to discuss around Election Readiness.
- This could fit under AYC's priorities for election advocacy (infrastructure investment, community safety).
- If loads are hydrocarbon contaminated, where would the load go?
 - It would likely have to be taken to Whitehorse for treatment. The operator of the septic truck would have to pump the materials out of the SRS to take this with them.
- Staff asked to find records of prior discussions with YG and their Engineers to help make the case to YG.
- Do Septic Truck companies have to sign an agreement to deposit directly into the lagoon?
 - An agreement was in place before the SRS was installed that was no longer required when the SRS was operational.
 - An updated version has been drafted until the SRS is operational again that requires legal review.
- Do RV sani-dumps test for hydrocarbons?
 - Will need to investigate what other communities do to test for hydrocarbons in sani-dumps.

#240-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT the RTC on the Septic Receiving Station be received and filed. Staff are directed to do background research on the SRS installation.

Motion #240-35 was **CARRIED**.

RTC – Water System SCADA

CAO Presentation:

- This RTC is for information.
- A Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition System (SCADA) controls the water and wastewater system.

- Increasingly this system has been problematic. Earlier this spring a network component failure shut down the water system and required a water advisory.
- Approximately \$250k is needed to update the existing software with new software.
- Hardware is also changing and will also require updating at some point.

Discussion:

- What does the SRS have to do with the SCADA system?
 - The last time the SCADA system had a major update was when the SRS was constructed in 2019.
- What would the life expectancy be of the new SCADA software packages?
 - Most of the existing system is 15 years old, this is a reasonable expectation of lifespan for future systems.
- Council would like our Public Works Manager to come to answer questions when Council is deciding on whether to make this (and the other significant SRS and Spill Response Equipment) purchases.

#241-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT the RTC with an update on the water system SCADA is received and filed.

Motion #241-25 was **CARRIED**.

RTC – Fees for Propane Tanks Disposal at the SWMF

CAO Presentation:

- The current Waste Management Cost Recovery and Sorting Requirements Bylaw does not include a fee for the disposal of propane tanks larger than 1lb.
- Currently, any propane tank over 1lb is billed as scrap metal as they are disposed of in the scrap metal pile which is eventually taken away for scrap metal recycling.
- Staff recommend only accepting tanks up to 100lb, and only if the valve has been removed.

Discussion:

- What are other communities doing?
 - Whitehorse accepts propane tanks <30lb for free
- Is this something our Solid Waste Management Advisory Group could look at?
- Many people in town would not have the ability or tools to remove valves. Would prefer we charge a fee to remove valves then refuse tanks with valves.
 - Valve removal could also be done through a local business in town.

#242-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT Council directs staff to defer amendments to the Waste Management Cost Recovery and Sorting Bylaw until advice is received from the Solid Waste Management Advisory Group.

Motion #242-25 was **CARRIED**.

RTC – Changes to Monthly Billing at the SWMF

CAO Presentation:

- When tipping fees were introduced, staff created monthly billing (credit) accounts for high volume users. The intention was to facilitate ease of use and streamline billing for those making frequent use of the facility.
- We now have over 40 credit accounts. This is a significant administrative burden for staff. In an effort to be accommodating, we may have over-reached.
- Recommend only high-volume users be eligible for a monthly billing accounts. An average minimum monthly volume could be set where users below this level would need to pay at the gate or pre-purchase bag tags.
- Could also introduce a monthly user fee to maintain a billing account to offset staff time required to use the accounts.

#243-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT Council directs staff to draft a policy establishing a minimum usage rate for eligibility to participate in the monthly credit account system at the Solid Waste Management Facility.

Motion #243-25 was **CARRIED**.

RTC – Cardboard Trailers

Policy/Communications Manager Presentation:

- The Village instituted a cardboard trailer program 25 years ago to encourage businesses to recycle. At the time there was no incentive to separate cardboard from residual waste because everything could be disposed of free of charge.
- We now have an incentive for businesses to do that separation – tipping fees.
- We have seven cardboard trailers located at businesses in town. When the trailer is full, the business calls the Recycling Centre and the attendant takes the truck out to pick up the trailer, bring it back to the landfill, empty it, and take it back to the business.
- This service has been provided for a long time to the same businesses. It is not a service that we advertise, and sometimes there is a bit of juggling to move trailers around to where they are needed.
- Staff recommend either developing a policy to set a fee structure for providing this service, or cancel the program and surplus the trailers.

Discussion:

- This program takes up a lot of the Recycling Attendant's time. When they get a call from a business to come and pick up a full trailer, they must drop everything and leave the site.
- Would like to give notice to businesses to give them time to adjust to not having access to the program.
- Can we give businesses the option to buy out the trailers?
 - Will need to follow the surplus policy regarding the sale of the trailers.

#244-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT staff be directed to cancel the Cardboard Trailer Service as of March 1, 2026, notify businesses as soon as possible, and surplus the trailers.

Motion #244-25 was **CARRIED**.

RTC – Online Video Archive of Council Meetings

Policy/Communications Manager Presentation:

- It is becoming quite commonplace for municipalities to put recordings of Council meetings online.
- Presently we are meeting requirements of both the Municipal Act and the Council Procedural Bylaw to provide access to municipal governance by the fact that we produce minutes as prescribed.
- Providing online access to recordings increases access to those who aren't available to attend Council meetings on the night that they are occurring.
- Our website will not let us upload videos, but we can post link to another site. Recommend downloading Zoom recordings and creating a municipal channel on YouTube where they can be viewed for a defined period of time.

Discussion:

- Why can't people just read the minutes?
 - The recordings give more of a sense of the deliberation that takes place in meetings, and how much time is being given to the discussion.
- Posting recordings also gives Council and opportunity to consider what it wants from its minute-taking.
 - Council reduced requirements for minute taking for Committee of the Whole meetings, which is a substantial savings in staff time.
 - Recommend action-oriented minutes – only capture direction, motions, action items, not the dialogue that leads to the motions/decisions.
- Concerns were expressed that members of the public may not be willing to present to Council if they knew it would be put on YouTube.
- Can our website be fixed to allow recordings to be posted?
- Could post just audio and not audio and video.

- Whether or not to post recordings or make changes to how minutes are produced are two separate decisions.
- How often are the minutes referred in supporting Council decisions?
 - Staff refer to the motions recorded in the minutes, and to the Reports to Council discussed at meetings.
- How long does the record of minutes go back? Are they ever deleted?
 - Minutes are kept in the permanent record as they are sent to the Territorial Archives.
- Staff asked to post minutes of audio recordings as soon as capacity allows, and to post from that time forward.

#245-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT Staff provide a link to audio recordings of Council meetings online, from a location on a secure server, going forward.

Motion #245-25 was **CARRIED**.

#246-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT Staff prepare a RTC with more descriptive terminology regarding action-oriented minute taking

Motion #246-25 was **CARRIED**.

RTC – Municipal Act Review Board Appointment

CAO Presentation:

- On June 19, 2025, the AYC issued a call-out to Yukon CAO's and staff for expressions of interest to serve on the newly formed 2025 Municipal Act Review Committee. Five seats are available for municipal CAO or staff representatives.
- Committee participation would require a time commitment of one day/month between August 2025 and February 2026.
- CAO Fairbank would like to put his name forward.

Discussion:

- CAO wears a lot of hats and doesn't need to wear them all. Does the CAO have capacity to take this on?
- Pros and cons of the CAOs participation were discussed:
 - Time may be better spent within the community. This is a research and advisory body only, expect AYC would consult with all communities at key decisions points.
 - This is a limited time commitment that will create benefits from the creation of partnerships and relationships. Knowing how discussion goes within a meeting

will have benefits for us, noting that the Municipal Act has not been reviewed for a long time.

#247-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT Council approves the CAO as a candidate to participate in the 2025 Municipal Act Review Committee and directs staff to submit an expression of interest prior to the application deadline.

Councillor Sundbo voted against the motion.

Motion #247-25 was **CARRIED**.

Bylaws – Reports, Readings and Adoption

Bylaw #429-25 Zoning Bylaw #411-24 Amendment #2, for third reading

#248-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT Bylaw #429-25 Zoning Bylaw #411-24 Amendment #2 be read for the third time and adopted on July 9, 2025

Motion #248-25 was **CARRIED**.

#249-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT the meeting continue past 9:00pm

Motion #249-25 was **CARRIED**.

Correspondence

Council Reports and Notice of Motions

Councillor Busche

- Participated in Canada Day event. Told the event was considerably bigger than it has been in recent years. Announced, along with Councillor Mackinnon, the Community Recognition Awards.

Councillor Mackinnon

- Also participated in Canada Day event and joined Councillor Busche in announcing the Community Recognition Awards.

- Have heard from some members of the community that they would like an update on where the road work is at.
 - Working to extend YG's contract with Castle Rock to include road work included in 2025 budget.
 - Until this contract amendment is signed, we are being cautious about announcing what will be done.
 - Castle Rock may have limitations on how much work they can take on.
 - Staff are aware that potholes in Willow Acres Road need to be addressed.
 - Staff will plan, as a temporary measure, to put gravel in the potholes.

Councillor McPhie

- Would like to see our equipment showcased in the Canada Day parade.
- Would like to see communications put on Facebook about road work. Understand it makes sense to not fill potholes until infrastructure upgrades are done.
- At the last Council meeting, requested staff put out an update on the pool, including the demolition of the old pool/community hall. Important that people know this is moving forward.
- Requested update on the muffin – not on today's agenda?
 - Staff is still sourcing quotes.
- Christmas lights – would like a plan on doing something different/something more.
 - Staff are working on bringing this forward to Council.

Councillor Sundbo

- Would like to see a celebration for the Shakwak Hall at the appropriate time in the process of its demolition.

Mayor Strand

- Attended St. Elias Grad
- Attended CAFN's Dance Festival and gave a welcome on behalf of Council
- Notice of motion: Would like strategic priorities brought to next Council meeting so they can be finalized, approved and subsequently shared with the community, CAFN and AYC
- Notice of motion: Would like to develop truth and reconciliation statement
- Notice of motion: Would like to make a motion around painting the highway in recognition of orange shirt day (which is the whole month of September). Will need to talk to YG about painting roads, what type of paint to be used, etc. Request RTC for next Council meeting.

Questions from the Public

Motion to Close Meeting to the Public

#250-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT the meeting be closed to the public at 9:17pm.

Motion #250-25 was **CARRIED**.

Motion to Reopen Meeting to the Public

#251-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT the meeting be reopened to the public at 10:55pm.

Motion #251-25 was **CARRIED**.

#252-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT Staff schedule a CoW on August 6 at 9am to discuss Capital Budget and Strategic Planning and August 27 at 5pm to discuss grant policy.

Motion #252-25 was **CARRIED**

Adjournment

#253-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT the meeting be adjourned at 10:56pm.

Motion #253-25 was **CARRIED**

Meeting adjourned at 10:56pm.


Mayor Diane Strand


CAO David Fairbank

