



**Township of Howick Council Minutes
Tuesday, February 10, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.
Howick Council Chambers**

1. Call to Order

Reeve Harding called Council Meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. and welcomed everyone in attendance. It was noted that the Council meeting was very well attended and capacity was standing room only.

2. Confirmation of the Agenda

Moved by: Councillor Rognvaldson

Seconded by: Councillor Grimes

That the Council of the Township of Howick hereby adopts the February 10, 2026, Regular Council Amended Agenda as presented.

Carried.

3. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest under the “Municipal Conflict of Interest Act”

4. Minutes of Previous Meetings

Moved by: Councillor Rognvaldson

Seconded by: Deputy Reeve Gibson

That the Council of the Township of Howick hereby adopts the following minutes:

4.1 January 27, 2026, Council Meeting Minutes

4.2 January 27, 2026, Special Council Meeting Minutes

Carried.

5. Public Meetings/Hearings

6. Delegations and/or Presentations

7. Consent Agenda

Items on the Consent Agenda are considered routine and are enacted in one motion. Prior to the motion being voted on, any Council Member may request that

one or more items be removed from the Consent Agenda and discussed and/or voted on separately.

8. Regular Agenda

8.1 Planning – Huron County Planner Sarah Kurtz

9. Municipal Drains - Drainage Superintendent Scott Richardson

10. Staff Reports

10.1 Chief Building Official Ed Podniewicz

10.2 Fire Chief/Manager of Development & Protective Services - Josh Kestner

10.2.1 DPS-2026-06, 2025 Capital Budget Overages

Fire Chief/Manager of Development & Protective Services Josh Kestner provided an overview of his report. The overspending of the capital budget items was outlined in the report resulting in \$3,620.11 having to be pulled from the Fire Reserves with council's approval.

**Moved by: Councillor Rognvaldson
Seconded by: Councillor Grimes**

That the Council of the Township of Howick receive this report on the 2025 capital purchases for information;

And further that Council approve the total budget overage for 2025 capital projects in the amount of \$3,620.11 to be drawn from the Fire Reserve.

Carried.

10.3 Manager of Public Works – Scott Price

10.3.1 PW-2026-02, Pothole Prevention and Repair Program Grant Payment Agreement

Manager of Public Works reported that the Township of Howick secured \$38,000.00 through the Ontario Pothole Prevention and Repair Program. This funding was based on the work that was completed in 2025. It is estimated that the funding will be received by June 2026.

**Moved by: Councillor Grimes
Seconded by: Deputy Reeve Gibson**

That Howick Council receives report PW-2026-02, Pothole Prevention and Repair Program Grant Payment Agreement, for information;

And That Howick Council approve entering into a Transfer Payment Agreement with His Majesty the King in Right of Ontario as Represented by the Honourable Minister of Transportation;

And That the Treasurer and CAO/Clerk be authorized to sign and execute the agreement on behalf of the Corporation of the Township of Howick.

Carried.

10.4 Manager of Recreation and Facilities - Brady Ropp

10.5 Treasurer/Manager of Finance - Amy Van Meeteren

10.5.1 FIN -2026-05, 2026 Municipal Budget – Draft #3

Reeve Harding called upon Treasurer Amy Van Meeteren to present the third draft of the 2026 Municipal Budget.

Treasurer Van Meeteren presented that Council provided direction to staff after the second draft of the municipal budget was presented to decrease the tax rate increase to be the same or less than the 2025 tax rate increase. The Senior Management Team met and reviewed the entire budget and was able to cut a few things. Draft 3 of the 2026 Budget is being presented with a 5.34% tax rate increase, plus a 2% capital infrastructure levy. 2025 Budget was a 5.49

MPAC is holding their current assessment values. The average assessed home in Howick is \$210,000. Based on the proposed 2026 tax rate increase, the annual taxes levied would be \$2,102.00, an increase of \$144.00 from 2025. 2025 Municipal tax rates were compared across Huron County and Howick falls directly in the middle.

Treasurer Van Meeteren explained that for every \$100.00 of Howick property taxes collected, \$29.00 goes to capital contributions, \$27.00 goes to roads and transportation, \$16.00 goes to Police, Fire and Protective Services, \$11.00 to Recreation, Parks and Facilities, \$11.00 to General, Government & Administration, \$5.00 to Waste and Recycling and \$1.00 to Planning and Development.

The proposed 2026 Capital budget is funded 80% from reserves, 19% from grants and 1% is being pulled from taxation. In 2026 there is \$2.83 million in capital projects being proposed.

10.5.2 Questions/Comments from Council

Council discussed and were very happy with the break down and the quality of the presentation of the budget and satisfied with the tax rate being less than 2025's increase.

10.5.3 Questions/Comments from Public

A member of the public asked if the 2026 Budget includes wages for a Daycare Manager. Staff pointed out that we have budgeted wages for a Daycare Manger for 6 months and that the wages budgeted will go into the Recreation reserve if the Day Care does not proceed.

A member of the public asked about unanticipated costs associated to the daycare facility and what expenses are associated to accommodating 49 children? Staff clarified that there will be a public meeting to review the proposed day care facility, including draft operating costs, several year projections and all wage subsidy and operating grants available to help offset the costs to run the day care annually.

CAO/Clerk Caitlin Gillis stated that she has reached out to our Huron County Consolidated Service Manager to get further clarification from the Ministry of Education regarding the funding timelines in order to receive the approved \$2-million-dollar funding that was offered to Howick. If the facility is unable to be completed by end of 2026, will Howick still receive the full \$2 million? A Public meeting to be held at the Howick Community Centre at a later date and lots of advertising will be completed prior to the meeting.

Reeve Harding outlined that the Before and After School Program ran by the Recreation Department at the Howick Community Centre has been very successful and that very few facilities operate similar programs at a surplus. Childcare is a service just like recreation, which does not operate at a surplus. Breaking even is the goal, and childcare is something that is needed in the community to attract people to Howick Township.

A member of the public asked for clarification on the Community Improvement and Beautification Plan. The Capital budget shows a total of \$32 000.00 plus \$3000.00 coming from reserves to fund this in 2026. There are concerns about the annual costs to operate this program. Should the villages be responsible to implement and fund the program? Some members of the public don't believe it should be the responsibility of the whole municipality.

A member of the public asked about the purchase of a used vehicle for the contract By-law Enforcement Officer position. The Manager of Development and Protective Services/Fire Chief explained that the new By-Law Enforcement position is a proposed 2-year contract for a full-time By-Law Enforcement. Staff are proposing that this new By-law Enforcement Officer would be contracted out one day per week to North Huron.

Members of the public are upset and frustrated with various property standards and clean yards by-law infractions in the downtown areas in Gorrie and Wroxeter. Staff outlined that there has been a limited amount of time spent on By-Law enforcement over the last 25 years. Suggestion from the public to purchase some of these buildings that may be available and demolish those that are beyond repair. The public expressed that they do not have an issue with spending the money on a full-time By-Law

Enforcement Officer, if they receive something for the money spent.

Staff provided an update regarding the closed Post Office in Wroxeter. Staff met with Canada Post to review their plans for temporary community mailboxes and requested that Canada Post send an update letter to all residents affected by the Wroxeter Post Office closing.

Canada Post is continuing to look for a suitable building to relocate the Wroxeter Post Office, but there is not much inventory available. They are planning to install temporary community mailboxes, similar to what was done in Fordwich. Canada Post has proposed 4 potential locations that Township staff and Village Management reviewed and provided feedback on. Staff have requested one central location in the downtown parkette. Once the snow melts, Canada Post will be sending a representative to Wroxeter to investigate the parkette as the potential central location for the community mailboxes. It is estimated that there will be 19-21 units total. Township staff expressed that main concerns are resident safety, parking, and lighting.

A member of the public inquired about sidewalk snow clearing in Wroxeter. Staff explained that Howick does not have a by-law where each resident whose property fronts on a sidewalk must clear all snow from the sidewalk. Sidewalks are closed in the winter except for the main street exceptions.

10.5.4 Closed Session

Moved by: Deputy Reeve Gibson
Seconded by: Councillor Grimes

That a closed meeting of Council of the Township of Howick be held on Tuesday, February 10, 2026 at 10:39 a.m. in the Council Chambers of the Township Office, in accordance with Section 239(2) of the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended, for the purpose of considering the following matters:

- (b) personal matters about an identifiable individual, including municipal or local board employees;
- (d) labour relations or employee negotiations.

Carried.

Agenda moved to Closed Agenda at 10:39 a.m.

Agenda Returned to Open Agenda at 11:51 a.m.

11. Motion to Reconvene into Open Session and Reporting Out

Moved by: Councillor Rognvaldson
Seconded by: Deputy Reeve Gibson

That the Council of the Township of Howick reconvene into Open Session at 11:51 a.m.

Carried.

Reeve Harding reported that Council met in Closed Session to discuss the salary grid and benefits included in the draft 2026 Budget.

12. FIN-2026-5, 2026 Municipal Budget – Draft #3

Council discussed and decided to remove both the used by-law enforcement vehicle and the boom mower arm from the capital budget. Staff pointed out that this will not affect the tax rate, as both items were already funded from reserves. It was pointed out that going forward, any donations made to the Township in order to receive a donation receipt counts as municipal revenue and should receive council approval before being spent. Council would also like to see figures for how much grass cutting cost in 2025.

**Moved by: Deputy Reeve Gibson
Seconded by: Councillor Rognvaldson**

That Howick Council receive report FIN-2026-05, 2026 Budget Draft #3, for information;

And That Howick Council adopt the 2026 Capital and Operating Budgets as amended;

And That Howick Council pass By-law 9-2026; being a By-law to adopt the 2026 Municipal Budget for the Township of Howick.

Carried.

13. Committee and Board Reports

Reeve Harding noted that Belmore Homecoming made \$128,000 as was outlined in their minutes. Staff pointed out that Belmore Homecoming and the Belmore Maple Syrup Festival are actually Belmore Chamber of Commerce events and not Arena Board events. Because of this, they will no longer be able to receive donation receipts from the Township, as they are not committees of Council.

**Moved by: Deputy Reeve Gibson
Seconded by: Councillor Rognvaldson**

That the Council of the Township of Howick adopt the following Board or Committee minutes:

13.1 Belmore Arena Board– Meeting Minutes October 20, 2025

13.2 Belmore Arena Board– Meeting Minutes November 17, 2025

13.3 Wroxeter Hall Board – Meeting Minutes January 8, 2026

Carried.

14. Correspondence

14.1 Howick Family Festival Committee– re. Request for an increase in profit share for the Howick Family Festival Event

**Moved by: Councillor Grimes
Seconded by: Deputy Reeve Gibson**

That the Council of the Township of Howick approve an extra 25% net bar profits for the Howick Family Festival at their event on Saturday February 14, 2026.

Carried.

14.2 The Municipality of North Perth – Sustainable Funding for Police Services Request

**Moved by: Councillor Rognvaldson
Seconded by: Councillor Grimes**

That the Council of the Township of Howick endorse the letter sent from the Municipality of North Perth to the Premier of Ontario, Minister of the Solicitor General, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Perth County OPP Detachment Board and all Ontario Municipalities in support of Sustainable Funding for Police.

Carried.

14.3 Maitland Conservation – Draft 2026 Work Plan and Budget

14.4 Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing – New and Amending Regulations Under the Planning Act and the City of Toronto Act

14.5 Huron OPP Detachment Board Minutes – December 15, 2025

14.6 Avon Maitland District School Board – Board Meeting Highlights January 27, 2026

15. Unfinished Business

16. Council Reports

16.1 Council Member Reports

Reeve Harding pointed out that Huron County has another budget meeting tomorrow, looking at 4% tax increase.

Members of Council pointed out that the County has been logging the Huron County Forest Adams Tract at the bottom of Gorrie Line.

16.2 Requests by Members

16.3 Notice of Motions

16.4 Announcements

17. Other Business

18. Enactment of By-laws – First, Second & Third Reading

18.1 By-Law 8-2026

**Moved by: Councillor Grimes
Seconded by: Councillor Rognvaldson**

That the Council of the Township of Howick give first, second, third and final reading to By-law 8-2026;

Being a By-law to Authorize the Execution of an Agreement Between the Corporation of the Township of Howick and His Majesty the King in right of Ontario as Represented by the Ministry of Transportation.

Carried

18.2 By-law 9-2026

**Moved by: Deputy Reeve Gibson
Seconded by: Councillor Rognvaldson**

That the Council of the Township of Howick give first, second, third and final reading to By-law 9-2026;

Being a By-law to Adopt the 2026 Budget for the Township of Howick.

Carried.

19. Confirming By-law

19.1 By-law 10-2026

**Moved by: Councillor Hargrave
Seconded by: Councillor Grimes**

That the Council of the Township of Howick give first, second, third and final reading to By-law 10-2026;

Being a By-law to Confirm the Proceedings of the Council meeting held on February 10, 2026.

Carried.

20. Adjournment

Moved by: Councillor Grimes
Seconded by: Deputy Reeve Gibson

That the Council of the Township of Howick adjourn the February 10, 2026
Council meeting at 12:23p.m.

Carried.

Reeve, Doug Harding

CAO/Clerk Caitlin Gillis