



**Township of Howick Council Minutes
Tuesday, March 24, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.
Howick Council Chambers**

1. Call to Order

Reeve Harding called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone in attendance.

2. Confirmation of the Agenda

Moved by: Deputy Reeve Gibson

Seconded by: Councillor Grimes

That the Council of the Township of Howick hereby adopts the March 24, 2026, Council Agenda as presented.

Carried.

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

None declared.

4. Minutes of Previous Meetings

Moved by: Councillor Grimes

Seconded by: Councillor Rognvaldson

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

4.1 March 10, 2026, Council Meeting Minutes

Carried.

5. Public Meetings/Hearings

6. Delegations and/or Presentations

6.1 Rob Kienapple, Howick Zoning By-Law Housekeeping Amendment

Reeve Harding called upon Rob Kienapple to present his delegation. At the last council meeting Howick's Planner brought the Zoning By-law housekeeping amendments for Council to pass. Rob's property located at Concession 12 N Part Lot 25 was included in the proposed amendment to correct his site specific

ER1 (extractive resources) zoning and re-zone to AG1. This amendment was to be at no cost to him and would avoid zoning issues in the future. The land was rehabilitated from a gravel pit and is now actively being farmed. Rob is frustrated that Council deferred the passing of the amendment, as he has been waiting for this issue to be corrected for quite some time. He has completed a lot of research since that meeting and understands that the minimum lot sizes being proposed for additional residential units are based on nitrate studies to protect our water from contamination. He was also frustrated with Council's lack of explanation for not supporting the amendments or why the concerns were not brought forward during the 6 week commenting period before the amendments were proposed at the March 10, 2026 Public Meeting. Council had given the planner direction to bring the housekeeping amendments to the March 10th meeting for passing. He would like to see Council approve the Housekeeping Amendments.

Reeve Harding apologized to Mr. Kienapple on behalf of Council. Council was unprepared to split the housekeeping amendment into parts to approve the proposed changes that Council was in agreement with during the last meeting.

CAO/Clerk Caitlin Gillis commented that the Huron County Planner is planning on bringing the Housekeeping Amendment back to Council on April 7th, 2026. Any members of council who have questions or are not in favour of any parts of the amendment are asked to reach out to the planning department prior to the next council meeting. Council expressed that should there be concerns around the complete housekeeping amendment, they would consider splitting up the housekeeping amendment to re-zone the site-specific property.

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.

Moved by: Deputy Reeve Gibson

Seconded by: Councillor Rognvaldson

That Consent Agenda item 7.1 be received for information and approved.

**7.1 FIN-2026-08, February 18 to March 17, 2026 Accounts Payable
For Information Only.**

Carried.

8. Regular Agenda

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

10.3 Manager of Public Works – Scott Price

10.3.1 PW-2026-05, MTO Improvements to West Heritage Street

Manager of Public Works Scott Price reviewed his report. The Ministry of Transportation has reached out to staff about the reconstruction of HWY 9 in 2027. They are asking to use West Heritage Street for a detour route during the reconstruction (at no cost to the Township) and want to make improvements to West Heritage Street in 2026 prior to reconstruction of Highway 9. They would like the intersections to be improved to allow better traffic flow for larger trucks.

Staff will inspect the intersections prior to any work being completed, after the work is completed and after the detour route has ended to ensure that the work is completed to our standards and left in good condition. Two lifts of asphalt will be completed by the MTO to match what we have there currently.

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

That Howick Council receives report PW-2026-05, MTO Improvements to West Heritage Street;

And That Howick Council approve entering into an Agreement with His Majesty the King in Right of the Province of Ontario Represented by the Minister of Transportation for the Province of Ontario (MTO) to Allow Intersection Improvements on West Heritage Street at Highway 9 and Fordwich Line and a Detour Route;

And That the CAO/Clerk be authorized to sign and execute the agreement and all other documentation required 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-2026-09, 2025 Property Tax Adjustment

Under Section 357 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, as amended,

property owners can apply for the cancelation of taxes associated to changes in property assessment that may result in an increase or decrease of property taxes. For the 2025 tax year, the 357 adjustments totaled \$24,488.21 in reduced taxes. The supplemental and omitted assessment received in 2025 totaled \$49,514.16. The overall net increase to the municipal tax portion was \$25,025.95.

Moved by: Deputy Reeve Gibson
Seconded by: Councillor Rognvaldson

That the Council of the Township of Howick accept and adopt report FIN-2026-09, 2025 Property Tax Adjustments and approve the tax assessment adjustments for the Minutes of Settlements (RFR), 357 reductions, Post Roll Adjustment Notices (PRANS) and Farm Tax Incentive Program adjustments (TIA) for the tax year of 2025 in the amount of \$24,488.21.

Carried.

10.6 CAO/Clerk Caitlin Gillis

11. Committee and Board Reports

Moved by: Deputy Reeve Gibson
Seconded by: Councillor Grimes

That Howick Council adopt the following Board or Committee minutes:

11.1 Community Improvement and Beautification (CIP) – Meeting Minutes March 18, 2026

Carried.

12. Correspondence

12.1 Avon Maitland District School Board – Changes to English Public School Board Governance

12.2 Saugeen Conservation – Annual Spring Freshet

12.3 Saugeen Conservation – Conservation Authority Amalgamation

12.4 Howick Homecoming – Meeting Minutes, Monday March 9, 2026

12.5 Huron County Federation of Agriculture – Annual MP MPP Local Politicians Forum Invitation – Friday March 27, 2026

Should any members of council wish to attend, please reach out to the Clerk as soon as possible.

12.6 Avon Maitland District School Board – Long Term Accommodation

Any member of the public would like more information on an agenda item please contact the Clerk's office at 519-335-3208 ext. 2 or email clerk@howick.ca, alternative formats of this publication available upon request

Plan

341 Children enrolled at Howick Central Public School currently. The 10-year forecast is 303.

12.7 Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks – Improving Ontario’s Conservation Authority System

12.8 Nuclear Innovation Institute – Clean Energy Frontier Conference 2026

13. Unfinished Business

14. Council Reports

14.1 Council Member Reports

Reeve’s Verbal Update from County Council

Reeve Harding provided an update that the Huron County budget has passed, and a press release went out today, March 24, 2026. The total levy increase is 4.55% with a tax rate increase of 2.78%. Programs have been cut to get the budget to where County Council wanted to see it. A few programs that were cut were the SLED grant and electric car chargers.

Verbal Update from Council Members

Councillor Grimes provided an update from the Belmore Arena Board that Ice is out. The Belmore Maple Syrup Festival is the 9th and the 11th of April.

14.2 Requests by Members

14.3 Notice of Motions

14.4 Announcements

15. Other Business

CAO/Clerk Caitlin Gillis addressed Council and advised that the Manager of Children’s Services from Huron County has responded to our inquiries and had the County’s solicitor review the Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) program guidelines. Greg Stewart did review the guidelines in the agreement and if we had un-spent funds at the end of December 2026, we would not be asked to pay anything back unless we pulled out of the program completely.

The Ministry of Education has requested to be notified if Howick is proceeding with the construction of a childcare centre before April 2, 2026. Funds would need to be spent before December 31, 2026. No further Infrastructure funds are planned for 2027. The \$2 million allocated to Howick would need to be spent by the end of 2026.

CAO/Clerk Gillis drafted operating revenue calculations and determined that

Howick would be eligible to receive \$1.03 million annually under the cost based funding formula under the CWELCC program. With daily maximum direct costs to parents set at \$22/day, there would be approximately \$200,000 in additional revenue annually. Staff also looked at Goderich and North Perth's daycare budgets, and they tend to break even. North Huron does run a small deficit each year.

Manager of Recreation Brady Ropp received a 48-page agreement from the +VG Architects to move ahead with drawings for the facility. The fee for the plans is based on 7.9% cost of the entire project.

Staff feel that a public meeting is pointless without drawings and cost estimates to provide to the public. To receive accurate cost estimates from contractors, we require engineer stamped drawings, and council would need to approve the cost to develop those drawings.

Council inquired as to whether staff had a chance to speak with local contractors to see if they would have the ability to fit us in yet this year. CAO/Clerk expressed that without drawings, contractors would be unable to provide cost estimates or determine their ability to complete the project.

+VG Architects estimated that the entire construction project would be around \$2.5 million. \$2 million in start-up funds are being provided from the CWELCC program and the remaining \$500,000 would be required to be paid by the Township, likely through a combination of fundraising and an Ontario Infrastructure loan.

Council felt that without new agreements in place between the Federal government and the province for the CWELCC annual operating grant funds, and the fact that the project would need to be completed before the end of 2026, there wasn't enough information available for council to support moving ahead.

Council decided to proceed with a motion to tell the County that we will be turning down the \$2 million dollar funding for the childcare facility in Howick and not proceeding with the project.

Moved by: Councillor Hargrave
Seconded: Councillor Grimes

That the Council of the Township of Howick rescind the Start Up Service Agreement between the County of Huron and the Township of Howick under the Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care Program and not proceed with the construction of a childcare facility;

And That this decision was made in response to the tight timelines required to complete construction of a new childcare facility before December 31, 2026 and the lack of information available regarding whether the CWELCC program will be extended beyond December 31, 2026.

Carried.

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

16.1 By-law 17-2026

Moved by: Deputy Reeve Gibson
Seconded by: Councillor Grimes

That the Council of the Township of Howick give first, second, third and final reading to By-law 15-2026;

Being a By-law to Authorize the Execution of a Road Reconstruction and Detour Route Agreement between His Majesty the King in Right of the Province of Ontario Represented by the Minister of Transportation for the Province of Ontario (the "MTO") and the Corporation of the Township of Howick

Carried.

17. Confirming By-law

17.1 By-law 18-2026

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 18-2026;

Being a By-law to Confirm the Proceedings of the Council meeting held on March 24, 2026.

Carried.

18. Adjournment

Moved by: Councillor Grimes
Seconded by: Deputy Reeve Gibson

That the Council of the Township of Howick adjourn the March 24, 2026 Special Council meeting at 7 :45 p.m.

Carried.

Reeve Harding

CAO/Clerk Caitlin Gillis