

Municipality of North Cowichan
Regular Council
MINUTES
November 5, 2025, 3:00 p.m.
Municipal Hall - Council Chambers & Electronically

Members Present Mayor Rob Douglas
 Councillor Mike Caljouw
 Councillor Bruce Findlay
 Councillor Becky Hogg
 Councillor Chris Istace
 Councillor Christopher Justice
 Councillor Tek Manhas

Staff Present Ted Swabey, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)
 Bill Corsan, General Manager, Corporate Services and Community Relations
 George Farkas, General Manager, Planning, Development and Community Services
 Amanda Young, Director, Planning and Building
 Andrea Hainrich, Deputy Corporate Officer
 Barb Floden, Manager, Communications and Public Engagement
 Barry Davidson, Manager, Manager, Bylaw and Business Licensing Services
 Chris Osborne, Manager, Planning
 Clay Reitsma, Director, Engineering
 David Conway, Director, Subdivision and Environmental Services
 John Horn, Director, Social Planning and Protective Services
 Manuela Herzig, Director, IT & Business Solutions
 Moudud Hasan, Senior Manager, Engineering (Transportation and Drainage)
 Pablo Golob, Manager, Development Planning
 Shaun Mason, Director, Parks and Recreation
 Shawn Cator, Director, Operations
 Teri Vetter, Director, Financial Services
 Tricia Mayea, Corporate Officer

1. CALL TO ORDER

There being a quorum present, Mayor Douglas called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

2. RESOLUTION TO CLOSE THE MEETING TO THE PUBLIC [3:00PM - 5:00PM]

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council close the meeting to the public at 3:00 p.m. based on the following sections of the *Community Charter*:

- 90(1)(c) labour relations or other employee relations.
 - 90(1)(e) the acquisition, disposition or expropriation of land or improvements, which the council considers that disclosure could reasonably be expected to harm the interests of the municipality.
- CARRIED

2.1 Approval of in-camera meeting Agenda

2.2 Adoption of in-camera meeting Minutes

2.3 In-camera meeting Items

2.3.1 Closed under section 90(1)(e) Land + Harm

2.3.2 Closed under section 90(1)(e) Land + Harm

2.3.3 Closed under section 90(1)(c) Labour

2.4 Rise and report

Council rose with report on item 2.3.1.

2.3.1. Overnight Sheltering in North Cowichan Parks and Public Spaces

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council:

1. Receive the November 5th, 2025 report on overnight sheltering options in North Cowichan parks and public spaces from the Director, Social Planning and Protective Services; and
2. Direct staff to bring forward the following sites for consideration for overnight sheltering at a future open meeting of Council:
 1. 4015 Hiddenluck Street
 2. Fuller Lake Park
 3. York Road
 4. Beverly Street

CARRIED

3. RECESS UNTIL 5:00PM

The meeting recessed at 4:51 p.m. and reconvened in open session at 5:00 p.m.

4. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council approve the Consent Agenda and the recommendations contained therein.

CARRIED

4.1 Items for Decision

4.1.1 Council Meeting Minutes for Adoption

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council adopt the minutes of the special meeting held October 7, 2025 and the special and regular meetings held October 15, 2025. ADOPTED ON CONSENT

4.1.2 Environmental Advisory Committee October 9, 2025 Meeting Recommendations

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council:

1. Receive the October 9, 2025 Environmental Advisory Committee minutes, and,
2. Direct staff to include the following climate grant allocations from the 2026 Climate Action and Energy Plan Reserve Fund for consideration during the 2026 budget deliberations:
 - a. Clements Centre in the amount of \$17,155.50
 - b. Volunteer Cowichan in the amount of \$21,150.00

ADOPTED ON CONSENT

4.1.3 Agricultural Advisory Committee October 21, 2025 Meeting Minutes

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council:

- a. receives the minutes of the October 21, 2025 Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting; and.
- b. endorses the inclusion within the Strategic Agricultural Plan review of policies regarding similar uses on rural properties, both within and outside the Agricultural Land Reserve.

ADOPTED ON CONSENT

4.1.4 Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) Appointments for 2026

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council appoint Councillor Manhas as Trustee, and Councillor Justice as Alternate Trustee to the Vancouver Island Regional Library Board for 2026.

ADOPTED ON CONSENT

4.1.5 Request for a Letter of Support from the Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council authorizes the Mayor to provide a letter of support to the Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society to include in their application to the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund (HCTF) Land Stewardship Grant for the 2 properties, identified as the Somenos Marsh Open Air Classroom (OAC).

ADOPTED ON CONSENT

4.2 Items for Information

4.2.1 Third Quarter of 2025 Financial Update

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council receive the Third Quarter of 2025 Financial Update dated November 5, 2025, from the Director, Financial Services for information.

ADOPTED ON CONSENT

4.2.2 3rd Quarter of 2025 List of Supplier Payments

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council receive the 3rd Quarter of 2025 List of Supplier Payments report dated November 5, 2025, from the Director, Financial Services, for information.

ADOPTED ON CONSENT

5. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

The agenda was amended to move Item 11.2 [Analysis of the Large Project Surcharge for OCP Amendments] to the next meeting.

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council postpone consideration of item 11.3 [Implementation of North Cowichan's Response to homelessness, mental health and addictions] to the next Council meeting.

(Opposed: Douglas)
CARRIED

5.1 Introduction of Late Items

None.

5.2 Changes to Order of Business

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the agenda be adopted as amended.

CARRIED

6. MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Douglas provided a verbal update on meetings and activities he recently attended.

7. PUBLIC INPUT ON AGENDA ITEMS

Council received public input from 3 members of the public regarding agenda items 4.1.2, 9.1, 12.2, and 12.3.

8. PRESENTATIONS AND PETITIONS

8.1 Presenters

8.1.1 RCMP Quarterly Report [July 1 – September 30, 2025]

Staff Sergeant and Acting Officer in Charge, Ken Beard, presented the North Cowichan/Duncan RCMP's quarterly report (July 1 – September 30, 2025) and answered questions from Council.

9. UNFINISHED AND POSTPONED BUSINESS

9.1 Request for Council to reconsider the Remedial Action Order – 2566 Lewis Street

Connor Swick, lawyer for the property owner, Roman Kubica attended the meeting and presented to Council to request that Council reconsider their decision made at the October 15, 2025 Council meeting.

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council confirms the remedial action requirement issued against 2566 Lewis Street, North Cowichan at the October 15, 2025 Regular Council meeting.

(Opposed: Findlay, Istage)
CARRIED

10. BYLAWS

10.1 Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 4026, 2025 for adoption

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council adopt Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 4026, 2025.

CARRIED

11. REPORTS

11.1 Janitorial Services – Municipality Request for Proposal

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council awards a three-year janitorial services contract for the Municipal Hall, Public Works building, public washrooms, and sewer buildings to 13SB Building & Maintenance Services Ltd. for \$652,128.24, excluding taxes.

CARRIED

12. NEW BUSINESS

12.1 Backyard Hens

Mayor Douglas declared a conflict of interest, as he owns backyard chickens, and left the meeting at 6:02 p.m. Acting Mayor Councillor Istace assumed the chair.

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

Whereas members of the local community have requested a revision to the Zoning Bylaw to permit the keeping of poultry (specifically backyard chickens) on lots smaller than 0.40 hectares;

And whereas food security and rising inflation are significant concerns for residents of North Cowichan and the broader Cowichan Valley community;

And whereas the current Zoning Bylaw restricts the keeping of poultry on smaller lots, but enforcement of this provision has been suspended by Council directive, resulting in community confusion;

And whereas Council has referred the matter of permitting chickens on smaller lots to the Agricultural Advisory Committee (AgAC) for discussion and input;

Therefore be it resolved that Council direct staff to prepare an amendment to the Zoning Bylaw to remove the current restriction on poultry, thereby permitting the keeping of chickens on all residential lots in North Cowichan, subject to conditions such as:

1. Chicken coops must be located a minimum of 3 metres from all property lot lines;
2. Property owners must comply with the Animal Responsibility Bylaw, which requires the provision of appropriate care, housing, and hygiene for poultry, including access to food, water, and a clean, dry enclosure to prevent disease and pests; and
3. Roosters are prohibited on a lot less than 8,000 m².

And further that Council considers the input and recommendations of the Agricultural Advisory Committee in the development of the proposed bylaw amendment.

And further that staff is directed to advance this bylaw amendment independently from other ongoing or potential zoning bylaw updates.

CARRIED

Mayor Douglas returned to the meeting at 6:07 p.m. and resumed the chair.

12.2 Changes to Municipal Director Appointments to the CVRD

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

WHEREAS Council strategic priorities are inevitably going to be changing or modified, and we need to take those priorities as a unified group to the Cowichan Valley Regional District Board;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council appoints Councillor Findlay as Municipal Director to the Cowichan Valley Regional District Board, with Councillor Justice as Alternate Director #1, Councillor Istace as Alternate Director #2, and Councillor Hogg as Alternate Director #3." (Opposed: Douglas, Istace, Justice)

CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council replaces Mayor Douglas as Director on the Cowichan Valley Regional District Board with Councillor Justice;

AND THAT Mayor Douglas be appointed as Alternate Director #1. (Opposed: Justice)

CARRIED

12.3 Redevelopment of Cowichan District Hospital

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council authorize the Mayor to write the Minister of Health to request that the Province and Island Health explore the possibility of repurposing the existing Cowichan District Hospital site for an addictions treatment and recovery centre and a facility for individuals with severe mental health conditions and addictions. CARRIED

13. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

13.1 Request for Comparative Analysis of Residential Tax Levels

Councillor Justice introduced the following motion which Council will consider at the November 19, 2025 Council meeting:

"WHEREAS residents want to understand whether they are receiving good value for their property taxes and how their tax burden compares to that of other communities;

AND WHEREAS without clear comparisons to similar municipalities, it is difficult to determine whether North Cowichan's residential tax levels are high, low, or appropriate; information that is essential for informed decisions on budgets, service levels, infrastructure, and tax policy;

AND WHEREAS benchmarking tax rates and tax burdens against comparable municipalities supports financial accountability, helps identify opportunities for greater efficiency, and contributes to keeping taxes as low as possible while maintaining service levels and infrastructure;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council direct staff to prepare a report analyzing the residential property tax burden in the District of North Cowichan using 2025 data, and comparing it with a selection of British Columbia municipalities that represent

reasonable and defensible comparators in terms of population size, geographic location, service levels, and assessment base;

AND THAT the report include, but not be limited to, the following measures of residential tax burden:

- Per capita tax burden: Total residential property taxes divided by the total population;
- Residential tax rate: The tax rate charged per \$1,000 of assessed property value;
- Average tax bill: An estimated annual tax for a representative residential property (e.g., the average assessed value in North Cowichan);

AND THAT the methodology used in the report rely on readily available data and be designed to allow replication in future years;

AND THAT the report identify the comparator municipalities selected, provide the rationale for their inclusion, and offer a high-level summary of major known differences in service levels (e.g., recreation, fire protection) and infrastructure conditions among the comparator municipalities, based on available data.”

14. QUESTION PERIOD

Council received 2 questions from the public regarding agenda items.

15. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Certified by Corporate Officer

Signed by Mayor