

Township of South-West Oxford
Council Minutes
June 17, 2025

Members Present:

Members Absent:

Staff Present:

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Mayor David Mayberry and a quorum was present.

Motion to Accept Agenda

Resolution No. 1 Moved by Paul Buchner
Seconded by George Way

RESOLVED that the regular meeting agenda for the June 17th, 2025 meeting of council be approved.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

None.

Minutes of the Preceding Meeting

June 3rd, 2025 - Regular Council Meeting Minutes

Resolution No. 2 Moved by George Way
Seconded by Craig Gillis

RESOLVED that the regular minutes of the June 3rd, 2025 council meeting be approved.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

Business Arising from the Minutes

CL 36-2025: Business Arising from the Minutes of June 3rd, 2025

Clerk Julie Middleton provided Council with a report to provide them with an overview of the staff actions arising from the minutes of the last Council meeting.

Resolution No. 3 Moved by Jim Pickard
Seconded by Craig Gillis

RESOLVED that the Council of the Township of South-West Oxford receive report CL 36-2025: Business Arising from the Minutes of June 3rd, 2025 as information.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

Delegations and Appointments

6:35 p.m. - Conor Brennan, Asset Management Specialist - Asset Management Plan

Conor Brennan, Asset Management Specialist, presented the Township of South-West Oxford's 2025 Asset Management Plan. The Plan outlines the current state and long-term strategies for managing the Township's core infrastructure, including roads, bridges, culverts, water systems, and stormwater assets. The total replacement value of these assets is estimated at approximately \$214 million. The report highlights a continued funding gap between infrastructure needs and available financial resources and provides recommendations focused on risk management, levels of service, and lifecycle planning to support long-term sustainability.

New to this year's plan is the inclusion of natural assets, with a review of their role in supporting infrastructure and services. Aerial photography will also be updated in 2025 to support enhancements to GIS mapping. The Plan closely aligns with the Township's annual investment requirements; however, a slight funding deficit is projected due to increasing needs in bridge maintenance and efforts to reserve additional funds for Township facilities.

Next steps include improving data confidence, addressing asset gaps, and working with the software vendor to further enhance the Township's risk profile. Council members discussed the financial implications of the Plan.

Councillor Pickard noted that meeting the annual funding target could require an approximate 0.6% levy increase. Staff clarified that each appendix breaks out the associated costs and proposed funding sources, most of which would need to come from the municipal levy.

Councillor Way raised concerns about past discrepancies in asset condition reporting. He cited a facility with a metal roof deemed acceptable by a third-party building condition assessment in 2023 that required replacement this year. Conor Brennan acknowledged that such assessments, while informative, can occasionally under- or over-estimate actual conditions.

Council also discussed the regulatory framework, noting that while there is no formal enforcement mechanism for failing to follow the Asset Management Plan, non-compliance with Ontario Regulation 588/17 may jeopardize eligibility for provincial or federal funding. As such, adopting the Plan supports transparency, sound financial management, and compliance with provincial mandates.

Resolution No. 4 Moved by Paul Buchner
Seconded by Valerie Durston

RESOLVED that Council receive Report FIN 02-2025 from Conor Brennan, Asset Management Specialist, Oxford County, for information and approve the 2025 Asset Management Plan.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

Staff Reports

CL 37-2025: Township Communication Tools – App Options and Pilot Project

Clerk Julie Middleton provided Council with a report to provide them with an overview of digital communication tools considered by staff in response to Council's direction during the 2025 Strategic Planning Session held in January. She advised that this report outlines the various platforms reviewed and provides an update on a test Township app currently in development in collaboration with Oxford County IT Services.

Paul Buchner commented on the importance of members of the community actively seeking out the information that they are looking for.

RESOLVED that the Council of the Township of South-West Oxford receive report CL 37-2025: Township Communication Tools – App Options and Pilot Project as information.

Appointments (continued)

RESOLVED that the Council of the Township of South-West Oxford move into Committee of Adjustment to consider minor variance application A07-25 submitted by Steve and Karen Albright for property located at 324071 Mount Elgin Road at 7:00 p.m.

RESOLVED that Council reconvene in regular session at 7:12 p.m.

Doug Duimering, Senior Development Manager at Prowind Renewables, provided Council with an update on community engagement activities and early-stage planning for the proposed Bower Hill Wind Farm. Mr. Duimering emphasized Prowind's commitment to transparency and long-term collaboration with the Township and its residents. He outlined efforts to engage the public through community open houses, direct outreach to

landowners, a company website (currently being restored after a platform change), and social media channels including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and the Village Voice. Written responses have also been provided to questions and concerns raised by the public by the company.

The presentation included a general overview of the project's proposed timeline, regulatory requirements, and anticipated next steps. Prowind is preparing a bid submission for the IESO's expected fall 2025 procurement call (LT2), and if successful, would complete detailed site analyses, environmental and technical studies, and submit documentation for municipal and provincial review and approval. Mr. Duimering confirmed that the company is proposing six wind turbines in two clusters within South-West Oxford—one north of Highway 401 and one south near Curry Road and the OnRoute Centre on the 401. He clarified that contrary to some reports, Prowind is not proposing a 200 MW project but a much smaller development with six turbines.

The location was selected for its suitability, including proximity to existing distribution infrastructure, ease of access via Highway 401, and minimal impact on agricultural lands. The turbines would be located with an overall footprint of approximately one acre per turbine. Mr. Duimering explained that the proposed turbines are significantly larger and more efficient than those at the existing Gunn's Hill project and are capable of producing nearly three times the energy. It was discussed that while the larger turbine size results in lower revolutions per minute, the tip speed remains comparable.

Mayor Mayberry raised concerns about inaccuracies in mapping presented at the May 24th meeting, particularly a turbine shown south of Curry Road. Mr. Duimering acknowledged that micro-siting is still being finalized. Council members also raised questions regarding construction methods and groundwater protection, referencing concerns in other municipalities. Mr. Duimering confirmed that turbine foundations are typically constructed on concrete pads rather than by driven piles, and additional environmental assessments would be part of the next phase.

Prowind anticipates requesting a municipal support resolution by August, 2025 in preparation for the October bid submission. If the bid is successful, further project details would be brought before Council for review and consideration.

7:30 p.m. - Marleen van Ham and Wendel Johnson re: Wind Turbine Proposals in South-West Oxford

Marleen van Ham and Bob Orr appeared before Council to deliver a presentation on behalf of concerned residents opposing the proposed wind turbine developments in South-West Oxford. Mrs. van Ham and Mr. Orr,

longtime residents of the Township, outlined a range of issues raised by the community, including economic inefficiencies, environmental impacts, and a lack of transparency in the development process. The presentation emphasized concerns over the high cost of wind energy to taxpayers, the limited effectiveness of wind generation in meeting peak electricity demands, and the growing availability of alternative, less intrusive energy technologies such as small modular reactors and hydrogen-based solutions.

A major point of concern was the potential loss of prime agricultural land. The presenters noted that although turbine bases may occupy a relatively small footprint, larger turbines can require up to three acres of land each, cumulatively impacting local agriculture. The loss of farmland—estimated in Ontario at 319 acres per day—was suggested would lead to food insecurity and undermining the Township’s commitment to local agriculture. The inadequacy of provincial setback regulations was also raised, with presenters arguing that current setbacks do not scale with turbine size and are significantly smaller than those in many other countries. They drew comparisons to Ontario’s Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) requirements for livestock operations and questioned why similar formulas do not apply to wind turbines.

Mrs. van Ham also spoke to the social consequences of turbine development, highlighting the secrecy and division that can arise in rural communities when private land lease negotiations are conducted without public input. She stated that discussions with wind developers in South-West Oxford have been ongoing for three to five years without transparency, often leaving neighbouring residents unaware until late in the process. She emphasized that many residents feel sidelined, with the process creating distrust and social fragmentation.

The presenters urged Council to follow the lead of other municipalities, including the Township of Malahide, by passing a formal resolution declaring South-West Oxford an “Unwilling Host” for wind energy projects under the current provincial procurement framework. They provided examples of such motions for Council’s consideration, characterizing the declaration as a clear and symbolic gesture—likened to a “road closed” sign—to signal to developers that wind projects are not supported locally.

Mr. Orr concluded by reminding Council that wind turbines have a limited lifespan—typically 20 to 30 years—with many failing sooner, and that the environmental and land use impacts can persist long after the turbines stop functioning. He emphasized the importance of preserving South-West Oxford’s agricultural heritage and stated that decisions made today would affect future generations. The presenters thanked Council for their time and urged them to take decisive action.

Councillor Pickard expressed appreciation for the efforts of community members and committees opposing the wind proposals, noting that he had received over 100 emails and numerous phone calls from residents expressing concern. He acknowledged the strong community engagement and stated his intention to support a resolution aligned with public sentiment. Although unable to attend the meeting in person, Councillor Pickard requested that Council move forward with a motion declaring South-West Oxford an unwilling host for industrial wind turbine projects. He requested that Clerk Julie Middleton read the proposed motion.

Councillor Buchner, whose ward is most directly affected by the proposed wind Canada Corporation wind turbine locations, shared that he has made a concerted effort to remain open-minded throughout the process. However, he expressed growing concern about the timing and practicality of large-scale wind energy development without adequate energy storage solutions in place. He suggested that alternative renewable options, such as solar panels on the vast square footage of flat industrial rooftops, should be prioritized. Councillor Buchner also referenced the Township's recent Asset Management Plan, noting that the wear and tear on municipal roads resulting from turbine construction and maintenance could have long-term financial implications.

Resolution No. 8 Moved by Jim Pickard
Seconded by Paul Buchner

WHEREAS the Township of South-West Oxford is committed to safeguarding the health, safety, environment, agricultural integrity, and overall well-being of its residents; and

WHEREAS industrial wind turbine developments may negatively impact:

- Public health, with reports of sleep disturbances, noise-related stress, and other adverse effects;
- Property values, particularly in proximity to turbine installations;
- Agricultural operations, including interference with crop production, livestock behavior, aerial spraying, and productive land use due to setbacks and access roads;
- Water resources, where construction may pose risks to groundwater, aquifers, and private wells;
- Environmental ecosystems, through disruption of wildlife habitats and migratory paths;

AND WHEREAS the procurement of electrical energy is the responsibility of the Province of Ontario;

AND WHEREAS the current Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) procurement process requires a Municipal Support Resolution before an application can proceed, yet provides municipalities with limited information about the full impacts of proposed energy projects at that stage;

AND WHEREAS municipalities are not resourced with the technical expertise or capacity to responsibly assess long-term impacts on agriculture, health, and the environment prior to issuing a Municipal Support Resolution;

AND WHEREAS while the current process mandates an Agricultural Impact Assessment, it is not required until after a contract is issued — leaving municipalities to make premature decisions without adequate information;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Township of South-West Oxford declares itself an “Unwilling Host” for industrial wind turbine projects under the current provincial procurement framework;

AND THAT the Township will not provide Municipal Support Resolutions for any such projects until the procurement process is revised to ensure:

- Full Agricultural, Health, and Environmental Impact Assessments are completed prior to municipal endorsement;
- Municipalities are provided with adequate data, timelines, and consultation resources to make informed decisions;
- Local autonomy and planning authority are meaningfully respected in energy project approvals;

AND THAT this resolution be sent to the Premier of Ontario, the Minister of Energy, the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Minister of

Municipal Affairs and Housing, the local MPP, and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO);

AND FURTHER THAT this resolution be made publicly available through the municipal website and local communications channels to ensure transparency and community awareness.

Discussion on the motion:

Members of Council offered closing remarks following the public presentations on proposed wind turbine developments in South-West Oxford.

Councillor George Way expressed appreciation for the strong community turnout and acknowledged the significant volume of information Council has received over the past six months. He thanked residents for their engagement and emphasized that members of Council have been doing their homework. Councillor Valerie Durston echoed these sentiments, stating that she had read letters, taken calls, and listened to residents' concerns, and was pleased with the level of public engagement. Councillor Craig Gillis also thanked the public, noting the value of the thoughtful questions received and the opportunity for everyone—including Council—to learn more about the impacts on the community.

Mayor David Mayberry addressed several points raised during the meeting. He noted that while Council has a general idea of where five of the six proposed turbines may be located in the northern portion of the Township, no publicly available information has been provided about specific turbine locations or landowners with signed construction agreements, particularly in the southern portion. He highlighted the resulting speculation and division in the community, fueled by a lack of transparency. The Mayor also clarified that, under the current Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) procurement process, wind energy contracts are awarded through a competitive bid-down model, not through fixed rates like those offered under the 2009 Green Energy Act. According to the IESO, there are no direct subsidies for renewable energy projects under the current

framework, with the possible exception of nuclear energy.

The Mayor also responded to concerns about property values. He noted that property assessments have fluctuated broadly in the current market, making it difficult to definitively attribute changes in value to proposed wind projects. Bob Orr added that even the suggestion of a project can have a negative impact on local real estate.

The discussion also included a review of international turbine setback standards. Mrs. van Ham noted that countries such as Germany and Denmark have adopted more stringent setback requirements—1,000 metres or up to six times the turbine height. She explained that in Denmark, landowners within setback zones are eligible for compensation if their property values decrease. She suggested that if such standards were applied in South-West Oxford, it is unlikely any turbines would be permitted.

Water quality was another point of concern. The Mayor referenced conflicting views on the impacts of turbines on groundwater, specifically citing conversations with Dr. Keith, a researcher involved in the Chatham-Kent investigations, and the former Medical Officer of Health for that region. Bob Orr acknowledged this, clarifying that while there are differing opinions, the concerns expressed reflect legitimate community fears.

Mayor Mayberry also addressed the volume and nature of correspondence received by Council. He noted that of the more than 100 emails reviewed, approximately 90% expressed opposition to wind turbine development. More recent messages in support of the projects appeared to be based on a generic template. Ms. van Ham responded that community opposition is widespread and deeply personal, with concerns ranging from property values and noise to groundwater and social division. She presented Council with an envelope containing a petition of 1,245 signatures and reported that door-to-door canvassing showed approximately 97.5% of residents opposed to the proposed projects.

The Mayor emphasized that Council must weigh economic, environmental, and social impacts when making decisions. Councillor Buchner added that the Township is currently conducting a community health and well-being survey, and that proceeding with turbine development in the face of widespread concern could be divisive. He noted the high levels of public anxiety on this matter.

Bob Orr reiterated the risks of community division, sharing an example from his past work with a company that had installed a turbine. He reported that the experience led to thousands of complaints and fractured relationships among neighbours and families.

Finally, Mayor Mayberry acknowledged concerns that a resolution declaring the Township an "Unwilling Host" might be perceived as circumventing the IESO's established process. He stated that each municipality must decide whether to follow the provincial framework or take an independent stance.

Councillor Way requested that a recorded vote be held on the proposed resolution.

Councillor Paul Buchner	Yes
Councillor Valerie Durston	Yes
Councillor George Way	Yes
Councillor Jim Pickard	Yes
Councillor Craig Gillis	Yes
Mayor David Mayberry	No

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

** Council took a break for ten minutes at 8:20 p.m.*

Staff Reports

CL 38-2025: Follow-Up – Disposal Options for Residentially Kept Chickens

Clerk Julie Middleton provided Council with a report to provide them with follow-up information regarding the disposal of dead chickens kept in residential zones, specifically addressing Council's request to explore the option of composting as a disposal method. She advised Council that there

are local options which comply with provincial requirements and suggested that staff be directed to advise residents that have received an exemption for the keeping of chickens in residential zones what these options are.

Resolution No. 9 Moved by Craig Gillis
Seconded by Paul Buchner

RESOLVED that the Council of the Township of South-West Oxford receive report CL 38-2025: Follow-Up – Disposal Options for Residentially Kept Chickens as information.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

Consent Agenda – June 17th, 2025

#1 - Oxford County Council Report - Bill 17 and Proposed Regulatory Changes

#2 - Alex Innes, Wind Energy Article: In Defence of the Wind

#3 - Reaffirmation of WOWC Position on Strong Mayor Powers

#4 - City of Woodstock Resolution re: Bill 5: Protecting Ontario by Unleashing Our Economy Act, 2025

#5 - City of Peterborough Resolution re: Bill 6, Safer Municipalities Act, 2025

#6 - Township of Georgian Bay Resolution re: Floating Accommodations

#7 - Township of McGarry Resolution re: Standing for Canada

#8 - Township of Georgian Bluffs Resolution re: Responsible Growth and Opposition to Bill 5 and Bill 17

Resolution No. 10 Moved by Craig Gillis
Seconded by George Way

RESOLVED that the Council of the Township of South-West Oxford receive the Consent Agenda dated June 17, 2025, for information, and that it be noted and filed.

Discussion on the motion:

Mayor David Mayberry will prepare a letter in response to Bill 5 and Strong Mayor Powers. Councillor Pickard commented that the letter that Alex Innes wrote re: In Defence of the Wind was well done.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

Accounts Payable Report

June 17th, 2025 - Accounts Payable Report

Resolution No. 11 Moved by Paul Buchner
Seconded by Valerie Durston

RESOLVED that the following Accounts be approved for payment:

Accounts Payable for June 1 to June 14, 2025	\$490,952.19
Bi-Weekly Payroll #12	\$58,312.51

Total: \$549,264.70

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

By-laws and Agreements

- By-law No. 47-2025 - To appoint persons to the Brownsville Hall Board (amended)

Resolution No. 12 Moved by Paul Buchner
Seconded by Craig Gillis

RESOLVED that the following By-Law be introduced and that it be read a first and second time:

- By-law No. 47-2025 being a By-law to appoint persons to the Brownsville Hall Board (amended).

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

Resolution No. 13 Moved by George Way
Seconded by Jim Pickard

RESOLVED that By-Law 47-2025 be read a third time and finally passed, and that the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to sign the By-Law and affix the corporate seal.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

Round Table

members provided updates from their respective wards and recent city involvement. The Sweaburg Fish Fry successfully served approximately 500 attendees last weekend, and Sweaburg Minor Ball is using both ball diamonds as the season continues. The Brownsville Show and Yard Sale also took place over the weekend, and the city is still awaiting a response regarding the Brownsville Hall Board's grant application for a new playground.

g events include the Rural Oxford Economic Development
ion's Annual General Meeting, scheduled for Friday in East Zorra-
k, where discussions will include plans to develop a new Strategic
e Salford Hall Board will not meet in August. The Tillsonburg Airport
ee is set to meet this Thursday. In Beachville, the Museum will host
Show this Sunday. Family Fun Day in Foldens will take place this
r from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., with the Mayor scheduled to attend for
d opening of the new walking path at 12:30 p.m. The Federation of
re's Bus Tour is also scheduled for Friday.

atory By-law

- y-Law No. 48-2025 - To confirm all actions and proceedings of
ouncil (June 17th, 2025)

ion No. 14 Moved by Craig Gillis
 Seconded by Paul Buchner

RESOLVED that By-law 48-2025 being a By-law to confirm the proceedings of Council held Tuesday, June 17th, 2025 be read a first, second and third time this 17th day of June, 2025.

AND FURTHER THAT the Mayor and Clerk are hereby authorized to sign the By-law and affix the corporate seal.

DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

