

**Village of Haines Junction
Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes
October 9, 2025**

Present:

Mayor Strand

Councillor Mayor Busche

Councillor Mackinnon

Councillor McPhie (via Zoom)

Councillor Sundbo

Absent:

CAO Fairbank, Public Works Manager Tracey

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:30pm

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

#339-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT the agenda be adopted as presented.

Motion #339-25 was **CARRIED**.

Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

Old Business

Public Works Operations Update

Presentation by Public Works Manager:

Key services:

- Water & wastewater
- Solid waste management
- Roads
- Parks & recreation
- Grounds maintenance (mowing)
- Snow removal & seasonal operations
- Property maintenance (structures)

Public Works operates and/or maintains:

- A Class 2 water treatment plant and distribution system capable of 2,200 m³/day. This includes 2 well houses, 1 treatment plant, 1 distribution pump house, 101 fire hydrants, 4 pressure-relieving valve stations, and 16km of water main
- A sewage lift station, 5-cell lagoon system and 14km of sewage main, 2.3km of force main and 190 manholes. Soon to be a 2nd lift station
- 16km of streets, 2.8km of laneways, 240 driveway access points, 32km of ditch and 484 culverts
- 9km of paved trail, and multiple flower beds and boxes along the trail and on Village properties
- Solid Waste Collection site along with Recycle Centre
- Building maintenance of 10 structures, 1 playground and Dezadeash Day Use Area
- Ice rink in winter and set up for skate park in summer.
- Prepare graves and cemetery groundskeeping.

Staffing levels:

- Have fluctuated between 9-11 FTE since 2016
- New regulations have eroded staff time to do work. E.g. new regulations have required
 - The addition of gatehouse attendant
 - More staff time devoted to training
 - More inspections of fire extinguishers, first aid kits etc. to ensure regulatory compliance
- Staffing has largely been the same, but responsibilities have increased
- When community growth is compared to staffing levels, it is apparent why there is a perception that service levels have declined.
- Between 2016 and 2021:
 - Population has increased, along with the number of dwellings, in the community
 - The number of taxable properties increased by 21%
 - The number of water and sewer accounts increased by 37.5%
 - The number of bulk water users has increased by 60%
- Between 2016 and 2025:
 - The value of capital assets has grown by 136.2%
 - O&M budget expenses increased by 42.8%
- Recommend 2 summer students to help with grounds maintenance in 2026 season and further evaluation to determine adequate staffing levels in relation to desired service levels and infrastructure growth.

Maintenance and records management:

- Weekly inspections on all equipment and trucks
- Written Inspection logs/maintenance records ensure work is recorded as it happens.
- Water system records were also written records that required annual data entry to send them to the Water Board.
- In 2024, a system was created in google forms to facilitate digital data entry. A tablet is taken around that is filled out during inspections, that auto-populates a spreadsheet. Survey prompts are used to remind inspectors of all the data that needs to be recorded. The data is saved to the cloud and to the Public Works drive on the server. Data can be

easily shared with any inspectors. The system has built in QA/QC to flag entries that are outside normal parameters.

- Currently working on moving written vehicle/equipment inspection record-keeping into the digital format/system.

Training:

- Training requirements are extensive, ongoing, and sourced from a variety of providers.
- Water operators are required to participate in continuing classroom-based education/training every year to retain their certification.
- Required safety training is kept track of in a spreadsheet for all public works employees. Most safety training needs to be re-taken every 2-3 years for certifications to be kept up to date.
- Equipment operation training is expensive. It can cost \$2-4k per piece of equipment. Once certified on equipment, there is an incentive to work elsewhere as the wage you can get anywhere else will far outweigh what the Village can afford to pay for a certified operator. This is why, traditionally, municipalities mentor staff to operate equipment, some of which an operator may only use a few times/year.

Asset management

- A list of all equipment is maintained that shows when an item was purchased, and its theoretical year of replacement.
- Industry standard for lifespan is 10 years for a vehicle and 15 years for a piece of heavy equipment. Should also consider the number of hours, whether it works well, and maintenance costs.
- A number of items are beyond their lifespan
- Proposed capital purchases for the next four years were recommended.

Discussion:

- How does the savings on the cost of training to certify an operator compared to additional repair costs that may result from lesser trained operators?
 - It is not as large as one might think – the most important thing is to instill in operators that their level of comfort should dictate the speed of operating equipment
- Would it be possible to have an agreement with employees that we support with training to be certified operators that they must spend a year or two with the organization?
 - Possibly, if people would be willing to agree.
 - Losing more staff time to training is an additional cost to the organization, particularly given where we are at with staffing levels.
- Providing support for training, for which people move on from the organization with, is not all bad, especially for younger employees – it supports education for which individuals may not have had a chance otherwise and develops human capital that benefits the territory.
 - For the odd person this wouldn't be a problem... but this can become a burden if the Municipality is training people who continually move on.

- Mentoring takes away from what the mentor could be doing otherwise. Would like to see staff being trained to the level where they can fire up the equipment and operate it safely. Must avoid throwing someone in cold at all costs – it is not safe and not good for the equipment.
 - Mentoring is a slow process. Opportunities can be provided to get experience in the lagoon or at the landfill before putting someone out on the road.
- Part of the problem is that some people will overstate their experience on their resume and are not tested as part of the interview/screening process.
- If equipment isn't being used very much, do a cost-benefit analysis whether it is worth it to train and have the equipment, or if it would be better to contract the work out to someone in the community.
 - This is factored into decision making. For example, the excavator was scheduled to be replaced in 2021. A decision was made to not replace it and instead rely more on contractor support. The excavator was not sold as there are still some applications where it makes sense to use it and to keep it running as long as it is financially viable to do so.
 - Another example is road grading – it doesn't make sense to purchase one because there are a lot of contractors with graders, and a lot of training is required to be a decent operator.
- Can the Village tie into YG's standing offers for equipment? Yukon communities could potentially save by piggybacking on YG's procurement because YG buys considerably more equipment than we do.
 - Availability to access fleet vehicles is a key challenge right now. Some dealerships have a one-two year wait for fleet purchases, even if the vehicle is on the lot.
 - Action item: Staff will follow up with YG.
- Is there value in bringing electric vehicles into the fleet?
 - The Village is not in a great location to get these vehicles serviced.
 - Need vehicles that can be fired up at 7am and be put to work within 10 minutes and can run all day – don't need vehicles where time to do work is limited.
 - Batteries are potentially a large liability; it can cost \$40,000 to replace a battery.
- Leased/rental vehicles are eventually put up for sale, and probably still have reasonable lifespans. Would these meet our needs?
 - If this makes sense to Council, this would be helpful policy direction for staff.
- Utility vehicles would make more sense for a summer student grounds crew, or to get around at the landfill to check the fence, than a half-ton pickup truck. They are much cheaper to purchase and insure.
- What are the next steps from this?
 - Staff will need a motion to support the hiring of summer students.
 - Capital items will be incorporated into the capital/projects budget.
 - As we move into level of service discussions, these conversations will continue.

Adjournment

#340-25 It was moved and seconded

THAT the meeting be adjourned at 5:45.

Motion #340-25 was **CARRIED**

Meeting adjourned at 5:45pm.



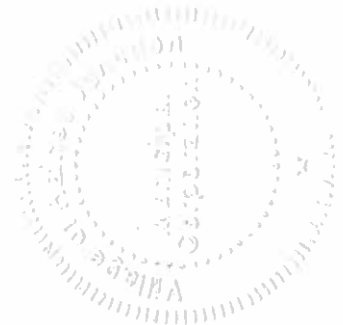
Mayor Diane Strand



CAO David Fairbank



Sydney MacKinnon





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

Minutes of the Village of Haines Junction (VHJ) Council Meeting held October 9, 2025, from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., in the Council Chambers at the Haines Junction Convention Centre, 178 Backe Street, Haines Junction, Yukon, prepared by Bessie Chow from a recording.

Attendance

Present:

Mayor Diane Strand
Councillor Debbie Busche
Councillor Sydney Mackinnon
Councillor Rob McPhie*
Councillor Bruce Sundbo

Absent:

None

CAO David Fairbank, Recorder Bessie Chow

**denotes attendance via videoconference (Zoom)*

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

2. 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.

3. Adoption of Agenda

Motion #341-25 – It was moved, seconded and CARRIED:

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

- In-Camera discussion – Personnel

Discussion:

- A question was raised about the relevance of a letter received from CUPE regarding the Canada Post strike. Staff will review the correspondence and determine whether it should be included on a future meeting agenda.

4. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

5. Adoption of Minutes of Regular and Special Council Meetings

Regular Council Meeting Minutes September 24, 2025

Discussion:

- Council noted that Motion # 336-25 related to 10.d. – *Proposal: Halloween Event at Landfill* did not include the full direction discussed during the in-camera session. It was agreed that the September 24, 2025 minutes should be amended to reflect Council's intent at that meeting as follows:

