Village of Haines Junction
Regular Council Meeting Minutes
June 24, 2026

Present:
Mayor Strand
Councillor Busche
Councillor Moore
Councillor Sundbo

Absent:
Councillor Mackinnon

CAO Fairbank
Recorder L. Sylvain, Sylvain Human Resource Services (remote)

1. **Call to Order**
   The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

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**
   #150-26 It was moved and seconded

   THAT the agenda be adopted as amended with the following addition by Mayor Strand:

   - Move 6. Delegations to 5.; and
   - Move 9.a (Old Business) after 5. Delegations.

   Motion #150-26 was **CARRIED.**

4. **Declaration of Pecuniary Interest**
   There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

5. **Delegations**
   a. <u>Mark Ritchie – Willow Acres Loop Road Resurfacing</u>

   Mr. Ritchie's Presentation:

   - Expressed appreciation for recent community improvements, including paving the Pine Lake Trail, supporting construction of the Bike Skills Park, and grading the firebreak before ski season.
   - Expressed support for repairing and resurfacing Willow Acres Road, as long as the project is properly planned, fully funded, publicly tendered and supported by consultation with affected residents.
   - Raised concerns regarding a lack of advance notice and consultation with Willow Acres residents before recent construction and proposed road closures.

- Raised concerns about proceeding with a change order to Castle Rock Enterprises rather than publicly tendering the project. He recommended that local contractors be given the opportunity to bid on the work.
- Expressed concerns that engineering, drainage, and ditching design may not be sufficiently completed before construction proceeds. He recommended that Council inspect the current construction area and Willow Acres Loop before making a decision.
- He mentioned concern that the section identified in the staff report as requiring the most attention does not reflect the actual condition of the road.
- Raised questions regarding whether funding has been secured and whether the project qualifies for the identified funding programs.
- Expressed concern that previous Village of Haines Junction infrastructure projects included stakeholder consultation, while Willow Acres residents have not been consulted on this project.
- Raised concerns that delays between construction phases could leave the road in poor condition and negatively impact access and property values.
- Made a request to postpone approval of the proposed change order, delay the project until engineering and drainage design are complete, confirm funding has been secured, and consult with affected residents, and publicly tender the project before proceeding.

Discussion:

- Council thanked Mr. Ritchie for his presentation and requested that the email referenced by Mr. Ritchie be forwarded along to Council.

6. Adoption of Minutes of Regular and Special Council Meetings

a. <u>May 27th, 2026 Regular Council Meeting Minutes</u>

Discussion:

- Amend the minutes on Page 2, Item 9.a. to add mention that Councillor Sundbo provided questions to CAO Fairbank via email regarding the Accounts Payable; and
- On Page 7, amend the mention of 'CAO identified Industrial Road (between highway and municipal shop' to say 'Fireweed Street' instead of 'Industrial Road'.

#151-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting of May 27th, 2026 be adopted with the following amendments:

- Amend the minutes on Page 2, Item 9.a. to add mention that Councillor Sundbo provided questions to CAO Fairbank via email regarding the Accounts Payable; and
- On Page 7, amend the mention of 'CAO identified Industrial Road (between highway and municipal shop' to say 'Fireweed Street' instead of 'Industrial Road'.

Motion #151-26 was **CARRIED.**

7. **Public Hearings and Public Input Sessions**
   None.

8. **Old Business**

   a. Draft Audit Review and Presentation - Metrix Group LLP.

   Stephen Webber's, Metrix Group LLP Representative, Presentation:

   - The independent audit confirmed that the Village's 2025 financial statements fairly present its financial position and comply with Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards. The audit provides reasonable assurance based on testing and sampling procedures, rather than a full examination of every transaction.
   - The Village reported net financial assets of approximately $9.6 million, reflecting a strong liquidity position after accounting for liabilities. The accumulated surplus increased to approximately $59 million, with most of this value held in tangible capital assets.
   - Tangible capital assets increased primarily due to the transfer of the Phase 4 wastewater and sewer project valued at approximately $3.5 million. Annua budgeted operating costs were approximately $3.6 million, indicating the Village is financially sustainable under current operations. Accounts receivable increased mainly due to government grant funding for landfill improvements of approximately $650,000, which is considered low risk for collection.
   - Loans receivable decreased as two of the five outstanding land sale loans were fully repaid ahead of schedule. Deferred revenue increased due to multi-year restricted funding from the Housing Accelerator Fund, which has not yet been fully spent.
   - Amortization expense of approximately $1.8 million reflects the annual non-cash reduction in the value of capital assets over time. Prepaid expenses increased due to bulk purchases of water treatment materials that will be recognized as expenses over future periods.
   - Total revenues for the year were approximately $4.6 million, remaining consistent with both the prior year and approved budget.
   - Government transfer revenues increased due to additional funding for landfill improvements and housing-related programs.
   - Interest income declined as market rates fell from approximately 4% to 2.5% despite strong cash balances.
   - Environmental health expenses exceeded budget due to landfill project timing and the reclassification of certain costs to capital. Public works expenses were lower than expected due to unfilled or partially filled staff positions during the year. Administration expenses decreased compared to the prior year due to the absence of one-time legal and land sale-related costs. Planning and development activity remained minimal in 2025 due to the absence of land sales.
   - The Village recorded an annual surplus before capital items of approximately $1.2 million. Capital activity during the year was primarily driven by infrastructure investments, including the sewer project.

- Internal controls over payroll, procurement, and revenue collection were assessed as strong and operating effectively.
- The audit did not identify any significant deficiencies, fraud risks, or material weaknesses in internal controls. Only eight audit adjustments were required, which is considered very low and indicative of accurate financial reporting. Approximately $66,000 in unadjusted differences were identified, but these were not material to the financial statements. No significant audit difficulties were encountered, and the audit process was supported by strong cooperation from staff and management.
- The prior year financial statements were restated due to the recognition of the asset retirement obligation related to landfill closure costs.
- The Yukon Government agreement covers approximately 50% of landfill closure costs, reducing the Village's long-term liability exposure.
- Overall, the Village remains in a strong and stable financial position with healthy reserves, consistent operations, and a clean audit outcome.

Discussion:

- Back to the liabilities and asset retirement obligations, we discussed the landfill closure costs. Could you clarify why a similar asset retirement obligation does not apply to the sewage lagoon?
    - Mr. Webber explained that sewage lagoons rarely have set retirement or decommissioning dates. He recommended that the Village may want to hire a professional to assess the legal requirements of the environmental obligations to remediate and decommission the sewage lagoon.
    - CAO Fairbank noted that this topic has previously been raised at the Association of Yukon Communities (AYC) meetings. It was mentioned that under ESAP accounting standards, the sewage lagoon doesn't meet the criteria that would require it to be recorded as an asset retirement obligation, so it isn't treated as such for accounting purposes.
    - Mr. Webber added that, in the future, Council may choose to add this as an obligation out of an abundance of caution.
- Reviewing the management letter, it was noticed that there are a few items that were also identified last year, such as the small outstanding accounts payable with the swim club. Although these amounts are minor, they were previously brought to Council's attention and do not appear to have been fully addressed. From your perspective, how concerning is it that these recurring items remain unresolved, and would you expect these types of issues to be cleaned up in the interim?
    - Mr. Webber explained that the items in the management letter are not considered significant concerns, mainly due to their very small dollar value. He noted that the purpose of keeping these items in the letter is to track them until they are resolved, clarified, or explicitly left as-is by management. If no specific follow-up note is included, it generally means the issue is still expected to be addressed but has not yet been completed. He added that while it would be ideal to clean up minor items like these and properly identify ownership of

funds, their continued presence does not raise any financial red flags or materially impact the audit, even if they remain outstanding for some time.

- Council thanked Mr. Webber for the audit and his great presentation.

#152-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT Council approve the Audit Report by Metrix Group LLP. with Mr. Webber's amendments.

Motion #152-26 was **CARRIED**.

b. Accounts Payable to June 10th and June 24th, 2026

Discussion:

- Council noted that Item 28469 should read 'diesel exhaust fluid' instead of 'diesel exhaust fuel'.
- Item 28482 refers to 'Bump Lock Blocks'. What is that referring to?
  - CAO clarified that it was an item, as written on the invoice and likely was for the municipal dump.
- What does the Government of Yukon Capital Projects Alaska Highway Quarry Permit refer to?
  - CAO explained that quarry material is paid for upfront, and a survey is done afterward to determine actual usage so any unused amount can be refunded. In this case, the municipality purchased the quarry permit in advance to secure material needed for the budgeted $550,000 roadworks program.
- Council noted that Ellen's surname was misspelled on the last page.

c. RTC – Composting Budget and Next Steps, Public Engagement Summary Report

CAO Presentation:

- Presented update on Solid Waste Advisory Group (SWAG) composting proposal following Council's request for further public engagement and survey data.
- The survey results indicate an estimated 25-43% of residential waste could be compostable, with some already being composted and some residents not expected to participate.
- Diverting organics is expected to extend landfill lifespan, supporting asset management goals.
- The proposed composting unit cost is $119,374. With the following additional costs: $5,000 for electrical connection to sea can (pending quote); $5,000 contingency for site prep (grading, gravel, etc.); and an estimated operating cost: $3,000/year (electricity, hardwood pellets, testing), with potential increase depending on testing frequency.
- The bucket program would be cost recovery for users; staffing/handling costs not fully estimated due to uncertain uptake.
- Maintenance requirements noted were mentioned with details still being refined. A backup plan has been considered and exists if system demand exceeds capacity.
- The project aligns with asset management and long-term cost savings priorities.

- The draft resolution includes approval of $130,000 capital budget and corrected $3,000 annual operating budget.

Discussion:

- What kind of maintenance requirements can be expected for this unit?
    - The SWAG Committee member responded that they spoke with current users of the composting units, who reported successful operation over a range of approximately 4 to 10 years, with continued good performance over time. They noted the following maintenance requirements:
        - The system requires bi-weekly maintenance by staff, estimated at 45 minutes to 1 hour per session.
        - This includes emptying the machine, initiating an automatic cleaning cycle for each chamber, and manually cleaning both the interior and exterior surfaces using a scraper.
    - While the cleaning process is partially automated, staff involvement is still required to start and complete key steps, meaning the workload is more active than initially assumed.
    - Additional longer-term maintenance requirements were also outlined:
        - Routine electronic system checks are recommended every 3, 6, and 12 months to ensure proper functioning. These tasks are considered manageable for municipal staff.
        - A more comprehensive motor inspection is recommended approximately every 10 years, representing a longer-term preventative maintenance requirement.
    - These maintenance practices are already being carried out on existing installations, which continue to operate effectively after extended periods of use.
- Will there be water requirements with regards to maintenance?
    - The SWAG Committee member noted that there was no water use needed. The maintenance just required scraping and wiping.
- Council noted that survey respondents were generally positive and supportive of implementing a composting program. They expressed hope that this support translates into actual participation once the program is in place. They emphasized that achieving higher diversion rates (up to the estimated 43% of compostable waste) would significantly reduce landfill use and improve long-term outcomes.
- Who are the composting unit users that the SWAG committee spoke with?
    - The Jean Coutu Headquarters, a drug store in Québec; and the La Vie en Rose store.
- Are there municipalities using these composting units?
    - The SWAG Committee member mentioned that no municipalities are using the models, as created by this current company. However, the previous company, which was sold a few years ago, did sell units to some municipalities. Since the

sale of the company, many improvements have been made, making the units considerably more durable and less prone to breaking.

- CAO noted that the composting machine has a limited processing capacity of approximately 1,500 kilograms of food waste per month, as highlighted in the report. Based on potential participation rates and total household waste volumes, there is a realistic possibility that the system could reach or exceed its capacity, leaving excess material that would still require alternative handling. The CAO explained that if sustained demand proves higher than the machine can manage, there is an option to add additional units in the future. However, they emphasized that it is preferable to risk higher usage than insufficient usage, since composting systems require a minimum "critical mass" of input material to function properly and maintain the necessary operating conditions.
- SWAG Committee member explained that, based on early experience from La Vie en Rose, the machine did not need to operate at full capacity to function effectively. The unit includes key features such as a grinder, aeration, heating pads, and a secondary chamber to ensure it consistently meets Health Canada and CCME requirements. They added that alternative systems considered were simpler tumbler-style units with slightly higher capacity, but they lacked these advanced features and the difference in capacity was not significant.
- SWAG Committee member noted that the Terra 200 is Novaterra's largest unit, supporting the committee's preference for starting with one machine and adding a second only if demand requires it. They noted that an alternative from BROM was nearly double the cost for a slightly larger system, making Novaterra the more cost-effective option. The approach focuses on maximizing one unit by targeting organics not already diverted, such as commercial, institutional, and households without composting access, while encouraging residents who already compost at home to continue to avoid exceeding capacity.
- Council noted that this is a pilot project, and that the Village will have to see how the composting system works.
- Council expressed concern about purchasing a smaller machine and having to purchase another, thus doubling the price, due to higher capacity of use.
- When the SWAG Committee spoke with Novaterra, did they mention any current users who are looking at getting a larger machine to increase capacity?
    - Not at the moment.
- The SWAG Committee representative noted that if the Village exceeds capacity, in the short term, they've discussed putting compost into the landfill to address over-capacity issues.
- Is the machine proposed the largest unit available with Novaterra?
    - Yes. It is their largest, and only commercial composting machine.
- Some Council members expressed concern about the capacity of compost that the Novaterra machine could process, noting that they believed the Village compost would exceed the machine's capacity immediately. Other Council members disagreed with the speed at which capacity would be met.
- How are the compost buckets washed?

- CAO responded that the buckets would be transported in bulk to the Public Works yard to be washed there.

- Council thanked the SWAG committee for all the hard work they did.

#153-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT Council approve a capital budget of $130,000 for the purchase and installation of a Novaterra Terra 200 composting system at the Solid Waste Management Facility and approves an annual operating budget of $3,000 for its ongoing operation and directs staff to proceed.

Motion #153-26 was **CARRIED**.

d. RTC - 13 Ways Community Survey and Pilot Project

CAO Presentation:

- The Village has an opportunity to participate in a pilot project led by Doug Griffiths, former Alberta MLA and Minister of Municipal Affairs. Griffiths is conducting a free community assessment initiative and has invited the municipality to participate as a "pilot" site.
- The first step is a comprehensive 70-question survey, with the option for Council to add custom questions. The survey aims to gather community feedback on local character, priorities, and areas of need. Results would support future planning work, including the community planning process and a Community Identity Workshop.
- Staff are requesting Council approval to proceed with the survey and allow the project to continue without repeated Council approvals, with updates provided through reports instead. There is no cost to participate, and administration views the information as potentially valuable for decision-making and planning.

Discussion:

- Why was the report identifying Dakwäkäda as the recipient?
    - Dakwäkäda was used to represent the broader community, to ensure that Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Citizens who live on settlement land would also participate in the survey.
- Council suggested naming both Haines Junction and Dakwäkäda to be clearer.
- Council noted that while the cost of the survey is free, staff time will be required. How confident is the CAO that staff have time to participate in this project?
    - CAO responded that for the survey portion, there is no more time required from staff. Moving into next steps, staff will have to be conscientious to ensure that their time capacity is not exceeded.
- Council noted that Community Identity is on its Council priority list, tying in well with participation in this project.
- Could Council potentially add questions to the survey?
    - Yes.
- Has this project been done in other communities?

- CAO responded that he believed that other communities are also involved in this pilot project. On the website, it shows that communities can pay money monthly to participate in the program.
- Has Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (CAFN) been engaged in this?
  - Not yet.
- Council noted that it would like to involve CAFN in this discussion and project.
- Council expressed that involvement in this project could be positive and work towards the priority of 'Community Identity'.
- Council expressed wanting to know more about the overall project.
- What are the timelines for the project?
  - CAO responded that the survey would be available online for somewhere between 60 or 90 days, though he would need to clarify exact timelines. It is unknown how long it would take to analyze the information and draft a report of findings.
- Is there a fixed deadline to participate in this project?
  - CAO responded that he wasn't sure, but that there was likely some urgency as it is a pilot project.
- If Council approves to participate in the project, they would like to have more formal information provided, to ensure that it is clear what is being agreed upon.

#154-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT Council direct staff to run the 13 Ways community survey, to use the results to inform the Community Identity Workshop, and to report those results back to Council; and **THAT** Council direct staff to continue participating in the 13 Ways Community Audit & Realignment Exercise pilot project, bringing any further details and work to Council for direction and approval and providing regular updates.

Motion #154-26 was **CARRIED**.

#155-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT the meeting be extended past 9:00 p.m.

Motion #155-26 was **CARRIED**.

<u>e. RTC – Unrestricted Reserve Allocation</u>

CAO Presentation:

- The Village holds just over $5 million in unrestricted surplus, exceeding the recommended reserve level of approximately one year's operating costs (about $3.6 million).
- The Village's financial position is strong compared to peer Yukon municipalities, with unrestricted reserves equal to 17 months of operating costs and total net financial assets equal to 34 months, compared to peer averages of 8 months and 17 months, respectively.

- A transfer of $1,429,681 from the unrestricted surplus was recommended, with $300,000 allocated to the Fire Department Reserve and $1,129,681 to the Infrastructure Reserve.
- Increasing the Fire Department Reserve would support the future purchase of a fire pumper apparatus and provide greater flexibility in negotiations regarding out-of-municipality fire response services.
- The Infrastructure Reserve was identified as the highest priority because it funds the replacement of major assets and is currently underfunded.
- Recent Public Works fleet purchases have reduced the equipment reserve, but major replacement costs are not expected for another 7 to 15 years.
- The Recreation Facility Reserve will retain more than $2 million after the demolition project, leaving sufficient funding for future recreation facility needs.

Discussion:

- Is the Recreation Facility Reserve used for the demolition of the facility?
    - Yes, the cost of the demolition is being drawn from the Recreation Facility Reserve. However, this hasn't been passed in a bylaw yet, which leaves it up for discussion.
- Council proposed establishing a new Emergency Operations and Recovery Reserve with an initial contribution of $500,000 to ensure funds are readily available for emergency response and recovery efforts. It was suggested that funding for the new reserve come from reducing the proposed contribution to the Infrastructure Reserve, while continuing to build all restricted reserves over time as financial capacity allows. Creating the reserve was viewed as a way to strengthen emergency preparedness and demonstrate the Village's commitment to emergency planning and response.
- Why is the Infrastructure Reserve an odd, not rounded number?
    - The proposed allocation was calculated by starting with the Village's unrestricted surplus of just over $5 million, retaining approximately $3.6 million as the recommended minimum reserve equal to one year of operating expenses, allocating $300,000 to the Fire Department Reserve, and transferring the remaining balance to the Infrastructure Reserve.
- Does the unrestricted surplus need to be $3.6 million?
    - No. That amount reflects the operating costs for 17 months, but it does not need to be this specific amount.
- Other Council members were in agreement with establishing an Emergency Operations and Recovery Reserve, though it was uncertain what amount of money should be in the reserve.
    - **Action:** CAO to prepare a Report to Council to compare what other communities have contributed to a similar reserve fund, as well as bylaw implications.
- CAO and Council noted that the $3.6 million unrestricted reserve can also be used for other purposes, such as capital expenses or emergencies.
- Council mentioned that the unrestricted reserve could be reduced to allow the Village 8 or 10 months to cover operating costs.

    - **Action:** Council requested that the CAO research the reasons why other communities have chosen to hold, on average, 8 months of operating costs in their unrestricted reserves.
- Would the renovations of the firehall fall under the infrastructure reserve or the fire department reserve?
    - CAO responded that it would probably fall under both.
- Council requested to defer this discussion after more information was provided, and its questions were answered.

#156-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT Council defer the surplus and unrestricted reserve allocations until Village staff prepare and present more information to Council, as discussed. That Village staff provide additional information on why other communities have 8 months on average reserves versus a larger or smaller number; to explore an emergency response and recovery by-law, potentially with a value of $500,000 to be drawn from the proposed infrastructure reserve edition; to provide language on each of the existing reserve bylaws; and information on the fire department reserves.

Motion #156-26 was **CARRIED**.

f. Verbal – Pride Flag request

CAO Presentation:

- The Freedom of Colours Club requested that the Pride flag presented to Council be permanently mounted in the arena, following the installation of the Pride sidewalk. The request was brought forward for Council discussion and direction.

Discussion:

- Council noted that its research indicated municipal and professional arenas typically display the Pride flag during Pride-related events rather than year-round. The majority of Council expressed that permanently displaying the flag could set a precedent for similar requests from other groups, and that the Village already demonstrates its support through Pride Month activities, including the Pride flag, sidewalk, and parade.

#157-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT Council deny the request to hang the pride flag permanently in the arena and that Village staff draft a letter in response to the Freedom of Colours group regarding this request.

Motion #157-26 was **CARRIED**.

g. Verbal – Council Summer Meeting Schedule

CAO Presentation:

- Council had a previous discussion regarding cancelling certain council meetings during the summer months to allow for a seasonal break.

Discussion:

- Council suggested cancelling one meeting per month during the summer period.
- Council noted that a one-month break in meetings seemed to be too long. It was mentioned that the current one-month break between meetings led to a backlog of issues to discuss at this meeting.
- Council generally agreed to have both meetings in July 2026 to catch up on discussions, while cancelling one of August 2026's meetings.

h. Draft Community Recognition Policy – Amendment #1

Councillor Busche recused herself from this discussion. Councillor Busche left the Council meeting at 9:37 p.m.

CAO Presentation:

- Noted that he forgot to attach the document to the Council package.

Discussion:

- Council mentioned that this item would have to be discussed at a future time, when information was provided.

#158-26 It was moved and seconded

> **THAT** Council defer the discussion of Item 9.h. Draft Community Recognition Policy – Amendment #1 to a future Council meeting.

Motion #158-26 was **CARRIED**.

Councillor Busche re-joined the Council meeting.

i. RTC – 2026 Community Recognition Nominations

CAO Presentation:

- Two independent nominations were received for the St. Elias Lions Club under the Village's Community Recognition Policy, and both met the eligibility criteria.
- The nominations recognized the Club's long history of volunteer service, including organizing community events such as the Canada Day Poker Run and Skate with Santa, as well as contributions to cemetery maintenance, cancer fundraising, the Tomlin Hill Memorial, and the installation of new playground equipment.

Discussion:

- No discussion.

#159-26 It was moved and seconded

> **THAT** Council recognize the St. Elias Lions Club under Policy #43-25 Community Recognition Policy for outstanding volunteerism and long service to the community of Haines Junction; and **THAT** staff are directed to arrange a gift or

donation of appreciation valued at $300, and to announce the recipient during the Canada Day celebrations on July 1, 2026.

Motion #159-26 was **CARRIED**.

j. RTC – 2025-2026 Road Repair and Resurfacing Update – Decision

CAO Presentation:

- Willow Acres Loop was identified as a priority road project in 2024, but funding was not available until the 2026 capital budget, which allocated $550,000 for road work.
- Excavation confirmed the road has reached the end of its service life, with a poor foundation consisting of pit run over uncompacted clay and no geotextile fabric. The deteriorated base causes significant movement, making patching an ineffective long-term solution.
- Castle Rock Enterprises continues to honour pricing from its competitively tendered 2024 contract, providing cost savings through price stability and reduced mobilization costs. Administration noted there were no concerns with Castle Rock's workmanship on the subdivision project, and previous issues were unrelated to the contractor.
- Ditch improvements are recommended before resurfacing to address drainage issues that contribute to road deterioration and create liability concerns. A LiDAR scan of the roadway has been completed, and additional ditch surveys are planned to support a drainage improvement plan.
- Administration intends to seek federal climate adaptation funding to support ditching and drainage improvements, with the possibility of including future BST surfacing if funding is approved.
- The estimated cost to reconstruct the road foundation is approximately $1.1 million, with an additional $650,000 (subject to market pricing) required for BST surfacing in a future phase.
- While road conditions vary throughout the loop, the entire roadway was described as being in poor condition. The corner section presents an additional public safety concern due to road grading and deterioration affecting vehicle control.
- The Village currently has approximately $5 million in accrued Canada Community-Building Fund (CCBF) funding available that can be used for eligible road projects without submitting a new funding application.
- Concerns regarding communication with residents were acknowledged, and the contractor has been directed to improve public communication throughout the project.
- Although concerns were raised regarding communication and local contractor involvement, notices were issued once plans were sufficiently advanced, and no local contractor currently has the capacity to complete engineered road reconstruction to the Village's required standards independently.

Discussion:

- What is the cost of mobilization for this work?
    - It depends on the amount and type of equipment needed, but the estimate for the 2025 work was at approximately $200,000.

- Would Champagne Aishihik First Nations also consider Castle Rock a local contractor?
    - Yes.
- If we have a local contractor, why do they have to have equipment mobilized to your community?
    - Because they operate all over the territory, and as a result, their equipment will not likely be nearby.
- Who determined the road status?
    - In 2024, Village staff assessed the road conditions. There was also an associate engineer that the Village paid to provide data on the road substructure.
- Council supported improving the road policy to provide earlier and clearer communication to residents about planned works to improve public awareness and acceptance. It emphasized the need for better coordination and sequencing of preliminary work, including surveys, ditching, and BST application, suggesting survey work should occur earlier if required.
- Council agreed with the report's recommendation that the road requires full completion rather than temporary or partial measures.
- Council expressed concern that options such as leaving the road gravel for an extended period or only patching it would likely lead to public dissatisfaction and complaints.
- Where are the access points into the expansion of the Willow Acres Subdivision?
    - There are two access points: one through Lupin Road and the other is through the Willow Acres Loop.
- Council questioned the appropriate approach for the road given expected impacts from construction activity and heavy hauling. It noted that no geotechnical investigation or centerline drilling has been completed on the road, limiting understanding of subsurface conditions. Council suggested that better preliminary geotechnical work could have informed decisions regarding existing sub-excavated areas and overall road conditions. Council expressed concern that current planning is based on assumptions about subsurface conditions rather than confirmed data.
- Council expressed uncertainty about the best option for the road given competing considerations. It noted resident concerns about leaving the road as gravel, but suggested this may be based on misunderstandings of what a properly constructed gravel surface would involve.
- Council clarified that a maintained crushed gravel surface with calcium treatment would differ significantly from the current conditions that include potholes and washboarding.
- Council suggested that better public information could help address concerns and clarify expectations. It was acknowledged that while reconstruction impacts residents, longer-term infrastructure outcomes must also be considered.
- Council noted that residents have received a consistent level of service and should generally expect that level of service to continue.
- Council referenced the upcoming asset management plan as a tool that may eventually provide better information about infrastructure conditions, including subsurface road conditions. It suggested that improved asset management data could help reduce uncertainty and support better decision-making in future road planning.

- Council stated that road decisions are operational and should not require broad public consultation, similar to water and sewer infrastructure decisions.
- Council noted that they believed this road work was mentioned in Mayor Strand's most recent Facebook live video update to Village residents.
- How does this roadwork fall under the Climate Adaptation Fund?
    - The road and road structure work doesn't but the ditching work could qualify for the fund as it could be argued that rapid spring freshet is significantly worse than in past years due to the changing climate.
- How long will the road work take?
    - CAO responded that the road foundations would be undertaken this summer (2026), leaving a gravel calcium finish. Then, they would come back in 2027 to do the ditch work, and finish with the BST road surfacing.
- CAO noted that residents would feel better if they had reassurance from Council that the roadwork would be completed regardless of receipt of external funding sources prior to Fall 2027.
- CAO noted that the roadwork would cost an estimated $1.8 million dollars in total if $1.1 million was spent this year. He indicated that this amount exceeds the expected cost of the BST work for the year. However, there is no current estimate for the ditch work.
- CAO confirmed that Phase 4B (the alley across the highway) is scheduled for next year.
- Council expressed concern about doing road work, then having heavy equipment on it afterwards, which would likely heavily damage the road. Can we restrict the heavy equipment to move through the other access?
    - CAO responded that there are a few options of using primarily Lupin Road as the access, or perhaps other alternate routes.
- Council discussed timing of road works, noting that if delayed, the road would need to be torn up next year, impacting the residents.
- The CAO noted that deferring the project could allow the ditching, road work, and BST application to be completed together next year. However, the project would require a new tender process, and costs would likely exceed the currently guaranteed 2024 pricing. While combining the work into one construction season has advantages, residents would have to live with the existing road conditions for another year.
- The CAO acknowledged that residents have differing preferences, with some opposed to a temporary gravel surface and others wanting to avoid another year of potholes. He suggested that if Council wishes to gauge community preferences between these options, broader public consultation would be necessary.
- Council expressed concern about delaying the road works, noting that something could occur that would further delay the work, and that the costs would likely continue to rise.
- Council noted that it would likely be financially advantageous to conduct all the BST work at once.
- Council discussed that Mr. Ritchie mentioned that the current road is muddy. Is there currently no gravel or calcium on the road?
    - CAO responded that there is no gravel or calcium. He explained that the poor condition of the Willow Acres Road work area was the result of the road being sub-cut during reconstruction. An initial lift of pit run was used as a base before

the road would be built up with structural fill gravel for the top layer. He clarified that the rough conditions were a temporary stage of the reconstruction process rather than the finished road surface.

- Did Mr. Ritchie come to the Village to ask any questions ahead of his presentation?
  - CAO responded that there was no verbal conversation. There had been an email exchange, but that the items of concern raised tonight were not mentioned. He had mainly expressed overall concern for the project.
- CAO noted that he shared a draft copy of the Report to Council last Friday afternoon via email to around 15 residents of the community, some of whom had expressed concern with the roadworks project. There was one response to the email from a resident, who reiterated their concerns with the project. The concerns revolved around losing the greenery, such as strawberries, when the work was undertaken.
- Council noted that 'Option 1 – Do Nothing' was not desirable, that 'Option 2 – Partial Repair' was simply a short-term patch up, and that 'Option 3 – Full Loop Rebuild to Gravel, Surfacing in 2027 (Recommended)', appeared to be the most sensible option. For Option 3, if gravel is put down, it must be well maintained, which means hiring graders. Council noted that there are local people to hire for that grading work.
- Council expressed interest in applying for the Climate Adaption Funding for some of this work, while also noting that the Village does have money to finish the project, regardless of outside funding.
- Council discussed providing a clear update of these road works on Mayor Strand's next weekly Facebook live video update.
  - **Action:** CAO will draft this update for Mayor Strand to communicate to the public.

#160-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT Council approve the addition of the Willow Acres Loop reconstruction to the 2026 road program under Option 3, and that the road be left as a calcium-treated gravel surface pending completion of ditching, drainage, and BST surfacing in 2027, Council commit to completing the surfacing by the Fall of 2027.

Motion #160-26 was **CARRIED**.

9. New Business

a. RTC – Council Maternity Leave Policy Options

CAO Presentation:

- Council members receive an honorarium rather than being employees of the Village and are therefore not covered by employment standards legislation governing maternity and paternity leave. Village employees are entitled to the minimum leave provisions under employment standards legislation, including maternity and parental leave, but no equivalent provisions currently exist for elected officials.

- A review of policies across Yukon municipalities found that none have maternity or paternity leave provisions for Council members. Research into municipalities in British Columbia and other Canadian territories found that many provide up to 26 weeks of maternity or parental leave for elected officials.
- These policies generally serve two purposes: maintaining remuneration during leave and protecting Council members from losing their seat if they miss consecutive meetings due to parental leave.
- Seeking Council's direction on whether to develop a maternity and paternity leave policy for elected officials.
- Potential policy options include: matching Yukon employment standards for leave duration; maintaining the current approach with no formal leave policy; establishing a different leave period based on Council's preference; or allowing members to miss a specified number of meetings with Council's approval while not receiving remuneration.
- The discussion was intended to gather Council's feedback before staff prepare a draft policy for future consideration.

Discussion:

- Council expressed support for exploring a maternity and paternity leave policy, noting it would be a progressive initiative for a municipality to take on.
- Council acknowledged that developing such a policy involves several complexities because Council members are elected officials rather than employees.
- Council agreed that staff should proceed with developing a draft policy for consideration.
- What does the Yukon Legislature do with regards to parental leave?
    - CAO hadn't researched this, but would investigate it.
- Council noted that any maternity or parental leave policy should address situations where a Council member's term ends before their approved leave period, with leave ending upon the expiration of their elected term.
- Some Council members expressed that it would be best to address parental leaves or other leaves of absence on a case-by-case basis, as there are many nuances and details to consider.
- Council discussed having further discussions on this subject.
- A Council member emphasized that maternity leave primarily affects women and acknowledged the unique challenges faced by elected officials who become parents during their term. The member expressed support for introducing a maternity and parental leave policy, describing it as a progressive, precedent-setting initiative. They noted that people do not always plan to have children while serving in elected office and that adopting such a policy would help make municipal governance more inclusive and supportive.
- CAO clarified that there is no risk for Councillor Mackinnon being ejected from Council due to her absence. However, this is a discussion to address the financial compensation to the Council member while away on leave.

#161-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT Council grant leave to Councillor Mackinnon to extend her 90-day leave of absence by another 90 days, as per Section 193.04 of the Municipal Act.

Motion #161-26 was **CARRIED**.

10. Correspondence

a. RCMP Monthly Report

Discussion:

- No discussion.

#162-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT Council receive and file the RCMP monthly report.

Motion #162-26 was **CARRIED**.

b. Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day and Month

Discussion:

- No discussion.

#163-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT Council receive and file the Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day and Month.

Motion #163-26 was **CARRIED**.

c. Health Center Update - June

Discussion:

- No discussion.

#164-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT Council receive and file the Health Center Update - June.

Motion #164-26 was **CARRIED**.

d. Swimming Pool Letter

CAO Presentation:

- CAO noted that he had a conversation with Mr. Ritchie about this topic to let him know that there wouldn't be an operational pool by 2027, but it is Council's top priority.

Discussion:

- Council noted that an update to the public about the swimming pool would be helpful. Council discussed having Mayor Strand add an update on the swimming pool on her next Facebook live announcement.

#165-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT Village staff draft a response to the letter from Mark Ritchie with Council's signature regarding the swimming pool and that the letter be received and filed.

Motion #165-26 was **CARRIED**.

11. Council Reports and Notice of Motions

Councillor Busche

- Presented the Tish Tomlin High School Award to her grandson on June 2nd, 2026.
- Attended a SWAG Committee meeting on Tuesday.

Councillor Mackinnon

- Councillor was not present.

Councillor Moore

- Noted that he and the volunteer fire department responded to an RV fire at Canyon Creek rest area last week at 10:30 p.m. There was a good group that came together to help. Three people stayed with the municipal pumper in case of a fire event in town, and six others went with their tender, extra water, and the Yukon Government pumper. Councillor Moore noted that the person driving the RV was aware of the issue and, to avoid a forest fire, drove it there to reduce risks. A brave act.

Councillor Sundbo

- Attended the Shakwak Community Hall Committee meeting on June 22nd, 2026. Updated Council that there will be a Canada Day event with photos, displays of memorabilia from the Hall. No t-shirts have yet to be made, but a list will be circulated if people would like a t-shirt with artwork produced on it in the future.
- The committee requested staff assistance to remove three historic signs from the exterior of Shakwak Hall, as the work will require equipment such as ladders or a lift and multiple people.
- The signs, along with other salvaged artifacts from the old hall, will be displayed during the Canada Day celebrations to commemorate the building and encourage residents to share memories.
- As Parade Marshal, Wade Istchenko will introduce the display and invite attendees to share stories about the old hall.
- No separate commemorative event is planned due to limited community interest.
- The committee hopes the Canada Day display will encourage residents to share memories, photographs, and historical materials related to the old hall.
- Any borrowed photographs would be digitized and returned to their owners, with the possibility of creating a commemorative photo book depending on community participation.

- The committee requested staff assistance to collect and safely store display cases, photographs, documents, and signs currently located in the arena lobby to help preserve them.
- A committee member offered to assist staff with moving and storing the materials if needed.
- Staff confirmed the requested work is included in the report and can be completed.

Mayor Strand

- Attended the SWAG committee meeting alongside Councillor Busche. Noted the Yukon Government had committed $60,000 to the compost.
- Recognized the passing of Rhoda Ann Istchenko, a previous Council member of the Village of Haines Junction, and an icon within the community who contributed greatly to the town as a whole. Noted that she attended her funeral. She will be greatly missed.

12. Questions from the Public

There were no questions from the public.

13. Motion to Close Meeting to the Public

#166-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT the meeting be closed to the public at 11:00 p.m.

Motion #166-26 was **CARRIED**.

14. Motion to Reopen Meeting to the Public

#167-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT the meeting be reopened to the public at 11:06 p.m.

Motion #167-26 was **CARRIED**.

#168-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT Council have a Committee of the Whole meeting on Emergency Response Measures on July 15th, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.

Motion #168-26 was **CARRIED**.

15. Adjournment

#169-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT the meeting be adjourned.

Motion #169-26 was **CARRIED**

Meeting adjourned at 11:08 p.m.

Mayor Diane Strand

CAO David Fairbank