

**Village of Haines Junction
Regular Council Meeting Minutes
July 8, 2026**

Present:

Mayor Strand (via zoom)
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

Councillor Busche acknowledged that we are on the traditional territory of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations.

3. Adoption of Agenda

#170-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT the agenda be adopted.

Motion #170-26 was **CARRIED**.

4. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

5. Adoption of Minutes of Regular and Special Council Meetings

a. Draft Minutes from June 24th, 2026, Regular Council Meeting

Discussion:

- On p. 11, #156-26, change 'emergency response and recovery bylaw' to 'emergency response and recovery restricted reserve'.
- Council discussed what was said during the discussion regarding maternal and paternal leave, ensuring that the minutes accurately reflected what was said.
 - Council to review the video record and compare it to the meeting minutes to ensure accuracy.
- P. 18, under the 'Swimming Pool Letter' discussion, did the CAO say that the pool was Council's top priority?
- P. 17 and p. 18, is it appropriate to mention Councillor Mackinnon?
 - Council deemed that it was.

#171-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT the adoption of the minutes of the Regular Council meeting of June 24, 2026 be deferred.

Motion #171-26 was **CARRIED**.

6. Delegations

There were no delegations.

7. Public Hearings and Public Input Sessions

None.

8. Old Business

a. Draft Community Recognition Policy

CAO Presentation:

- The Community Recognition Policy is intended to take effect in 2027 to allow Council time to discuss and deliberate.
- Village staff have asked to amend the policy to include a Lifetime Achievement Award to honour individuals who have a sustained contribution to the community and have had a positive impact.
- The substantive changes have been highlighted in the draft policy found within this week's agenda package.

Discussion:

- Is there a section of the policy that addresses asking the nominee if they would like to be recognized?
 - CAO responded that this was not within the policy, but that it was a good catch. Noted that the Village does not typically reach out to nominees until they've been selected to receive the award.
- Council noted that not all individuals would like to be publicly recognized for what they've done.
 - CAO mentioned amending the policy to follow up with nominees before announcements are made to ensure they'd like to be publicly recognized for an award.
- Council noted that the policy title should be changed to 'Community Recognition Policy #43-25, Amendment 1'.
- In the policy, it is noted that for a nominee to be recognized, they must not be a member of Council. Does this extend to groups that have been nominated?
 - CAO responded that an entire group would not be disqualified if one of its members is a Council member.

#172-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT Council approve the Haines Junction Community Recognition Policy #43-25, Amendment 1, with the addition of asking the nominee if they want to be recognized.

Motion #172-26 was **CARRIED**.

b. RTC – Draft Investment Policy

CAO Presentation:

- Council previously directed staff on May 27th, 2026, to prepare an Investment Policy for the Village of Haines Junction. The proposed policy would establish a framework for investing reserve funds while remaining compliant with the Municipal Act, which limits the types of investments municipalities can make.
- The Village currently holds approximately \$9 million in reserve funds in a single high-interest savings account earning 2.11% interest. The account generated approximately \$193,000 in interest last year, but the return is below inflation, meaning the real value of reserve funds is gradually declining.
- Staff have been working with the Village's auditor, the Village's current investment broker, and the Municipal Finance Authority (MFA) of British Columbia. The MFA currently provides investment services to approximately 180 British Columbia municipalities and is seeking approval to formally provide services to Yukon municipalities. One Yukon community is already investing through the MFA.
- The Village's reserves are currently held in one account at one financial institution (CIBC) with no diversification. Keeping all reserve funds in a single account creates risk because deposit insurance only protects up to \$100,000 per account, leaving the vast majority of Village reserves uninsured in the unlikely event of institutional failure. Diversifying investments across multiple accounts or institutions would reduce financial risk while maintaining security.
- The proposed policy applies only to reserve funds and would not affect operational funds used for day-to-day municipal operations.
- Staff outlined a range of investment options, noting that: higher liquidity generally results in lower returns, investments with longer notice periods or terms typically provide higher returns, and options range from high-interest savings accounts to pooled funds with varying levels of liquidity.
- The MFA also offers fossil fuel-free investment funds, giving Council the option to align investments with environmental objectives while maintaining comparable rates of return.
- The draft policy does not change existing internal financial controls. Council would authorize the transfer of reserve funds to the MFA, while staff would continue managing routine transfers between reserve and operating accounts as needed.
- The Village typically maintains \$1-2 million in operating funds to support day-to-day cash flow. Before implementing any investment strategy, staff recommend obtaining an independent financial review, in addition to the auditor's review, to ensure the proposed approach is appropriate and in the Village's best interest.

Discussion:

- Council noted that while the report states the Village does not currently have an approved investment instrument, the existing high-interest savings account has effectively served as the Village's investment strategy since Council previously endorsed that approach several years ago. Council agreed it is appropriate to revisit the strategy to seek improved returns on reserve funds but requested additional information on the Municipal Finance Authority of British Columbia (MFA), including its investment management structure, whether investments are overseen by an individual or a team, and its overall performance history and track record before making a decision.
 - CAO responded that the MFA is a non-profit based in British Columbia with 180 participating municipalities. They have 4 to 5 employees. CAO noted he would send along their brochures to Council.
- Council expressed support for exploring a new investment approach but emphasized the importance of conducting thorough due diligence before proceeding, evaluating the MFA's suitability, governance, and performance. Council recommended taking the time to carefully review the proposal before making a decision.
- Council expressed concern that the Village has not heard back from its current provider, despite having reached out. It considered reviewing its current relationship.
- Council expressed support for pursuing a new investment strategy but emphasized the need for additional education and information before moving forward. A Council member drew on their previous experience with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Trust, noting that the trust had undertaken a competitive process in which investment firms presented their services, fees, and investment approaches, helping trustees make an informed decision. While recognizing that municipal legislation may limit available options, Council requested further information on the Municipal Finance Authority of BC and the legislative framework governing municipal investments so Council can better understand the available choices and proceed with confidence.
- What other investment options had been considered before recommending the Municipal Finance Authority of British Columbia? Council recalled previous discussions about investment opportunities through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and questioned whether other alternatives had been evaluated. Council requested an explanation of the process used to assess available options and how staff ultimately arrived at the recommendation presented to Council.
 - The CAO explained that the recommendation was based on the investment options permitted under the Municipal Act, which historically limited municipalities to a small number of conservative investment vehicles, such as high-interest savings accounts, guaranteed investment certificates (GICs), government-backed bonds, and similar low-risk instruments. Following recent legislative amendments allowing Yukon municipalities to invest through Municipal Finance Authorities (MFAs), staff focused their review on the MFA model because it provides investment management tools not otherwise available under the Act. The CAO noted that Council could still compare rates offered by CIBC and other financial institutions for eligible investment products,

adding that the possibility of moving the Village's funds elsewhere may encourage more competitive rates from the current provider.

- CAO asked whether Council would like to set up a meeting with the MFA in BC or if it would prefer to take a broader step back beforehand?
 - Council asked whether there could be an option where providers put forward bids and present options to Council.
 - CAO noted that the intention is to bring in an independent financial advisor to explain processes and options. Then, perhaps in the same meeting, having the MFA present, then having the financial advisor offer support and explanations following the presentation.
- Council wondered if there could be more avenues and options for financial investments if the Village was not constrained as a municipality.

#173-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT Council accept the information presented and direct staff to seek more information, possibly from a financial advisor or Yukon Government's Community Services Department, to educate Council about what's acceptable with the Municipal Act and commonplace for other municipalities to invest their surplus funds.

Motion #173-26 was **CARRIED**.

c. Draft Bylaw #442-26 Investment Policy

#174-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT Draft Bylaw #442-26 Investment Policy discussion be deferred to a later date.

Motion #174-26 was **CARRIED**.

d. RTC – Trail Maintenance Program

CAO Presentation:

- In 2025, the Trail Signage Committee was allocated a \$25,000 budget for trail signage and trail development. Approximately \$16,000 of the budget was designated for trail development projects.
- An RFP was issued for the trail work, but no bids were received. Staff found that trail maintenance and development projects are difficult to tender because it is challenging to clearly define acceptable trail standards and deliverables. As a result, the \$16,000 in unspent funding has been carried forward to 2026.
- Staff recommended reallocating the remaining funds from the Trail Signage Committee project to establish a Trail Maintenance Program and ongoing fund. The proposed program would fund small-scale trail maintenance and improvement projects, allow staff to identify and prioritize projects as needed, and support activities ranging from community clean-up events to minor trail enhancement projects.

- Smaller projects would be easier to scope, manage, and monitor than large, contracted trail development projects. Most projects would fall below the procurement threshold, allowing for simplified purchasing while still using competitive quotes where appropriate. In some cases, community participation (e.g., school groups) could be recognized through honoraria rather than formal contracts.
- The program could also create opportunities to work with Champagne and Aishihik First Nations crews, citizens, or community groups to strengthen partnerships.
- Administration would ensure all work complies with Workers' Compensation Board and insurance requirements.
- The proposed program would provide a low-cost, flexible, and adaptive approach to maintaining and improving community trails.
- The fund would also allow the Village to respond quickly to unexpected events, such as storm damage or fallen trees.
- Staff considered several alternatives:
 - continue using an RFP process (which has been unsuccessful);
 - assign trail maintenance to Village staff (limited by existing workload);
 - allow the remaining funds to lapse and undertake no additional work; or
 - establish trail maintenance as an ongoing annual Operations and Maintenance budget item, with funding levels determined by Council each year, rather than as a one-time capital project.

Discussion:

- How would the Village ensure that workers would be covered by WCB? Who would be expected to pay?
 - CAO responded that if workers don't have their own coverage, the Village could pay, which would only increase costs by around 5%.
- Could the Village fund a few Village workers to simply do trail maintenance?
 - CAO responded that that is an option that is possible and that has been considered.
- Council expressed support for the proposed trail maintenance program, noting that the lack of interest from contractors suggests trail work may be better suited to Village staff in the future, provided sufficient staffing resources are available. Council emphasized the importance of establishing clear maintenance standards while preserving the natural character of community trails, observing that many trails require only minor maintenance rather than significant upgrades. The Dezadeash River Trail was cited as an example, where localized repairs to the boardwalk may be needed following past flooding and freeze events, while the remainder of the trail remains in generally good condition.
- Have the potential implications of hiring Village staff for trail maintenance been considered, particularly regarding the likelihood that such positions would be unionized, and whether a long-term trail maintenance role would require a permanent position rather than a term or seasonal position, which are typically intended for short-duration work?

- CAO responded that seasonal staff positions are unionized. He noted that positions with recurring terms would likely be pushed into unionized positions, or, at the very least, garner union speculation.
- Are summer students an option for trail maintenance?
 - CAO responded that yes, they are, and that the Village could seek more summer students. He explained that two summer students were hired this year, though no additional students had come forward to work with the Village. He noted that there is no guarantee that students will show interest in working with the municipality in the future, making this an uncertain option for trail maintenance work.
- Council suggested that safety be taken into consideration, particularly if trail maintenance activities involve frequent use of power tools or chainsaws, noting that it may be useful to review resources, such as Parks Canada's trail maintenance manuals, and adopting relevant standards where appropriate.
- How are "small-scale projects" defined in the report? Is the definition based on the procurement threshold, project cost, or another measure?
 - The CAO clarified that discussions with staff identified the largest anticipated trail maintenance projects would likely be in the range of \$3,000. The intent behind defining projects as "small-scale" is not solely based on procurement thresholds or a predetermined dollar amount, but rather to ensure the program provides equitable opportunities across the community. By dividing funding among multiple smaller projects, the Village can reduce the risk of one individual or group receiving a disproportionate benefit and support broader community participation.
- Council noted that it may be easiest to define a size of project based on the financial amount allocated.
- What is the current procurement threshold for construction or services?
 - CAO believes it is in the range of \$50,000.
- Yukon Government had a program for students called 'Y2C2'. Is this still operating?
 - CAO noted that it is. The Village has formerly made efforts to partner with Y2C2 for the Dezadeash Trail work, but the timing did not work out.
- Council suggested exploring whether external organizations or community groups could assist with trail maintenance projects. Council referenced a previous example where the Y2C2 program completed work on a ski trail initiated through a local ski club, noting that organizations could be approached through an application process if the project aligned with their mandate and timing. Council suggested investigating similar opportunities as a way to complete trail work using external resources.
- Council expressed support for establishing a trail maintenance program, highlighting the opportunity to involve community groups through an application-based process. Council noted that similar approaches have been successful with other Village initiatives, such as the Solid Waste Advisory Group (SWAG), by encouraging volunteerism, community involvement, and collaboration. Groups, such as the ski club or trail committee members, could participate in trail maintenance activities, potentially as a fundraising opportunity or community project. Overall, the program is viewed as a positive

opportunity to strengthen community connections while maintaining and enhancing local trails.

#175-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT Council approve the establishment of a Trail Maintenance Program, under which small trail maintenance and development projects are scoped by the Village and delivered by community groups through honoraria and/or small contracts;

And that Council re-allocate the unspent balance of the 2026 Trail Signage and App Committee budget to Trail Maintenance and Signage;

And that Council direct administration to bring forward, during 2027 budget deliberations, an option to establish a recurring operating line for trail maintenance.

And that Council directs staff to research other delivery methods, including Y2C2 and other possibilities.

Motion #175-26 was **CARRIED**.

9. New Business

a. Accounts Payable to July 8th, 2026

#176-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT Council receive and file the Accounts Payable to July 8th, 2026.

Motion #176-26 was **CARRIED**.

b. RTC – Lot Amalgamation Request – Tourist Commercial Properties

CAO's Presentation:

- The Village has received two amalgamation requests under the commercial zoning designation, both located along the highway frontage. The requests include: Lots 1 and 2, Block 10, owned by Sha Shaw Corporation; and Lots 9 and 10, Block 9. One property involves a relatively complete development, while the other is expected to begin development in the near future. In both cases, amalgamation is required to accommodate the proposed structures, parking areas, and associated uses.
- The amalgamations would allow the intended permitted commercial uses of the properties without reducing the development capacity of the serviced lands.
- Existing zoning and surface servicing investments would continue to be fully utilized.
- The CAO distinguished these applications from scenarios where multiple serviced lots could be combined for limited development, such as a small pop-up shop occupying only a portion of a larger parcel.
- Highway frontage lots have significant infrastructure investments, including water and sewer services, and should be effectively utilized to justify those servicing costs. In these

two cases, the proposed developments fully utilize the combined parcels and are considered appropriate.

- The CAO recommended developing a formal policy to guide future requests for amalgamations, subdivisions, and lot boundary adjustments. A policy would provide consistent guiding principles for staff decision-making rather than addressing requests on an individual, ad hoc basis. The CAO noted that subdivision policies would include amalgamation and lot adjustment processes.
- No asset management impacts were identified for the two current amalgamation requests.
- Options presented to Council:
 - Approve the two amalgamation requests and direct staff to develop a subdivision/amalgamation policy (recommended option);
 - Approve the two amalgamation requests and continue reviewing future requests on an ad hoc basis.
 - Defer the applications until a policy is developed. Noted that staff did not recommend deferral because both applications meet the criteria currently used to assess amalgamation requests.
- The CAO noted that an additional lot amalgamation request has also been received and will be brought forward at an upcoming Council meeting, indicating that requests are beginning to increase.

Discussion:

- Council expressed concern regarding staff capacity and workload, noting that Council has spent considerable time reviewing priorities and identifying outstanding work items. How does the development of an additional policy align with existing workload pressures and the limited staffing resources available? How would staff accommodate this additional work while continuing to address current priorities?
 - CAO acknowledged the concern regarding staff workload and agreed that any work requiring a significant amount of staff time should be considered within Council's existing strategic priorities and work plan. The CAO suggested that future policy development requests could be assessed based on their priority level, including whether they should be treated as a high-priority item, added as a secondary priority to be addressed once current priorities are completed, or formally documented for future Council consideration.
- Council noted that the proposed policy development could be considered as part of the upcoming Official Community Plan (OCP) review process. It suggested that reviewing subdivision, amalgamation, and lot adjustment policies would align with the broader OCP review and could be included as an item for consideration. Council also noted that the OCP review is currently identified as a high-priority item.
 - CAO noted that the OCP falls under a priority to be addressed in the next 12 months, therefore isn't the highest priority identified.
- CAO noted that while the current amalgamation requests before Council are relatively straightforward, future applications may involve more complex considerations. The CAO explained that residential lot amalgamations can become contentious, particularly

where multiple serviced residential lots are combined, such as when a home occupies one lot and adjacent lots are used for parking, storage, gardens, or other purposes. Given the limited availability of serviced lots and the high cost of development within the community, these decisions require careful consideration. The CAO emphasized that developing a policy would help guide these more complex applications and expressed hope that significant residential amalgamation requests would not arise before a policy is established.

- Council supported the CAO's suggestion to monitor the volume and complexity of future lot amalgamation requests before prioritizing development of a formal policy. Council suggested that if staff begin receiving an increased number of amalgamation applications or more complex requests, the matter could be brought forward for Council's consideration and potentially elevated within the work plan timeline.

#177-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT Council recommend to the Government of Yukon that the two commercial lot amalgamation applications described in this report be approved.

Motion #177-26 was **CARRIED**.

#178-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT staff bring the Subdivision Policy to Council's attention at the next Council prioritization discussion.

Motion #178-26 was **CARRIED**.

10. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

11. Council Reports and Notice of Motions

Councillor Busche

- Councillor Busche thanked Councillor Sundbo for attending the ATCO presentation and noted that she had intended to attend but was unable to due to unexpected company.
- She also commented on the success of Canada Day, noting that the event was enjoyable and well attended by families. She observed that there appeared to be nearly as many participants in the parade as spectators, which made distributing materials challenging, but overall viewed the event as a positive community gathering.

Councillor Mackinnon

- Was not present. No report was provided.

Councillor Moore

- Councillor Moore provided a brief update on the Fire Department, noting that the department recently experienced equipment issues with the emergency warning system on the pumper truck, which stopped working unexpectedly. A mechanic was brought in

to troubleshoot the issue, but the cause was not initially identified. After additional troubleshooting and adjusting wiring, the system began working again, and previously ordered replacement parts, which were costly, were returned without expense to the Village. Councillor Moore confirmed the issue has been resolved and the equipment is currently operational.

- Councillor Moore also provided an update on recent Fire Department training activities, including practicing emergency entry and door breaching techniques in the old hall and conducting vehicle extrication exercises.
- Councillor Moore noted that the Fire Department also participated in Canada Day activities with a couple of trucks present, although he was unable to attend.

Councillor Sundbo

- Reported that Canada Day was a successful event and echoed Mayor Strand's comments regarding the Shakwak Hall celebration portion of the day, noting that it was well received by those who attended. He highlighted the positive atmosphere of seeing families and children enjoying the outdoor space, socializing, and participating in the event.
- Councillor Sundbo attended a July 6, 2026 meeting with the CAO and Councillor Moore regarding emergency management planning, noting that the work is progressing well.
- He also attended an ATCO presentation on the upcoming Automatic Metering System (AMS) installation, which had limited attendance but was well received by those present. Councillor Sundbo advised that ATCO will begin installing smart meters in Haines Junction on July 20, 2026, starting on the east side of the community and moving west, with most installations expected to be straightforward, while more complex issues such as outdated meter bases which will need to be addressed by electricians.
- Councillor Sundbo acknowledged the upcoming celebration of life for Richard Mazur on July 20th, and suggested that Council extend condolences to Rose and the Mazur family.

Mayor Strand

- Reported that Canada Day was a successful event and expressed appreciation for the community participation. Mayor Strand highlighted the recognition of the Lions Club for their longstanding contributions and noted that the trivia activity generated meaningful discussion among attendees.
- Mayor Strand shared that several community members reached out afterward to thank Council for its commitment to recognizing the community hall and acknowledged the work of the Shakwak Community Hall Committee members (Councillors Moore and Sundbo, Wade Istchenko, and Rose Kushniruk) in advancing that effort. She noted that the event helped encourage community reflection and discussion about local history and suggested that similar gatherings or smaller discussion opportunities could continue to support community engagement.
- Mayor Strand noted that Rose Mazur previously served as a Councillor for the Village of Haines Junction and supported Council extending condolences to her family regarding the passing of Richard Mazur.

- She suggested reviving the community portrait tradition that had previously taken place on Canada Day, proposing that a community photo be organized in front of Shawkwak Hall before the building is demolished later this year.
- Advised Council that she has been invited to speak as Mayor of Haines Junction at the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (CAFN) General Assembly the following weekend. She noted that her remarks will focus on thanking Council and CAFN for their collaborative efforts and the positive relationship developed through ongoing meetings. Mayor Strand advised that she would circulate her speaking notes to Council in advance and welcome any feedback or suggested additions.

#179-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT Council direct staff to research cost and logistics regarding having a community photo taken in front of the Shawkwak Hall prior to its demolition.

Motion #179-26 was **CARRIED**.

12. Questions from the Public

There were no questions from the public.

13. Motion to Close Meeting to the Public

a. Council procedures discussion

#180-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT the meeting be closed to the public at 8:34 p.m.

Motion #180-26 was **CARRIED**.

14. Motion to Reopen Meeting to the Public

#181-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT the meeting be reopened to the public at 9:26 p.m.

Motion #181-26 was **CARRIED**.

#182-26 It was moved and seconded

THAT Staff Appreciation Day be held on July 24th, 2026, closing the landfill from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. and the Municipal Office from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and that all staff be off during those hours.

Motion #182-26 was **CARRIED**

15. Adjournment

#183-26 It was moved and seconded
THAT the meeting be adjourned.

Motion #183-26 was **CARRIED**

Meeting adjourned at 9:27 p.m.



Mayor Diane Strand



CAO David Fairbank



