

**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:

- **Motion #336-25 – It was moved, seconded and CARRIED:**
 THAT a budget of \$1,500 be allocated for the Halloween staff event at the landfill; AND THAT staff be directed to channel suggestions through their supervisor rather than directly to Council.

Motion #342-25– It was moved, seconded and CARRIED:

THAT the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting of September 24, 2025 be adopted as amended.

6. Proclamations

There were no proclamations.

7. Delegations

There were no delegations.

8. Public Hearings and Public Input Sessions

There were no public hearings or public input sessions.

9. Old Business

a. Draft 2025 Supplementary/Provisional Operations and Maintenance (O&M) and Capital Budget CAO Presentation:

- The draft 2026 provisional operating and capital budgets were presented for Council review and discussion. In accordance with the *Municipal Act*, Council must adopt a provisional operating budget by December 31 each year. The provisional budget authorizes ongoing expenditures until the annual budgets are adopted on or before April 15.
- The draft budget incorporates supplementary (amended) 2025 figures – updated to reflect actuals and estimated year-end results – as well as scheduled 2026 capital projects, anticipated carry-forwards, and additional items approved by Council since adoption of the 2025 preliminary budget.
- It was noted that the projected 2025 year-end surplus appears higher than actual revenue over expenses due to reserve withdrawals recorded as surplus. By comparison, the 2024 budget was balanced and the 2023 budget also reported a surplus.
- Key variances and notable items were highlighted, including adjustments to anticipated revenues, utilities, maintenance, and legislative expenditures, along with scheduled infrastructure projects and equipment replacements planned for 2026.
- Approximately half of the 2026 expenditures relate to Gas Tax funding, the balance on which will be included in the next report for additional context.

Discussion:

- Landfill revenue shortfall – Concerns were expressed about the limitations of the tipping fee bylaw for cost recovery. Staff advised that recommendations will be brought forward during the annual bylaw review.
- Asset management – In response to a question about the lack of expenditures in this area, staff noted that policies are being developed to guide future asset management engagement.

- Christmas lights – Council discussed the budget for Christmas lights, noting the greater maintenance required for consumer-grade versus commercial lights. A suggestion was made to manage the expense through phased setups over multiple years.
- Pool demolition and remediation – Council noted the potential to draw up to \$1 million from reserve funding for this work and suggested exploring alternative funding sources, including tendering the building for sale or demolition.
- Capital plan adjustments – Council noted minor adjustments to the 2026 plan, including the carry forward of the historic mural upgrade, the addition the septic receiving station project and the removal of the wet well wizard project.
- Budget reporting format – Suggestions were offered to improve the clarity of future budget presentations to support understanding by councillors and the public without accounting expertise, including adding brief explanatory notes for significant variances.

Motion #343-25 – It was moved, seconded and CARRIED:

THAT Council direct staff to increase the 2025 budget for Christmas lights from \$5,000 to \$40,000.

b. Christmas open house staff update

CAO Presentation:

- In response to Council's questions about having an open bar at the Christmas open house, staff noted that the bar had historically been operated by Council rather than staff, at a cost of less than \$500.
- No operational concerns were identified, and the decision to offer a bar remained at Council's discretion.

Discussion:

- Council discussed whether to include a bar, including the option of using a ticket system instead of operating an open bar.
- A preference was expressed for not serving alcohol in light of recent substance abuse issues in the community.
- Council acknowledged the opportunity to revisit this decision in future years.

Motion #344-25 – It was moved, seconded and CARRIED:

THAT no alcohol be served at the 2025 Village Haines Junction Christmas Social.

10. New Business

a. Accounts Payable to October 9, 2025

Discussion:

- Council acknowledged the CAO's note that an ATCO Electric billing error resulted in an overcharge of approximately \$7,300 to the Landfill & Recycling account, and that a refund will be issued following payment.

b. (i) Report to Council – Emergency Response Planning (ERP) / (ii) Proposal – ERP

CAO Presentation:

- The CAO reported meeting with Chris Reynolds, the contractor assisting Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (CAFN) with emergency planning, to discuss extending similar services to the Village.
- A proposal was received outlining options to strengthen the Village's preparedness ahead of the 2026 fire season.
- Staff recommended proceeding with the full scope of work to develop both Emergency Response Guidelines (ERG) – simple, flip-chart-style protocols for key hazards and contacts – and a Basic Emergency Response Plan providing governance, communication, and continuity structures.
- The plan would prioritize wildfire, hazardous material spills, severe weather, and similar risks, and include an orientation and tabletop exercise for staff and Council.
- Council was advised that this approach would position the Village for greater emergency readiness and coordination with CAFN and territorial partners.

Discussion:

- Contracting process – A question was raised about the sole-source selection of the emergency planning contractor and the absence of a competitive process. It was noted that Council had previously expressed interest in aligning with contractors engaged by CAFN to support development of a joint ERP.
- Procurement policy – The Village's *Competitive Bidding Process Policy* (#5-94) was referenced. It was confirmed that the proposed contract falls below the \$50,000 threshold permitting direct award, and that Council may authorize the engagement under the policy's provisions.
- Budget – It was noted that a specific figure could not be provided for the motion due to variable costs for travel and additional out-of-scope meeting and communications, billed at the consultant's hourly rate. Staff indicated expectations that total costs would not exceed \$25,000.
- Authorization scope – Council discussed the draft resolution language authorizing the CAO to execute related agreements. It was agreed to remove this clause to ensure Council retains oversight of any future intergovernmental or partnership agreements arising from the project.

Motion #345-25 – It was moved, seconded and CARRIED:

THAT Council direct Administration to engage Reynolds Consulting to work with staff to develop emergency response guidelines and a basic emergency response plan, and to provide an 8-hour staff orientation session with an introductory tabletop exercise.

c. Report to Council – Election Readiness

CAO Presentation:

- At Council's request, the election readiness report was brought forward as a consolidation of related items for Council's review and discussion. Emphasis was placed on the non-exhaustive nature of the advocacy items.
- The Mayor proposed sending a letter outlining Council's agreed-upon concerns to the two prospective territorial candidates and requesting their written responses.

Discussion:

- Approach and timing – Council supported the Mayor’s proposal and accepted the CAO’s offer to circulate a draft by email for edits, given limited timelines.
- Terminology – Council agreed to consistently use “Healthy Living Centre” in place of “new rec centre/pool,” and to strike “housing” from rationale language tied to the hall demolition site (recreation/healthy living intent).
- Housing updates – Council noted Yukon Housing Corporation (YHC) interest in a multi-residential lot on Spruce Street and the need to coordinate with the Northern Community Land Trust; zoning density requirements were flagged for any proposal.
- Gentle density phrasing – Council requested clearer terminology when discussing secondary suites or carriage houses to avoid confusion with high-density development.
- Tourism and other items – While additional advocacy ideas (e.g., tourism infrastructure/marketing, energy and utilities) were discussed, Council agreed to limit the letter to the shortlisted priorities and pursue other items separately as needed. Council also noted ATCO demand charges for municipalities as important but overlapped with ongoing Association of Yukon Communities (AYC) advocacy.
- Priority topics (shortlist) – Council identified the following as lead items for inclusion in the letter:
 1. the new Healthy Living Centre and demolition of the existing hall;
 2. infrastructure funding security / Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) replacement;
 3. end-of-life vehicles (ELV) program support;
 4. emergency management and public safety (stable municipal ERP / Emergency Measures Organization (EMO) support).

Motion #346-25 – It was moved, seconded and CARRIED:

THAT Council direct staff to write a letter reflecting Council’s election readiness advocacy priorities to be sent to all territorial candidates, requesting written responses and commitments, and to publish the materials for community awareness.

Meeting time extended

Motion #347-25 – It was moved, seconded and CARRIED:

THAT the meeting be extended past 9:00 pm.

11. Bylaws – Reports, Readings and Adoption

- a. (i) Bylaw #432-25 Supplementary/Provisional Budget for 1st reading / (ii) YTD and Preliminary Budget Bylaw Appendix
This item was bypassed without discussion.
- b. Bylaw #434-25 establishing the C-CARE program committee for 3rd reading

Motion #348-25 – It was moved, seconded and CARRIED:

THAT Bylaw #434-25 establishing the C-CARE program committee be read for the third time on 9th day of October, 2025

12. Correspondence

Motion #349-25 – It was moved, seconded and CARRIED:

THAT the Community AA Meetings poster be received as provided.

13. Council Reports and Notice of Motions

Councillor Busche

- **Notice of Motion:**
 - That staff prepare a report to Council on the rationale and application of facility rental fees, including when charges are applied or waived.
- The CAO explained that fees are generally waived for non-profit, open-to-public events not collecting entry fees, with limited discretion applied for cost-recovery activities. Some historic exemptions remain in effort. It was noted that the facility use policy requires review and clarification to ensure consistency.

Councillor Mackinnon

- No report was provided.

Councillor Sundbo

- Reported being approached by a resident about which materials collected at the landfill and recycling centre are actually shipped for processing versus stockpiled or landfilled, and suggested that this information be posted and updated on the Village website.
 - The CAO confirmed that the information can be compiled and offered to bring a report forward at a future meeting.
- Raised concern about outstanding notices of motion and suggested adding a formal tracking mechanism through the Council Procedural Bylaw.
 - The CAO noted that this could be incorporated by expanding the existing action and motion tracker.
- Informed Council of planned travel outside the community for four to five days.
- **Notices of Motion:**
 - That staff prepare a report to Council on facility recycling practices and options for public communication on the Village website.
 - That staff develop a policy regarding short-term rental accommodations in the Village, beginning with a report outlining potential regulatory approaches and associated benefits and risks.

Councillor McPhie

- Provided a brief personal update and advised that a decision regarding continued service on the Council will be made later in the month.
- Extended appreciation to arena staff for the start of the new season.

Mayor Strand

- Shared information about an upcoming Blanket Exercise hosted by IRP Consulting and Najee Consulting, to be held on November 14, 2025, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Haines Junction Convention Centre.

- Encouraged participation by Council and staff, noting the exercise's focus on Indigenous history and reconciliation.
- Council briefly discussed supporting staff attendance, including paid time and event fees, and agreed to bring the matter back for consideration at the next meeting.
- **Notice of Motion:**
 - That staff prepare a report on options for supporting staff participation in the November 14, 2025 Blanket Exercise, including time off and related costs.

14. Questions from the Public

There were no questions from the public.

15. Motion to Close Meeting to the Public

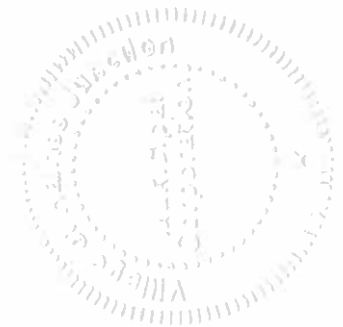
Motion #350-25 – It was moved, seconded and CARRIED:
THAT the meeting be closed to the public at 9:17 pm.

Motion #351-25 – It was moved, seconded and CARRIED:
THAT the meeting be reopened to the public at 9:55 pm.

16. Adjournment

Motion #352-25 – It was moved, seconded and CARRIED:
THAT the meeting be adjourned.

Meeting adjourned at 9:56 pm.




Mayor Diane Strand


CAO David Fairbank


Sydney MacKinnon