



City of Port Colborne

Council Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025
Time: 6:30 pm
Location: Council Chambers, 3rd Floor, City Hall
66 Charlotte Street, Port Colborne

Members Present: M. Aquilina, Councillor
M. Bagu, Councillor
E. Beauregard, Councillor
R. Bodner, Councillor
G. Bruno, Councillor
D. Elliott, Councillor
T. Hoyle, Councillor
W. Steele, Mayor (presiding officer)

Member(s) Absent: F. Danch, Councillor

Staff Present: B. Boles, Chief Administrative Officer
C. Banting, Manager of Environmental Services
J. Beaupre, Deputy Clerk
C. Dray, Road and Park Operations Manager
S. Double, Fire Chief
G. Long, Director of Development and Government Relations
C. Madden, City Clerk
J. Peazel-Graham, Manager of Communications

- 1. Call to Order**
Mayor Steele called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
- 2. National Anthem**
Everyone stood for the National Anthem.
- 3. Land Acknowledgement**
The Land Acknowledgement was read:

The Niagara Region is situated on treaty land. This land is steeped in the rich history of the First Nations such as the Hatiwendaronk, the Haudenosaunee, and the Anishinaabe, including the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. There are many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people from across Turtle Island that live and work in Niagara today. The City of Port Colborne stands with all Indigenous people, past and present, in promoting the wise stewardship of the lands on which we live.

4. Adoption of Agenda

C-25- 054

Moved by Councillor M. Aquilina
Seconded by Councillor M. Bagu

That the Council agenda dated March 25, 2025, be confirmed, as amended.

Carried

5. Disclosures of Interest

There were no disclosures of interest.

6. Proclamations

6.1 World Autism Day - April 2, 2025

C-25- 055

Moved by Councillor G. Bruno
Seconded by Councillor D. Elliott

WHEREAS World Autism Day is recognized on April 2, 2025, in Canada. Autism Ontario is one of the largest collective voices representing the autism community, and the work we do helps all autistic individuals and families in their communities have access to meaningful support, information, and connections — not only on April 2 but every day throughout the year; and

WHEREAS Autism impacts more than 135,000 individuals in Ontario, representing 1 in every 50 Canadian children and youth. It not only influences the lives of autistics but also their friends, families, and communities. It's crucial for us to raise awareness, and acceptance, provide support and promote a more inclusive society; and

WHEREAS Autism is a diverse spectrum that varies widely among individuals. Each person's experience with autism can change over time.

This evolving journey highlights the uniqueness of every autistic individual, emphasizing the need for understanding and support tailored to their specific needs; and

WHEREAS Autism Ontario is the leading source of information and referral on autism, and since 1973, has been providing support, information, and opportunities for thousands of families and individuals across the province; and

WHEREAS Autism Ontario is devoted to raising public awareness about autism and addressing the everyday challenges faced by individuals with autism, their families, and the professionals who work alongside them. We urge everyone to recognize and celebrate the unique differences and needs of others, fostering an inclusive environment where all individuals can participate fully in activities and discussions. Together, we can create a society that values and includes everyone.

NOW THEREFORE that I, Mayor William C. Steele, do hereby proclaim April 2 as World Autism Day while committing to embrace awareness and acceptance today and every day throughout the year.

Carried

7. Presentations

There were no presentations.

8. Delegations

There were no delegations.

9. Mayor's Report

A copy of the Mayor's report is attached.

10. Regional Councillor's Report

There was no Regional Councillor's report.

11. Consent Agenda

C-25- 056

Moved by Councillor E. Beauregard

Seconded by Councillor R. Bodner

That Council hereby approves the listed consent items on the March 25, 2025, Council agenda; and

That the consent items be approved on the recommendations as contained therein.

Carried

11.1 Approval of Minutes

- a. **Regular Council Meeting - March 11, 2025**

11.2 Receipt of Minutes of Boards & Committees

11.3 Staff Reports

- a. **2024 Annual Drinking Water Quality Report - 2025-59**
- b. **2024 Audit Plan - 2025-44**
- c. **2024 Statement of Council Remuneration and Expenses - 2025-58**
- d. **Declaration of Land as Surplus– Progress Drive North - 2025-35**
- e. **St Paul Lutheran Cemetery Transfer - 2025-67**

11.4 Receipt of Correspondence Items

12. Items Requiring Separate Discussion

12.1 Future of Healthcare in Port Colborne: Mid-Point Public Engagement Results - 2025-71

C-25- 057

Moved by Councillor T. Hoyle

Seconded by Councillor G. Bruno

That Chief Administrative Officer Report be received; and

That Council establish a Healthcare Advisory Committee to ensure residents have adequate access to, and knowledge of, healthcare services in the City of Port Colborne; and

That Council approve the Healthcare Advisory Committee Terms of Reference, attached as Appendix B; and

That Council direct the Healthcare Advisory Committee to propose a draft Healthcare Services Strategy by the end of 2025; and

~~That Council approve the motion regarding Provincial Healthcare Advocacy as outlined in the letter, attached hereto as Appendix C; and~~

That Council refer the motion regarding Provincial Healthcare Advocacy outlined in the letter attached as Appendix C back to staff and the CAO to include further data and bring it back to Council for consideration on April 8th; and

That Council direct staff to forward the petition regarding the Port Colborne Hospital and Urgent Care Centre received at the March 11, 2025, Council meeting to the Ontario Minister of Health.

Carried

Amendment:

Moved by Councillor G. Bruno

Seconded by Councillor T. Hoyle

That the following paragraph be substituted for paragraph 5:

That Council refer the motion regarding Provincial Healthcare Advocacy outlined in the letter attached as Appendix C back to staff and the CAO to include further data and bring it back to Council for consideration on April 8th; and

Carried

12.2 Municipality of South Huron - Heritage Advisory Committee, Amendment to Ontario Heritage Act and Niagara-on-the-Lake Support

C-25- 058

Moved by Councillor E. Beauregard

Seconded by Councillor D. Elliott

That Council endorse the Municipality of South Huron - Heritage Advisory Committee, Amendment to Ontario Heritage Act and Niagara-on-the-Lake Support correspondence.

Carried

13. Staff Remarks

Curtis Dray, Road and Park Operations Manager, advised Council that street sweeping operations will begin soon and run for a few weeks. They will also be

posting the ditching program and the tree planting program to the City's website this week.

Gary Long, Director of Development and Government Relations, noted that the new Chief Planner has started at the City. He also noted that they will be bringing forward a report soon on the housing accelerator fund. Lastly, he noted many Ministers are not available for meetings at the Good Roads conference, but they are working to set up some meetings with the Ministers offices. They will also be meeting with the Chief of Staff for the Minister of Health to update him on the healthcare situation in Port Colborne.

Bryan Boles, the Chief Administrative Officer, thanked the Mayor and Council for their work on the grants. He also thanked Public Works for their work to ready the parks for the season, and Cassandra and Jasmine for their work on the water/wastewater open houses; they will be reporting back to Council on the results. He noted the backyard chickens survey will be launching tomorrow and encouraged residents to fill out the survey.

14. Councillors' Remarks

Councillor Hoyle thanked staff for their work on the various open houses.

Councillor Elliot inquired if the healthcare petition could be sent to the Ontario Medical Association.

Councillor Bruno inquired about the security measures at Vale Health and Wellness Center, security cameras, and who people should approach when there are issues to report.

Councillor Bagu noted the report for the Eagle Marsh Drain is going to be delayed, as an appeal for the Northland Estates Drain needs to be resolved at the tribunal first. He thanked Public Works staff for their work on Kent Street. He also inquired about measures that could be taken in light of the tariffs imposed by the United States.

Councillor Beauregard updated Council on the recent Niagara Transit Commission meeting, and he noted the Chair brought up the procurement process and discussed municipalities taking a long-term approach to the issue. He also noted the Heritage sub-committee is working on looking at properties for designation and reports should be coming to Council soon.

Councillor Aquilina thanked Public Works staff for their work on a property issue. She congratulated the Communications team on their awards. She also noted she was pleased with community engagement efforts from staff.

15. Motions

There were no motions.

16. Notice of Motions

There were no notices of motions.

17. Procedural Motions

There were no procedural motions.

18. By-laws

C-25- 059

Moved by Councillor M. Bagu

Seconded by Councillor T. Hoyle

That the following by-laws be passed and enacted, as presented:

- By-law No. 7331/22/25
- By-law No. 7332/23/25
- By-law No. 7333/24/25

Carried

18.1 By-Law No. 7331/22/25 By-law to Authorize Entering into an Agreement with His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, as represented by the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities Regarding the Natural Infrastructure Fund

18.2 By-law No. 7332/23/25 Being a By-law to Establish a Healthcare Advisory Committee

18.3 By-law No. 7333/24/25 By-law to Adopt, Ratify and Confirm the Proceedings of the Council of The Corporation of the City of Port Colborne

19. Adjournment

Mayor Steele adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

William C. Steele, Mayor

Charlotte Madden, City Clerk



PORT COLBORNE

MAYOR'S REPORT TO COUNCIL TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 2025

\$19.25 MILLION FEDERAL FUNDING FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

Niagara Centre Member of Parliament Vance Badawey was here Saturday morning to announce \$19.25 million to improve water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure on our city. The announcement marks more great news for Port Colborne. You'll recall MP Badawey was here just two weeks ago with \$4.3 million from the Housing Accelerator Fund to expedite the construction of 128 homes in our city.

The \$19.25-million funding supports building capacity, ensuring the City has the necessary infrastructure to accommodate future housing needs and economic expansion. Many thanks to Gary Long and Greg Higginbotham for their over-and-above efforts on the application for this funding. On behalf of council, the city thanks Vance and the Government of Canada for investing in the growth and development of Port Colborne.

TOP HAT CEREMONY IN LOCK 8 PARK

It was not as bitterly cold as last year, but the wind was a little wild Monday morning as we celebrated the opening of the Welland Canal for the 2025 season. We welcomed almost 200 people to Lock 8 Gateway Park! That's remarkable because we had to change the day of the event, from Saturday to Monday, as high winds and ice kept ships anchored in Lake Erie. When the winds diminished Saturday afternoon, we heard from Captain Nathan Mayo aboard the Algonova he'd be in Lock 8 about an hour after entering the canal from Lake Erie.

Our communications manager Jasmine Peazel-Graham, raced to city hall to fetch the top hat to be presented. She picked up the log book from Tami Nail, the assistant curator at Port Colborne Historical and Marine Museum. The museum has kept a register signed by captains of all the first downbound ships since the 1970s, when the Port Colborne top hat event began.

Once she was secured, we climbed aboard and met Captain Mayo. We presented the top hat, he signed the register, we took some pictures, and within about 10 minutes we disembarked, and the ship was on its way down the canal. The captain and crew are already way up the St. Lawrence River; they're expected to reach their destination of Sept IIs by 11pm tomorrow. I share the behind-the-scenes view of all the elements that have to come together on opening day of the canal, and for the ceremony we present to celebrate it.

We coordinate with operations at the Seaway to determine which vessel will be first downbound in the canal. Sometimes it times up perfectly, other times, weather, and other factors play a huge role. Once the Seaway identifies which ships are due to enter the canal from the lake, we communicate with the shipping company and set up the presentation. I am so proud of staff from Public Works, the Museum, the Library, our Events and Communications teams, who work to plan the event, and show up before dawn to set it up.

We have some "civilian" partnerships to make this event happen, too. The Fair Trade Town Committee organizes breakfast, with its partners Bodner's Market for sausage, and Kevin Echlin of The Smokin' Buddha for pancakes. Rosemari and Greg from Canalside lent us some essential outdoor equipment. Krysta Lee Gorman knocked it out of the park singing our national anthem. The vicar from St. James and St. Brendan Anglican Church delivered a blessing for sailors. Amherst Crane chipped in to cover expenses for breakfast. Maple syrup was made just a week ago by Debbie and Trent Crowe at their sugarbush in Wainfleet.

This year, we were delighted to include Brian Kon, Niagara Region's Indigenous Relations Advisor, who opened our event with a gracious and insightful welcome. In addition to all their contributions, we schedule special guests to speak on the

significance of the canal. They included Vance Badawey, representative Mike Haines from MPP Jeff Burch's office, and Seaway Operations Supervisor Nathan Infantino. It takes many hands to present the Top Hat ceremony, and no matter the obstacles, the wind or weather, we come together as a community to celebrate the start of the new shipping season. I thank you all for your contribution and participation. I thank the many people who braved the cold and wind Monday morning to attend. The CAO and I attended the Seaway celebration this morning at Lock 3 Museum in St. Catharines. It's always a great event too, a little more formal, and maybe not as much fun as ours.

COMMUNITY CONCERTS

The line-up of our community concerts was announced last week, and wow, it looks like another great summer of music in the park. The series opens June 20 with **Shania Twin**, the Shania Twain tribute. Every time she's played Port Colborne, it's been standing room only. We'll all be singing along to '60s and '70s hits played by **Hot Wax Meltdown** on July 4. **The Bomb** will play a retro-80s live experience July 18. Local favourite **Strictly Hip** plays the best of the Tragically Hip on August 15. The ever-popular **Caverners** Beatles tribute show is Aug. 29. On September 12, to wrap up the series, will be the Taylor Swift tribute, **Taylor's Story**. It will be great to see everyone again at the concerts on Saturday nights this summer. The concerts are free, we only ask you bring non-perishable food items for the Reach Out Centre.

AWARDS FROM FESTIVALS AND EVENTS ONTARIO

Huge kudos and congratulations to our Communications and Events teams for winning three provincial awards for the Canal Days Marine Heritage Festival from the Festivals and Events Ontario organization; Best Promotional Campaign (Canal Days) Sponsor of the Year, GIO Rail Named a Top 100 Event – in Ontario. The awards are a testament to the passion, creativity, and dedication that go into making Canal Days such an incredible event year after year. On behalf of council, thank you to our amazing Canal Days team, our sponsors, our partners and to you, our community. We are grateful for you, and our crew of loyal and eager volunteers. Well done, Bryan, Jasmine, Greg, and your teams.

DOCTORS ACCEPTING PATIENTS

If you do not currently have a doctor, now is the time to register. There are now 35 doctors across Niagara taking on new patients. Please visit the Niagara Region website. There is a page called "Find a Doctor" which explains everything. That concludes my report this evening.