

Council and Committee Monthly Summary

September 2025

Below you will find highlights of the County of Renfrew County Council and Committee meetings held September 10 and September 24, 2025.

Please note that this summary does not constitute the official record of the meetings and approved minutes should be consulted for that purpose.

The full [Council and Committee packages](#) can be found online.

The [September 10, 2025](#) and [September 24, 2025](#) meetings are on YouTube.

Warden's Address

Key highlights

- At the September 24 meeting, Warden Peter Emon recognized the passing of John Hildebrandt, former Mayor of the Township of Madawaska Valley and former County Councillor. He noted Mr. Hildebrandt was a larger-than-life presence whose deep love for family, community, and service shaped everything he did. Whether through his leadership in municipal government, his contributions to local healthcare and heritage, or his role as a business owner and mentor, his impact on Barry's Bay and the broader Valley was profound. He extended condolences to his beloved wife Beth, their children and grandchildren, and all who had the privilege of knowing him.
- The Warden expressed his pride and thanks to the team which participated in a [cleanup](#) along the Algonquin Trail and Ottawa River on September 16. This included County staff from Public Works and Trails, Community Services, Paramedic Service, HART Hub as well as City of Pembroke staff, Community Mental Health workers and staff from the Renfrew County District Health Unit along with Councillor Michael Donohue and Mesa clients. Together the group gathered a truckload of debris and brushing was later conducted along the trail to open up views of the Ottawa River.
- He highlighted the fifth Recovery Day held in Renfrew on September 19, which was a powerful celebration of hope, healing, and resilience. This year's event shone a spotlight on youth, with a focus on prevention and awareness. Recovery Day honours those we have lost, supports individuals on their recovery journey, and works to break down stigma surrounding addiction and mental health. Renfrew County is proud of the compassionate, community-driven efforts underway to help individuals recover and thrive.
- On September 20 the Warden attended the Global Day of Action in Eganville, where diverse groups from all across the world marched to ask governments to increase their efforts for a healthier world, free from war, with a just transition away from fossil fuels and the need for migrant dignity in troubled times, which was named Draw the Line March.

- The Warden highlighted the recent Strategic Alignment Workshop for council and staff. He said the conversations throughout the day were both meaningful and thought-provoking and it was clear that everyone came well-prepared, having done their homework as requested. He appreciated the level of engagement and thoughtful contributions from both staff and Council.
- Warden Emon also marked the 10th anniversary of the triple femicide of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk and Nathalie Warmerdam, three women whose lives were taken in an act of intimate partner violence that devastated Renfrew County and reverberated across Ontario. Their deaths led to a coroner's inquest that produced 86 recommendations aimed at addressing systemic failures in how we respond to gender-based violence. He noted while some progress has been made, including widespread recognition of intimate partner violence as an epidemic, much more work remains. As we mark this solemn anniversary, he said we must recommit to the work ahead not only with remembrance, but with meaningful change that protects others from the same fate.

Delegation

- At the September 10 session of County Council Anya Gansterer, Artistic Director with Ottawa Valley Community Arts and Emily Stovel, Manager of Culture and Curator of Arnprior District Museum, made a presentation about the Art Gallery of the Ottawa Valley (AGOV) Project. The presentation highlighted the transformative impact of Ottawa Valley Community Arts, which has delivered over 30 projects, raised more than \$1 million, and engaged 50,000+ people across more than 20 communities. AGOV fosters resilient, connected communities and drives economic growth through public art, tourism, and creative industry development. With a vision for accessible public art within a 30-minute drive for all Renfrew County residents, AGOV seeks municipal support to establish a dedicated fund, integrate arts into planning, and partner with local artists.

Announcements

- Members of County Council and staff gathered at the Noojimokamig Garden for a ceremony in recognition of the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation with representatives from the Circle of Turtle Lodge. The vigil led by Aimee Bailey honoured survivors and victims of Residential Schools and supported the ongoing journey of truth, healing and reconciliation. It included a smudge and tobacco ceremony. During his remarks, Warden Emon offered an apology on behalf of the County of Renfrew and the municipalities across our region. In part the apology read, "We acknowledge the deep and lasting harm caused by past policies and systems, including the residential school system, the Sixties Scoop, and other government actions that sought to erase Indigenous cultures and disrupt families and communities. He also acknowledged that an apology alone is not enough, as he noted reconciliation is a journey and is one that requires meaningful action, consistent effort, and honest reflection.

Development & Property Committee

Presented by: James Brose, Chair

- County Council directed the Warden and Chief Administrative Officer/Deputy Clerk to execute a Memorandum of Understanding with the Town of Renfrew regarding the development project at Bonnechere Manor.

- The Economic Development Division and Renfrew County Community Futures Development Corporation (RCCFDC) are co-hosting an Economic Development Summit on November 25, 2025, at the Best Western Pembroke Inn. Under the theme – *Rooted in Resilience* – the goal of the summit is to bring the business and municipal community together for a day of learning and networking. Session topics include human resources, succession planning and youth perspective in community development. Program details and registration will launch after Thanksgiving.
- County Council directed the Warden and Chief Administrative Officer/Deputy Clerk to execute a Memorandum of Understanding with Arnprior Regional Health regarding the utilization of a portion of the surplus building (Old Grove) located at 275 Ida Street North, Arnprior, for seniors' transitional housing initiatives, campus of care, and/or other related collaborative projects. As part of the proposed Memorandum of Understanding, the County of Renfrew will undertake the retrofitting of the agreed-upon portion of the Old Grove building to create self-contained housing units with the intent to operate and manage the transitional housing units upon completion.
- On September 12, local elected officials and staff participated in an agricultural tour organized with the Renfrew County Agriculture Economic Development Committee. The tour featured diverse sectors, including dairy, beef, sheep, cash crops, beekeeping, maple syrup, and agricultural organizations. Key issues raised included the urgent need for large-animal veterinarians, regulatory barriers around livestock protection and interprovincial transport, improvements to the Deadstock Capacity Initiative, and the importance of consulting farmers when developing policies and by-laws.
- The Helping Your Place Excel (HYPE) Review Panel, comprised of Planning and Economic Development staff and the Director of Development and Property, has reviewed and approved the first round of applications received for the 2025 HYPE program, including nine received from the Town of Petawawa and one from the Township of Laurentian Valley.
- The Ottawa Valley Tourist Association's (OVTA) annual tourism conference will be held on November 3, 2025, at the Ottawa River Barn in Foresters Falls. Programming and registration will be announced in October.
- As part of the Ottawa Valley Tourist Association's pilot project with OHTO and regional partners, new tourism data reveals that 73.9% of visitors to Renfrew County were Canadian, with a strong sentiment score of 79/100. International visitors made up 26.1%, with Germany leading in satisfaction (81.3/100), followed by the UK, France, and the U.S. Overall, visitor sentiment remains positive across all markets, with international travellers expressing slightly higher satisfaction. The data highlights the continued strength of domestic tourism and the growing appeal of Renfrew County to global audiences.
- The Bridges to Business Growth Small Business Month series is a dynamic four-part event series happening in-person across Renfrew County in celebration of Small Business Month. Designed for entrepreneurs and small business owners, this series offers practical learning, meaningful connections, and actionable insights to help entrepreneurs grow with confidence in the topics of financial and tech management, marketing, building strategic partnerships, homesteading and food safety. For more information or to register, visit Enterprise Renfrew County's [workshops and event page](#). The Bridges to Business Growth Small Business Month series is hosted in partnership with Renfrew County Community Futures Development Corporation (RCCFDC) and sponsored by the Townships of Whitewater Region, McNab/Braeside, Madawaska Valley and Laurentian Valley, Town of Petawawa and City of Pembroke.

Operations Committee

Presented by: Glenn Doncaster, Chair

- County Council has formally endorsed a phased 2+1 highway program for Highways 17 and 11 — a safer, more cost-effective alternative to full four-laning. The Warden has sent a [letter](#) to Prime Minister Mark Carney and Ontario Premier Doug Ford outlining the resolution.
- County Council adopted a by-law authorizing the approval of a Community Safety Zone along County Road 52 (Raglan Street South) between Civic Address 577 and Civic Address 3847, a total distance of 1.0 kilometre. Due to expressed concerns and complaints from residents and the proximity of St. Joesph's Catholic High School and St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School, County of Renfrew staff have reviewed this area and recommend the implementation of a Community Safety Zone (CSZ).
- County Council adopted a by-law to acquire Part 6 on Plan 49R-20192, located in the geographic Township of Sebastopol, Township of Bonnechere Valley, from Ray and Luella Heideman for the sum of \$2,500. The property will be dedicated as part of the public highway upon registration of the transfer documents.
- County Council adopted a by-law to amend Schedule 'A' of By-law to Consolidate all By-laws with Respect to Roads and Bridges included in the County Road System, to add Banting Drive, from Highway 17 to Hillcrest Avenue, into the County Road system, subject to the adequate rehabilitation of the roadway.
- The approved contracts/tenders were as follows:
 - For Engineering Services for the Rehabilitation/Replacement Study on Algonquin Trail Structure AT032 (Bissett Creek and Highway 17) as submitted by Dillon Consulting, Ottawa, Ontario, in the amount of \$108,848, plus applicable taxes.
 - For the purchase of Concrete Gutters and Grates at the White Water Road Patrol to G.P. Splinter Forest Products Ltd., Pembroke, in the amount of \$47,914.77.
 - For the purchase of Overhead Doors at the Cobden Patrol to Draper Doors Inc., Harrowsmith, Ontario in the amount of \$59,900.
 - For Winter Sand in Calabogie to Town and Country Forming Ltd., Renfrew, Ontario in the amount of \$30,585.
 - For Loader Rentals for the Winter 2025/2026 at the Calabogie Garage to Paul Neill of Arnprior, Ontario, in the amount of \$17,500 and for the Cobden and Goshen Patrols to Bonnechere Excavating Inc., Renfrew, Ontario in the amount of \$21,350.

Corporate Services Committee

Presented by: Jennifer Murphy, Chair

- County Council approved the following 2026 Budget Guidelines – Increase the capital levy contributions by \$3,000,000 over the 2025 budget; all revenue associated with weighted CVA growth for the 2026 year be contributed to the Growth Reserve; and departmental net operating budgets increase by no more than 3% over the 2025 budget.
- Committee discussed a proposal brought forward by Warden Emon to have the Warden for the County of Renfrew elected at-large. Direction was given to staff to explore this option and bring a report back to the committee in the second quarter of 2026.

Community Services Committee

Presented by: Anne Giardini, Chair

- The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has confirmed a 2025-2026 investment of \$3,569,200 under the Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP), consistent with the allocation provided for the previous fiscal year. However, ongoing pressures, including increasing rates of homelessness, escalating rental costs, a critical shortage of affordable housing, and social assistance rates that have remained unchanged since 2018, continue to place significant demands on this limited budget. The attached recommendations for the 2025-2026 fiscal year reflect a review of expenditures during the first five months and propose a strategic reduction in the number of programs supported. This approach aims to concentrate available resources on the areas of greatest need, while acknowledging that the current funding is insufficient to meet the full scope of local demand. The Community Services Committee approved the Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) Investment Plan for 2025-2026 to be submitted to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Health Committee

Presented by: Michael Donohue, Chair

- The Ministry of Health has formally approved the County of Renfrew Paramedic Service to proceed with the implementation of the Low Acuity Disposition Patient Care Model, also known as SMART Transportation. Over the past year, paramedic services across the region have been actively training their staff in preparation for this important initiative. This model represents a significant cultural shift and marks the future of paramedicine delivering the right care, at the right time, in the right place. SMART Transportation is a province-wide initiative that enables paramedics to utilize clinical care pathways to treat and refer patients directly to local services such as Mesa, RC VTAC, and Clinical Assessment Centres. This approach helps ensure individualized care, reduces avoidable emergency department visits, and improves overall patient outcomes. From October to December 2024, the County of Renfrew delivered training to all paramedics, with costs reimbursed by the City of Ottawa through Ontario Health. The Paramedic Service is enthusiastic about advancing clinical knowledge and skills, and we remain optimistic about the evolving role of paramedics within these new care pathways; working to better serve the residents of Renfrew County.
- County Council approved an additional 1,824 hours per year of part-time Food Service Worker hours for Bonnechere Manor effective October 1, 2025.
- County Council approved an additional 3,368 hours per year of part-time Personal Support Worker hours for Miramichi Lodge effective October 1, 2025.
- County Council approve a business case to add one Nurse Practitioner in community programs to the County of Renfrew Paramedic Service.
- County Council approved a business case to add Casual Administrative Commanders to the County of Renfrew Paramedic Service.

Additional Information

Craig Kelley, Chief Administrative Officer/Deputy Clerk

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