

Council and Committee Monthly Summary

March 2026

Below you will find highlights of the County of Renfrew County Council and Committee meetings held March 12 and March 25, 2026.

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 [March 12, 2026](#) and [March 25, 2026](#) meetings are on YouTube.

Warden's Address

Key highlights

- The March 12 meeting was rescheduled from March 11 due to the weather.
- Warden Jennifer Murphy acknowledged March 8 as International Women's Day, an important opportunity to celebrate the women whose generosity, leadership, and resilience strengthens our communities every day. She said this year's theme, Give to Gain, reflects a truth seen across Renfrew County: when women share their time, knowledge, and compassion, everyone benefits. Whether through mentorship, public service, community building, or quiet acts of support, women create opportunities that ripple far beyond themselves.
- The Warden thanked the many volunteers who worked throughout the winter to keep our trail systems open, particularly our local snowmobile clubs. She noted despite challenging weather conditions, their commitment and countless volunteer hours ensured that residents and visitors could safely enjoy our trails. She added that their efforts support recreation, tourism, and local businesses, and they play a vital role in our winter economy.
- Warden Murphy recently attended Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus Board of Directors meeting, with a focus on redefining strategic strengths and opportunities on a regional basis. She noted a highlight of the meeting was a presentation from the Municipal Climate Internship Program, which showcased the meaningful work being undertaken by climate interns across eastern Ontario. She recognized Larissa Coulas, Municipal Climate Action Intern at the County of Renfrew, for her outstanding contributions, adding that her work is a great example of how investing in young professionals brings fresh perspectives, energy, and real progress to municipal initiatives.

Health Committee

Presented by: Michael Donohue, Chair

- County Council authorized the submission of the Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) for Bonnechere Manor and Miramichi Lodge to Health Quality Ontario prior to the March 31, 2026 deadline. A QIP is a formal, documented set of commitments that a health care organization makes to its residents, staff and community to improve quality through focused targets and actions.

- The County of Renfrew Paramedic Service is advancing its leadership in wilderness and remote-access paramedicine through the development of the 2026 Wilderness Response Symposium (WRS), an evolution of the Sierra Team's annual wilderness-response training delivered over the past five years. The symposium, scheduled for June 10-12, 2026 at Camp Arowhon in Algonquin Park, is intended to strengthen inter-agency collaboration, enhance responder readiness in austere environments, and support system-level learning across the province.

Development & Property Committee

Presented by: James Brose, Chair

- County Council approved entering into a partnership agreement with Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation LP for the purpose of supporting an application to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Growing Canada's Community Canopies Fund. County Council also authorized a formal Letter of Support confirming the County of Renfrew's participation as a municipal partner in the application.
- County Council adopted Enterprise Renfrew County's proposed Fee for Service model, with a three-year phased-in implementation schedule, for inclusion in the User Fee By-law. As a result of limited funding by the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade (MEDJCT) to the County of Renfrew, a Fee for Service model was proposed in an effort to generate more revenues to offset budget shortfalls. Funding to the County and all 53 other Small Business Enterprise Centres (SBEC) across Ontario has not increased in decades, while inflation, operational costs, salaries and benefits have continued to climb.
- County Council approved the Ottawa Valley Tourist Association Draft 2026 budget as presented. The Ottawa Valley Tourist Association (OVTA), the City of Pembroke and the County of Renfrew are partners in the delivery of tourism marketing and destination management for the City of Pembroke, Renfrew County and the Ottawa Valley.
- County Council supported the Township of Whitewater Region's request that the County of Renfrew assume a lead role in advancing the Crown land submission and acquisition process of approximately 90 acres, the former Timminco Mine Site, to enable industrial growth. County Council also directed staff to lead the regional promotion and marketing of the subject lands, including the associated critical mineral deposit, in support of long-term economic development across the County.

Corporate Services Committee

Presented by: Peter Emon, Chair

- Council approved a by-law that, if Council is limited under the *Municipal Act* "lame duck" rules after Nomination Day for the 2026 municipal election, allows the Chief Administrative Officer to make certain decisions until the new Council is sworn in. This includes hiring or dismissing staff, appointing or removing officers, selling municipal property valued over \$50,000, and approving expenditures or commitments over \$50,000.
- County Council approved several amended and one new Corporate Policy, including: Misconduct in the Workplace, Workplace Sexual Violence and Harassment Prevention, Occupational Health and Safety and Electric Vehicles EV Charging Stations. The policies are available from Human Resources.

- County Council adopted the revised By-law to Establish and Require Payment of User Fees and Charges. As part of the annual budget process, a review is made of the County of Renfrew User Fee By-law and Schedule with the following changes being implemented: hourly rates, Development and Property Enterprise Renfrew County fee table, Paramedic Service, Public Works tourism signs and County Recreational Trail Signage.
- Council was informed that artificial intelligence is an emerging technology that may significantly affect how the County works and delivers services; to begin understanding its potential impacts, County leadership held an introductory workshop on March 4, 2026 to start the discussion and outline an initial approach to this evolving technology.
- The County's Health & Safety Coordinator and Wellness Coordinator has successfully completed a Train-the-Trainer course in Non-Violent Crisis Intervention, delivered in partnership with Deep River Hospital. This training strengthens the County's proactive approach to risk management by building internal capacity to prevent, de-escalate, and safely manage potential workplace incidents.
- The 2026 Annual Warden's Golf Tournament has been scheduled for Friday, June 19, 2026 at the Whitetail Golf Club, near Eganville in North Algona Wilberforce. Details are currently being finalized but online registration will be available in the upcoming month.
- In response to rising fuel prices, County staff have launched a fuel conservation initiative focused on reducing unnecessary fuel use across County operations while maintaining all service levels. Measures include promoting fuel-efficient driving, reducing idling and travel where possible, reviewing fleet use, and closely monitoring fuel consumption to help manage costs and support responsible use of public resources.

Community Services Committee

Presented by: Anne Giardini, Chair

- The Renfrew County and District Early Years Table was formed to strengthen system coordination and outcomes for children aged 0–6 and their families, with the inaugural meeting held on February 2, 2026. The Table will be co-chaired by the County of Renfrew's Manager of Children's Services and the Renfrew County and District Health Unit's Manager of Health Promotions, with a mandate to identify and advance actionable improvements across the systems serving young children and families. Members identified several shared priorities:
 - Identifying and addressing service gaps
 - Strengthening coordination, partnerships, and system navigation
 - Reducing barriers and improving access for families
 - Enhancing wraparound care and warm handoffs
 - Increasing awareness of available services
 - Improving data sharing and developing a service directoryThe Renfrew County and District Health Unit provided an overview of relevant local data to help support the identification of priority actions and guide the group's ongoing planning and decision-making efforts.
- The [2026 Renfrew County and District Drug Strategy update](#) was provided as information.
- Council requested additional information on the number of Emergency Assistance clients (408) and Homelessness Prevention Program applications (1,604) in 2025. The data shows that most applications come from larger communities such as Renfrew, Pembroke, and Arnprior, which is expected given their higher populations and greater housing and cost-of-living pressures. When the numbers are compared to population size, some smaller municipalities, including

Bonnechere Valley, Laurentian Hills, and Madawaska Valley, show higher application rates per person, suggesting greater financial pressure in those communities as well. Overall, the information confirms that housing instability and financial hardship are affecting residents across the entire County, with the highest demand in urban centres and notable pressure in some rural areas. The data is based on postal codes, which can cross municipal boundaries, and reflects only certain financial assistance programs, not the full range of supports offered by the County or community partners.

- County Council adopted a by-law to authorize entering into a third-party agreement with the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Pembroke Regional Hospital for the purpose of co-chairing the Renfrew County Situation Table and facilitating the entry of case-related information into the Ministry's Risk-Driven Tracking Database. The Situation Table initiative is a collaborative, multi-sectoral risk intervention model initiated by police services and supported provincially through the Ministry of the Solicitor General. It brings together representatives from police, health care, mental health and addictions services, social services, education, housing, and other community agencies to identify and respond to situations of acutely elevated risk.

Operations Committee

Presented by: Glenn Doncaster, Chair

- County Council supported sending a letter, signed by the Warden, to the Prime Minister of Canada to strongly support the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities' request for federal involvement in upgrading Highways 11 and 17 under the Building Canada Act. The letter will stress the urgent need to modernize Highway 17 within the County of Renfrew, an important section of the Trans-Canada Highway. It will note FONOM's confirmation that if Ontario formally puts this project forward as a priority, the federal government is prepared to fund up to 50 per cent of the cost. The letter will also emphasize that improving Highways 11 and 17, particularly Highway 17 in Renfrew County, clearly meets nation-building goals, including improving safety, supporting economic growth, strengthening national security, encouraging Indigenous participation, increasing climate resilience, and being ready to build, given Ontario's planned 2+1 pilot project. The letter will call for a clear and public federal commitment to help secure full provincial participation.
- County Council adopted a by-law approving the Trail Wayfinding and Commercial Signage policy. A draft version of the policy was first shared with Council in August 2025 for review and feedback. Since then, minor updates were made in consultation with the Economic Development Division and trail partners, including OVCATA, the Renfrew County ATV Club, OFSC District 6 (Snow Country), and the Ontario Federation of Trail Riders. The policy outlines how businesses can apply for commercial signage along County trails and also supports the installation of additional wayfinding and trail-related infrastructure to enhance the trail experience.
- The Operations Committee approved the 2026 Recreational Trail Works Plans and Budgets as presented for the Algonquin Trail, the K & P Recreational Trail, and the currently unnamed trail over the former CN Line. The approved 2026 Budget includes maintenance funds in the amount of \$200,000 for Algonquin Trail, \$25,000 for K & P Recreational Trail, and \$40,000 for CN Rail Line. The Work Plan for the trail on the former CN Line is contingent on the finalization of the transfer from the Townships of Laurentian Valley and Whitewater Region; which is nearing completion.

- The approved contracts/tenders were as follows:
 - For supply and delivery of light towers, as submitted by Eastrock Equipment, Vars, Ontario, in the amount of \$34,802.50, plus applicable taxes.
 - For the manufacture, supply and delivery of a culvert, as submitted by Armtec Incorporated, Cambridge, Ontario, culvert in the amount of \$82,795.80, plus applicable taxes.
 - For the replacement of County Structure C308 (Tomasinis Culvert), located in the Township of Killaloe, Hagarty and Richards, as submitted by Thomas Cavanagh Construction Limited, Pembroke, Ontario, for aggregate supply and/or supply and delivery rates in the upset amount of \$58,960.00, plus applicable taxes.
 - For the purchase of one 3-ton truck and plow unit, as submitted by Everest Equipment, Ayer's Cliff, Québec in the amount of \$250,000.00, plus applicable taxes.
 - For rehabilitation of County Roads 1 (River Road) and 20 (Castleford Road), in the Township of Horton, as submitted by McCrea Excavating Limited, Pembroke, Ontario in the amount of \$1,128,019.20, plus applicable taxes.
 - For Street Sweeping Urban Areas (County Portions only) as submitted by Kerry Mullen, (16000053 Canada Inc.), L'Isle Aux Allumettes, Quebec in the amount of \$40,080.00 plus applicable taxes.
 - The Weed Control tender has been extended through the 2026 fiscal year with the service being provided by Wagar & Corput Weed Control, Bainsville, Ontario at a cost of \$6,542.15.
 - For two tandem truck and plow units as submitted by Freightliner North Bay, North Bay, Ontario for a net cost of \$917,966.78.
 - For supply and delivery of high-density Polyethylene (HDPE) Culverts. The culverts included intended for replenishing inventory for future culvert replacement needs (Part A); replacement of culverts on County Road 69 (Siberia Road) (Part B); replacement of culverts on County Roads 508 (Calabogie Road) and 653 (Chenaux Road) (Part C); and supply to the Township of Greater Madawaska (Part D). The tender was awarded to Ontario Agra Piping and Supplies Incorporated with the County of Renfrew's portions (Parts A, B and C) totalling \$194,072.
 - For the rehabilitation of County Road 653 (Chenaux Road), from 0.18km to 1.06km north of Highway 17, a distance of approximately 0.88km in the Township of Whitewater Region, as B.R. Fulton Construction Ltd., Renfrew, Ontario in the amount of \$571,965.00, plus applicable taxes.
 - For a Hydrovac Trailer, as submitted by Amaco Construction Equipment, Mississauga, Ontario, for a net cost of \$92,856.00.
 - For the rehabilitation of County Road 66 (Wilno South Road), from Highway 60 to Inukshuk Road, a distance of approximately 2.93km in the Township of Killaloe, Hagarty and Richards, awarded to Bonnechere Excavating Incorporated, Renfrew, Ontario, in the amount of \$1,127,929.48, plus applicable taxes.
- County Council adopted a by-law to appoint By-law Enforcement Officers for the Corporation of the County of Renfrew: Kevin Raddatz, Manager of Real Estate; and Pro-Tec 5 Incorporated, Pembroke, Ontario.
- County Council adopted a by-law approving the alterations to County Roads and Structures for the 2026 construction season. Approval of the alterations to a highway is intended to be the final step in the design process, where Council authorizes the work to proceed, subject to the budget and tender process. The approval is intended to apply only to those Capital Projects, which would result in alterations to the highway that could affect a person's access to and from

their land, or that could significantly restrict or alter the use of the highway for a period of time. Only those projects that involve significant alterations are presented for approval. The By-law sets out 16 rehabilitation projects on County Roads, five bridge rehabilitation projects and the rehabilitation/reconstruction of five culverts.

Additional Information

Craig Kelley, Chief Administrative Officer/Deputy Clerk

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