

Council and Committee Monthly Summary

April 2025

Below you will find highlights of the County of Renfrew County Council and Committee meetings held April 9 and April 23, 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 [April 9, 2025](#) and [April 23, 2025](#) meetings are on YouTube.

Warden's Address

Key highlights

- The Warden acknowledged the passing of County Councillor Mark Willmer, Mayor of the Township of Madawaska Valley. The Warden remembered Councillor Willmer a dedicated public servant, a strong advocate for rural communities, and a proud ambassador for his township. "Whether in the council chambers, at a local event, or simply chatting with residents, he brought sincerity, humility, and a deep love for his community to everything he did. He was a thoughtful voice around this County Council table; measured, respectful, and always focused on what mattered most to the people he served. Beyond his public service, Mark was a devoted partner, a proud father, and a cherished friend to many. His sudden passing is a tremendous loss, and on behalf of County Council, the Warden extended heartfelt condolences to his family, to the Council and staff of Madawaska Valley, and to the entire community he served so faithfully." A moment of silence was observed during the meeting and the flags at County Administration Buildings remain lowered in Councillor Willmer's memory.
- Warden Peter Emon congratulated MPP Billy Denault on the announcement from Premier Doug Ford on him being appointed Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming.
- On April 11, the Warden attended the Upper Ottawa Valley Chamber of Commerce Ottawa Valley Business Summit for a Fireside Chat focused on current affairs in Renfrew County, key economic development projects, and collaborative efforts to build a strong and connected community. The day featured open and thoughtful discussions about shaping our future together through a thriving and engaged business community.
- On April 15, he attended the Liberation of Leeuwarden Celebration in Petawawa to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Leeuwarden, Friesland in the Netherlands by the Royal Canadian Dragoons on April 15, 1945. He was pleased to meet Leeuwarden Mayor Sybrand Buma and discuss shared interests and values.

Delegations

At the April 9 meeting, Council heard from the following interested parties:

- Chela Breckon, Executive Director of the Renfrew County Community Poverty Action Network (CPAN), highlighted CPAN's New Network – The Village, which builds on an open network of people in Renfrew County who want to help and those who need help and makes meaningful connections between the two groups. The organization's mission continues to be addressing poverty across Renfrew County. This is done through the ongoing relief programs (Tools for School and Operation Snowsuit), making connections, facilitating community learning and sharing through presentations, workshops, training and working with key partners. For more information, visit <https://renfrewcountycpan.ca/>
- Public Works and Engineering Director Lee Perkins made a presentation on Rural Transit Solution for Renfrew County. He researched what other rural communities are doing to address transportation challenges. He noted there are groups in Renfrew County providing transportation services, but commuting issues are complex as a result of increased part-time and flexible work arrangements and the size of the County. He recommended the establishment of a Transportation Working Group to investigate the feasibility of a public transit system based on successful case studies, including Lanark County. The full report can be found on our website: <https://bit.ly/RuralTransitReport>

At the April 23 meeting, Council heard from the following interested party:

- Sabine Mersmann, President and CEO of the Pembroke Regional Hospital (PRH), provided an overview of hospital operations. She touched on the Emergency Department, Inpatient Care, Surgical Services, Cancer Care, Ambulatory Clinics and Diagnostic Imaging. She highlighted the number of Emergency Room visits during the 2024/25 fiscal year and noted over the past few years there has been a shift with non-urgent visits declining significantly (from approximately 5,000 to 500), which she attributed to the introduction of the Renfrew County Virtual Triage and Assessment Centre (RC VTAC) at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Patients requiring urgent care for conditions such as chest pain, advanced heart failure, pneumonia, COPD; people who are really ill, now account for more than 50 per cent of Emergency Department visits. For the presentation, she was joined by Richard Wilson, director on PRH Board, and Councillor Neil Nicholson, who serves as vice-chair on the PRH Board. The County of Renfrew and Pembroke Regional Hospital have an ongoing partnership for the Ottawa Valley Ontario Health Team and are working together to establish the Renfrew County Mesa HART Hub. For the slides visit <https://bit.ly/PRHUpdate> or see the full presentation on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhLiC9pR7aQ.

Development & Property Committee

Presented by: James Brose, Chair

- County Council adopted the Ottawa Valley Tourist Association 2025 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 development for the City of Pembroke, Renfrew County and the Ottawa Valley.

- County Council directed staff to budget \$45,000 in the 2026 Economic Development budget to cover the funding shortfall for staffing for the new Shared Immigration and Settlement Services program for Lanark and Renfrew Counties. The County of Lanark, in partnership with the County of Renfrew, was successful in their joint 2024 application to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) for the establishment of Shared Immigration and Settlement Services for both counties. Lanark and Renfrew Counties secured \$830,000 from IRCC for Shared Immigration and Settlement Services, ending March 31, 2028. Lanark County will lead the project, managing IT, HR, and IRCC relations. The funding was less than expected and adjusted to a three-year term to align with new immigration levels.
- County Council received and accepted the Helping Your Place Excel (HYPE) Program details for consultation and provided direction to staff to proceed with amending the County of Renfrew Official Plan to permit the Council to provide grants and/or loans to support local Community Improvement Plan initiatives. Following a public meeting to receive input on the Official Plan amendment, and the appeal period, it is anticipated County Council will approve the HYPE program details at the June 12 meeting.
- County Council approved the addition of Schedule D – Local Benefit to the County of Renfrew's Procurement Policy GA-01. The change to the Purchasing Policy is in response to the U.S. tariffs. For purchases requiring a competitive process, the amendment also outlines a priority order for sourcing. First priority will be given to Canadian-made goods provided by Ontario-owned businesses. If Canadian-made goods are not available, preference will then be given to Ontario-owned businesses, followed by Canadian-owned businesses. If no Canadian option is available, staff will be encouraged to explore delaying or reconsidering the purchase if a suitable alternative cannot be identified.

At the April 23 Development and Property Committee Meeting the following recommendation was approved:

- Direction to staff to negotiate a three-year lease agreement, with options to renew, with the Ontario Addiction Treatment Centre, Pembroke (OATC), located at 156 John Street, Pembroke, Ontario, for space to be used for the Renfrew County Mesa HART Hub. This is the location of the Warming Centre this past winter and the current lease expires May 1.

Operations Committee

Presented by: **Glenn Doncaster, Chair**

- County Council adopted a by-law to execute a License Agreement with the Ontario Federation of Trail Riders (OFTR), commencing May 1, 2025 and expiring November 1, 2028. The Ontario Federation of Trail Riders (OFTR) is the provincial representative for the off-road motorcycle community, similar to the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC) for snowmobile riders. OFTR started in 1992 and, as of 2023, had local clubs throughout the province and 5,835 members. A club is present in the Renfrew area, known as the Bytown Motorcycle Association, and consists of 962 members; another club was recently introduced in the Petawawa area, the Valley Trail Riders.
- County Council approved a contracts/tenders as submitted:
 - For the rehabilitation of County Structure B122 (Waba Creek Bridge), located on County Road 52 (Burnstown Road), 0.7km north of County Road 2 (White Lake Road), Township of McNab/Braeside, as submitted by DW Building Restoration Services Inc., Ottawa, Ontario, in the amount of \$638,892.80, plus applicable taxes.

- For Enclosed Cargo Trailer to Huckabone's Garage Ltd., Cobden, Ontario in the amount of \$7,935.00.
- For the Supply and Delivery of Propane to W.O. Stinson & Son Ltd., Ottawa, Ontario in the amount of \$89,351.93. The Townships of Admaston/Bromley, Head, Clara and Maria, and Whitewater Region participated in this tender.
- For Street Sweeping – Urban Areas Only to Valley Street Sweeping, L'Isle Aux Allumettes, Québec in the amount of \$34,850.00. The Townships of Admaston/Bromley, Laurentian Valley and Whitewater Region participated in this tender.
- For Maintenance Hole and Catch Basin Cleaning to Clean Water Works Inc., Ottawa, Ontario in the amount of \$55,077.33. The Townships of Admaston/Bromley, Greater Madawaska, Horton and Whitewater Region, as well as Renfrew County Housing Corporation, participated in this tender.
- For the rehabilitation of County Road 64 (Opeongo Road), from County Road 512 (Foymount Road) to Wieland Shore Road, a distance of approximately 10.95 km, in the Township of Bonnechere Valley, to Greenwood Paving (Pembroke) Ltd., Pembroke, Ontario in the amount of \$2,413,665.76 plus applicable taxes.
- For a four-wheel drive front-end loader to J.R. Brisson Equipement Ltee, Vars, Ontario, in the amount of \$334,762, plus applicable taxes.

At the April 23 Operations Committee Meeting the following recommendation was approved:

- That County Council adopt a new by-law that includes the execution of a Purchase and Sale Agreement and a Lease Agreement with the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority for the K&P Recreational Trail, from the County of Renfrew border northward approximately 6.7 km. The preparation of a Purchase Agreement with the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority (MVCA), in cooperation with the Counties of Lanark and Frontenac, has been ongoing for some time. The County of Lanark has been the lead in negotiations and preparation of the Agreements and has prepared both a Lease Agreement and Purchase and Sale Agreement to be executed with MVCA for the section they currently own.

Community Services Committee

Presented by: Anne Giardini, Chair

- The Community Services Committee received a presentation on the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) Directed Growth Plan for the County of Renfrew. CWELCC is the Federal-Provincial agreement from 2022-2026 with a goal of lowering daily fees for children aged 0-5 to an average of \$10 per day by March 2026. The Province of Ontario is supporting the creation of 86,000 new licensed child-care spaces for children under the age of 6 by the end of 2026. Previously the County of Renfrew had not received any additional spaces for 2025 or 2026 despite the need. This has been the subject of advocacy efforts by members of County Council. In her presentation, Margo Smith, Manager of Children's Services was thrilled to announce an allocation for 261 new spaces, bringing the total CWELCC allocation to 688 spaces and an additional \$8 million in funding. The presentation highlighted priority neighbourhoods for child-care spaces. The next steps include the development of a fair and transparent application process for spaces. More details will be forthcoming on this at a later date. Ms. Smith's presentation can be found on our website: <https://bit.ly/CWELCCDirectedGrowthPlan>.

- County Council authorized the Director of Community Services and the Manager of Children's Services to submit the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) Directed Growth Plan for the County of Renfrew to the Ministry of Education and directed staff to move forward with the development and implementation of an application process for new CWELCC expansion in the County of Renfrew.

Corporate Services Committee

Presented by: Jennifer Murphy, Chair

- County Council endorsed participation in the Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund's *Legacy Spaces Program* which will allow the County to promote reconciliation initiatives across the organization. The Legacy Spaces Program is a national initiative designed to create safe, physical spaces dedicated to reconciliation within organizations. These spaces honour Indigenous cultures and histories; serve as educational and reflective areas for staff and the public; and act as visible commitments to reconciliation in action. This initiative directly supports several strategic priorities, including fostering inclusive and respectful workplaces; enhancing community well-being and engagement; strengthening relationships with Indigenous communities; and living our Why statement.
- County Council adopted a revised by-law to Establish and Require Payment of User Fees and Charges. As part of the annual budget process, the County of Renfrew User Fee By-law and Schedule are reviewed and a number of changes were made.
- County Council adopted a by-law to authorize the submission of an application to Ontario Infrastructure and Lands Corporation ("OILC") for Financing of Capital Works (Broomes Creek Culvert and Dam; Pembroke Paramedic Base and Whitewater Paramedic Base) to authorize temporary borrowing from OILC to meet expenditures in connection with such capital work. As per the 2025 County of Renfrew approved budget, these three projects were budgeted to be financed via short-term construction loan. Upon completion, the short-term construction loan will be converted to a long-term debenture.
- County Council approved the following Corporate Policies: Performance Appraisals (amended); Performance Management (new); Total Compensation Philosophy (new); Hours of Work and Overtime (amended); Employee and Family Assistance Program (amended); Impairment in the Workplace (amended); Discipline and Dismissal (amended). For more information on these policies, please contact the Human Resources department.

Additional Information

Craig Kelley, Chief Administrative Officer/Deputy Clerk

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