

TOWN OF WATSON LAKE
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS 6:00 PM

MEETING NO. 19
December 2, 2025

ATTENDANCE

Lauren Hanchar – Mayor
Thomas Slager – Councillor
Norma Puckett – Councillor
Denina Paquette – Councillor
Absent: William Whimp - Councillor

Delegation

Jordan Stackhouse – Elevator Yukon
Randy Mitton – Yukon Wildland Fire

Administration

Cam Lockwood – CAO *
Tiffany Lund – Municipal Clerk

Public

P. Agana B. Walters * C. Ellis
J. Carlson * C. Craft * R. Wilkinson
L. Dicknoether *

*Electronic attendance **

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Mayor Hanchar.

AGENDA

MOTION 025-019-171

Moved by Councillor Slager, seconded by Councillor Paquette THAT:

The draft agenda be adopted as presented.

- CARRIED -

MINUTES

MOTION 025-019-172

Moved by Councillor Slager, seconded by Councillor Paquette THAT:

The draft minutes from the Council Meeting of November 18, 2025 be adopted.

- CARRIED -

PAYABLES

MOTION 025-019-173

Moved by Councillor Slager, seconded by Councillor Paquette THAT:

The Open Payables in the amount of \$113,881.40 be approved.

- CARRIED -

Council sought clarification on payables to Ascent Exploration and Consulting and KPI Northern Ltd.

DELEGATION
Randy Mitton, Yukon Wildland Fire
Community Wildfire Protection Plan

Randy Mitton, Regional Protection Manager for the Watson Lake region, provided an update on fuel management and prescribed burns, including historical data and plans for 2026 and beyond. Mitton also shared the status of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), the collaboration with LFN to identify areas of focus, and engagement with the Town, LFN and the public prior to its formal adoption. Once the CWPP has been adopted, federal and territorial funding will be available for future fuel management projects.

Jordan Stackhouse, Elevator Yukon
Council Strategic Plan

Elevator Yukon facilitated a strategic planning session with Council to identify priorities during Council's term of office. The draft Strategic Plan was before Council for review and feedback. Overall, Council is satisfied with the simplified approach taken and agreed that the document represented Council objectives. Council recommended a few minor edits and asked Stackhouse to prioritize goals. Stackhouse will provide the revised version at the Council Meeting of December 16th. Council will also be discussing the Strategic Plan at the Town Hall Meeting on December 10th for public input.

Jordan Stackhouse, Elevator Yukon
Housing Accelerator Fund Update

Stackhouse provided Council with a financial update for Housing Accelerator Fund initiatives, including a detailed report of funds spent to date and a forecast of future spending. As 2026 is the final year for HAF projects, Elevator Yukon will be closely monitoring project spending and reallocating funds as required. Stackhouse hopes to have a revised version of the HAF Mortgage and Lending Study report ready for Council's review at the December 16th council meeting.

REPORTS
CAO Report

CAO Lockwood provided an update on the planned ATCO Electric power outage and how these types of outages impact the municipality, including the Town's water reservoir and recirculation pumps.

CAO Lockwood also advised Council of generator issues at the Water Treatment Plant. The Director of Operations is working with technicians on a solution. Administration is also researching solutions for a back-up generator for Vault A.

The Parks and Rec team are busy with Christmas activities and events, including the Christmas Parade and Tree Lighting, Community Dinner and other events for families. Liard First Nation has contributed financial support for the Community Dinner.

There will be reduced facility hours over the holidays, including closing at noon on December 24th.

**Admin Report - Water and Sewer
Rate Comparables**

Administration requested a review of water and sewer rates to ensure the Town's rates are in line with other northern communities. Upon Council's request, Administration provided a detailed report with comparables from 6 communities. Council asked that Administration bring forward rate change recommendations for the Council Meeting of January 6, 2026.

**Admin Report – 2025
Business Grant Breakdown**

As requested by Council, Administration provided a detailed report showing all business grants advanced in 2025. The data was for information purposes only.

**Admin Report – Short-Term
Accommodation Survey**

Council was provided an Admin Report with results of the Short-term Accommodation Survey that was published in November. At recent AYC meetings, Mayor Hanchar discovered that other Yukon municipalities are working through a similar process and exploring short-term accommodation solutions. The survey remains open and will be discussed in open forum at the Town Hall Meeting on December 10th.

**2026 Property Tax Levy
Bylaw 2025-011**

The 2026 Property Tax Levy Bylaw was before Council for review prior to Third and Final Reading. CAO Lockwood provided 2025 property tax rates for other Yukon municipalities for comparison purposes. Council discussed a potential increase to the 2025 tax levy while acknowledging the rising costs that residents are realizing in their day to day lives. Hanchar explained that FCM and other municipalities across Canada are discussing other ways that municipalities can generate income, commenting that property taxes are an archaic income generation system that limit municipalities. After further discussion and considering the municipalities rising costs to provide essential services, Council agreed that the property tax levy be increased by 1% and brought back for Third and Final Reading at the Council Meeting of December 16th.

**NEW & UNFINISHED
Emergency Management Plan**

The draft Emergency Management Plan was before Council for review. There will be two other versions created; one redacted version for community stakeholders and partners and a quick reference guide for residents. Once Council has had a chance to fully review the draft Emergency Management Plan, it will be brought back for adoption. In ongoing efforts to strengthen emergency preparedness, Incident Command/Emergency Management training is taking place the week of December 8th where Mayor Hanchar, Deputy Mayor Slager and Town management staff will take part in position specific training.

Councillor Code of Conduct

Although Council had previously determined that a review of the Councillor Code of Conduct Bylaw was not necessary, there has since been discrepancies identified between it and the *Municipal Act*, as well as some sections that were found to be difficult to work through. Mayor Hanchar suggested a rewrite be done; Council expressed support for this.

MOTION 025-019-174

Moved by Councillor Paquette, seconded by Councillor Puckett THAT:

Council direct Administration to conduct a review of the Councillor Code of Conduct Bylaw and bring back recommended amendments for consideration.

- CARRIED -

AYC Quarterly Meeting

Councillor Paquette provided an update on the recent AYC quarterly meeting and strategic planning session that Councillor Paquette, Mayor Hanchar and CAO Lockwood attended, where they heard presentations and discussed topics such as asset management, the federal budget, solid waste, the *Municipal Act* review, the 2026 AYC AGM, the rescheduling of the Chiefs and Mayors meeting, AYC website upgrades, and the AYC logo and slogan. Mayor Hanchar explained that AYC is contracting the review of their policies and will continue to work to identify priorities.

COUNCILLOR OPEN FORUM

Councillor Slager:

- Going back to the topic of property taxes, noted that Dawson City implemented a vacant property tax to encourage use, development or sale, which is being reflected in Dawson's property tax levy.

Councillor Puckett:

- Asked what types of discounts are extended to seniors, which include property taxes, utilities, household garbage collection and facility user fees.

Councillor Paquette:

- Asked if LFN was hosting a Christmas Party for their members, aside from the Community Christmas Dinner. Administration explained that there is a children's crafting and pizza party planned in collaboration with LFN as well.

Mayor Hanchar:

- Reminded everyone of the Christmas Parade and Moonlight Madness events on Friday, upcoming Town Hall Meeting and community Christmas dinner, and advised everyone that Mayor and Council was entering the Christmas tree decorating contest at the Rec Centre.

- Advised Council of emergency management training, and working groups Mayor Hanchar and CAO Lockwood are participating in.

GALLERY OPEN FORUM

R. Wilkinson:

- Advised everyone that after 25 years, this year's block party will be the last.
- Commended the Public Works staff for snow clearing efforts during the first major snowfall.
- Asked if Council will be sending priorities to newly elected Yukon Government officials.

C. Ellis:

- Requested that packages be printed out and made available to attendees at the meeting as it can be hard to hear or see from the gallery. Mayor Hanchar explained the various ways to obtain meeting information.
- Asked if there would be a prayer at the community dinner.
- Had requested that a community member be recognized for years of volunteer service at the Community Christmas Dinner and asked for an update.

C. Craft:

- Asked in what ways the Town works with the YG Community Advisor and if there was a cost associated.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION 025-019-175

Moved by Councillor Paquette, seconded by Councillor Slager THAT:

There being no further business to discuss that the meeting be adjourned.

- CARRIED -



Lauren Hanchar – Mayor



Tiffany Lund – Municipal Clerk





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