TOWN OF WATSON LAKE
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS 6:00 PM

MEETING NO. 02
January 20, 2026

ATTENDANCE
Lauren Hanchar – Mayor
Thomas Slager – Councillor
Norma Puckett – Councillor
Denina Paquette – Councillor
William Whimp – Councillor *

Administration
Cam Lockwood– CAO
Tiffany Lund – Municipal Clerk

Public
P. Agana C. Ellis C. Craft*
CBC/G. Plonka *

Delegation
Marie-Eve D'Amours – Liard First Nation

Electronic attendance *

The meeting was called to order at 6:06 pm by Mayor Hanchar.

AGENDA

MOTION 026-02-011

Moved by Councillor Slager, seconded by Councillor Puckett THAT:

The draft agenda be adopted as presented.

- CARRIED -

MINUTES

MOTION 026-02-012

Moved by Councillor Slager, seconded by Councillor Paquette THAT:

The draft minutes from the Council Meeting of January 6, 2026 be adopted as presented.

- CARRIED -

PAYABLES

MOTION 026-02-013

Moved by Councillor Paquette, seconded by Councillor Puckett THAT:

The Open Payables in the amount of $187,863.22 be approved.

- CARRIED -

Council sought clarification on payables to Nu Maintenance and Fit 22 Consulting.

DELEGATION
Liard First Nation – Community Safety Plan

Marie-Eve D'Amours, the Community Safety Coordinator for Liard First Nation, presented Council with key components of the LFN Community Safety Plan that is nearly complete. There were five main topics identified while developing the Safety Plan which include additional support for men in the community, more cultural activities, youth empowerment, mental health and addiction, and grief and trauma. Some initial initiatives have been identified, starting with a shuttle for youth and Elders, cultural movies at the Northern Lights Centre, and drumming classes, with additional initiatives and projects to come. LFN has invited the Town to attend future meetings and participate in the five-year process moving forward.

CORRESPONDENCE
Watson Lake Outdoor Rec Club - Donation Request

Council received a request from the Watson Lake Outdoor Rec Club, asking for a donation to support their annual wild game banquet. Councillor Slager recommended a cash donation and free use of the Main Hall for the event.

MOTION 026-02-014

Moved by Councillor Slager, seconded by Councillor Paquette THAT:

Council provide the Watson Lake Outdoor Rec Club with a $500.00 cash donation and the use of the Main Hall at no charge for the Wild Game Banquet event.

- CARRIED -

BYLAWS
Third and Final Reading of Road Maintenance and Repair Reserve Fund Bylaw 2025-012

The Road Maintenance and Repair Reserve Fund Bylaw 2025-012 was before Council for Third and Final Reading. The purpose of the bylaw is to establish a new reserve fund for future road repair and maintenance needs that are outside of regular O&M scope.

MOTION 026-02-015

Moved by Councillor Paquette, seconded by Councillor Puckett THAT:

The Road Maintenance and Repair Reserve Fund bylaw be introduced for Third and Final Reading.

- CARRIED -

Third and Final Reading of Fire Department and Emergency Management Reserve Fund Bylaw 2025-013

The Fire Department and Emergency Management Reserve Fund Bylaw 2025-013 was before Council for Third and Final Reading. The purpose of the bylaw is to establish a new reserve fund for the Protective Services department for future fire department and emergency management capital expenses.

MOTION 026-02-016

Moved by Councillor Slager, seconded by Councillor Paquette THAT:

The Fire Department and Emergency Management Reserve Fund be introduced for Third and Final Reading.

- CARRIED -

First Reading of Unoccupied and Vacant Buildings Bylaw 2026-01

The Unoccupied and Vacant Buildings Bylaw was before Council for First Reading. The purpose of the bylaw is to regulate vacant and unoccupied buildings by implementing a permit system and requirements to safeguard and secure such buildings within the community.

MOTION 026-02-017

Moved by Councillor Slager, seconded by Councillor Paquette THAT:

The Vacant and Unoccupied Buildings Bylaw be introduced for First Reading.

- CARRIED -

REPORTS

Admin Report – Recommended Transfers to Reserve Accounts

An Admin report with recommendations for reserve account transfers was provided to Council for consideration. Administration requested that out of the $3.4M in savings, $1M be moved to reserve accounts as follows:

1. $250,000.00 to the Operational Contingency Reserve Fund
2. $250,000.00 to the Environmental Services Reserve Fund
3. $250,000.00 to the Fire Department and Emergency Management Reserve Fund
4. $250,000.00 to the Road Maintenance and Repair Reserve Fund

Administration clarified that the reserve transfers will be from savings, and not the potential 2025 O&M surplus, as any surplus will be used to fund 2026 capital expenditures.

MOTION 026-02-018

Moved by Councillor Slager, seconded by Councillor Puckett THAT:

Council accept the recommendation from Administration to transfer $1,000,000.00 from savings to be split equally between the Operational Contingency Reserve, Environmental Services Reserve, Fire Department & Emergency Management Reserve, and Road Maintenance and Repair Reserve.

- CARRIED -

NEW & UNFINISHED
Adopt the Emergency Management Plan

The Watson Lake Emergency Management Plan was before Council for adoption. This is a high-level plan for the municipalities' use, that once adopted, will be redacted for stakeholders. Administration is also creating a tri-fold pamphlet with need-to-know information that will be mailed to the public. Administration will also continue working on community re-entry and business continuity plans.

MOTION 026-02-019

Moved by Councillor Slager, seconded by Councillor Paquette THAT:

Council adopt the Watson Lake Emergency Management Plan.

- CARRIED -

Water and Sewer Rate Change Recommendations

Council continued discussions about the water and sewer rate change recommendations that were brought forward by Administration at the Council meeting of January 6th. The affected rates include non-metered water, metered water, sewer, commercial bulk water, service termination and re-instatement and septage receiving station fees. Councillor Slager expressed concern with the non-metered water rate and sewer rate recommendations, stating that the increases were too drastic. Council discussed the importance of remaining fiscally responsible and planning for future long-term capital expenditures and municipal responsibilities, such as the implementation of an asset management plan. After further discussion, Councillor Slager was prepared to accept all rate recommendations except non-metered water and sewer. Councillor Slager proposed that non-metered water rates be increased by $5/month rather than $10/month and sewer rates be increased by $2.50/month rather than $5/month.

MOTION 026-02-020

Moved by Councillor Slager, seconded by Councillor Puckett THAT:

Council accept Administrations recommendation to increase Water and Sewer rates as presented, except non-metered water to be increased by $5/month rather than $10/month and sewer to be increased by $2.50/month rather than $5/month.

- CARRIED -

The fee changes will be reflected in the Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw, which will be brought back before Council for formal adoption.

Janitorial Services Contract

The contract award for janitorial services was back before Council for further consideration as no decision was made at the Council meeting held January 6th. Administration provided Council with multiple recommendations to consider, which included that Council either accept the only bid received from JGV Services Inc. as submitted, accept the bid from JGV Services Inc. and attempt to renegotiate the scope of work to lower the monthly contract amount, or not accept the bid and re-tender the contract with a new scope of work (preferred option). Council was divided on how to move forward, with some members wanting to re-tender in hopes of receiving a lower bid and others who felt that the bid received should be accepted on principle. Councillor Whimp suggested there be reserve bid amounts established and published in the tender documents in the future.

MOTION 026-02-021

Moved by Councillor Slager, seconded by Councillor Whimp THAT:

Council accept the bid for janitorial services to JGV Services Inc. in the amount of $3,753.75/month.

- CARRIED -

COUNCILLOR OPEN FORUM

Councillor Paquette:

- Asked if the Water Operator II job had been filled. CAO provided details on how Water Operator II was being filled and that Administration was now advertising to fill a Water Operator I position.
- Expressed safety concerns with the snow pile on the right-of-way near the hospital. Administration will discuss this at an upcoming meeting with the Hospital Board.

Mayor Hanchar:

- Asked for an update on the Fire Fighter position advertised. Administration provided that there have been multiple qualified applicants and that the job posting was still open to applicants.

- Advised the public that Council met with MP Hanley January 13th to discuss federal funding for various projects, including the inground infrastructure project.
- Asked Council to start thinking about resolutions to bring forward to AYC for consideration. Mayor Hanchar would like to bring back an expired resolution, in respect to an increase to the Comprehensive Municipal Grant (CMG).
- Advised that a meeting Chair will be required for the March 17th meeting as Mayor Hanchar will be away. The topic will be added to the Council meeting agenda for discussion at the February 3rd Council meeting.

Councillor Slager:

- Expressed concerns about the timelines to complete builds under the HAF grant program, especially if the Town plans to conduct another funding intake. Administration is going to investigate the development deadlines as there are two contradictory timelines from CMHC. Administration believes there will be sufficient time for another funding intake but will confirm.

Councillor Whimp:

- Asked if the chipseal on Frank Trail, Adela Trail and Stikine Avenue will be completed in 2026. Administration confirmed that this work will start this spring/summer. There will also be work done to improve walkways, intersections and crosswalks in the downtown core.

CAO Lockwood:

- Acknowledged the passing of Llyod Kostuick, a beloved long-time resident of Watson Lake.
- Asked Council for potential dates to participate in Procurement training.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION 026-02-022

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