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

MEETING NO. 03
February 3, 2026

ATTENDANCE
Lauren Hanchar – Mayor
Thomas Slager – Councillor
Denina Paquette – Councillor

Administration
Cam Lockwood– CAO
Tiffany Lund – Municipal Clerk

Absent
William Whimp – Councillor
Norma Puckett – Councillor

Public
P. Agana *   C. Ellis   C. Craft *
L. Dicknoether *

Delegation
Graham White – Elevator Yukon *

Electronic attendance *

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

AGENDA

MOTION 026-03-023

Moved by Councillor Slager, seconded by Councillor Paquette THAT:

The draft agenda be amended to add *Letter from Auditor* and adopted as amended.

- CARRIED -

MINUTES

MOTION 026-03-024

Moved by Councillor Slager, seconded by Councillor Paquette THAT:

The draft minutes from the Council Meeting of January 20, 2026, be adopted as presented.
- CARRIED -

PAYABLES

MOTION 026-03-025

Moved by Councillor Slager, seconded by Councillor Paquette THAT:

The Open Payables in the amount of $859,874.08 be approved.

- CARRIED -

Council sought clarification on payables to Fit 22 Consulting, Acera Insurance, Acres Industries, Brandt Tractor, and Geo H. Hewitt Ltd.

Graham White of Elevator Yukon provided a HAF update and recommended priority programs for 2026. To date, 4 of the 5 initiatives under the program have been completed, with the final initiative in progress. Through various HAF initiatives, 24 new dwelling units are in progress, and 9 additional development permits are in the pipeline; there is a current shortfall of 27 dwelling units based on targets. White provided different strategies to bridge the gap and encourage additional dwelling development, including:

- A new intake for the Housing Development and Residential Conversion grants, with an option to provide a building permit incentive
- Idle land taxation and disincentives
- Property clean-up grants and/or waiving of landfill tipping fees
- A new grant for renovating existing suites
- A comprehensive update to Zoning Bylaw

Councillor Slager declared a conflict of interest and left Council Chambers for the remainder of the discussion.

After considerable discussion, Council decided to move forward with additional intakes for the Housing Development and Residential Conversion grants and asked for more information about building permit incentives, existing suite renovation grants, idle land taxation, and the Zoning Bylaw update, to better understand how these initiatives could increase dwelling development. Council also asked about funding claw backs if the Town is unable to meet the 60 dwelling unit target; White is confident that CMHC will continue to work with the Town to utilize as much of the approved funding as possible and explained safeguards in place in the event of funding claw backs.

REPORTS
Q4 Department Reports

Council was provided with department reports for the 4th quarter of 2025. Parks and Recreation were commended for their work providing various programs, events and activities. Mayor Hanchar asked about Bylaw clean-up order timelines, expressing concern with stalled progress at some properties.

MOTION 026-03-026

Moved by Councillor Slager, seconded by Councillor Paquette THAT:

Council accept Q4 department reports.

- CARRIED -

Administration provided Council with information about an inactive Traffic Control Bylaw Amendment that was believed to have been in force and recommended a review of the Traffic Control Bylaw and Snow Removal Policy to ensure they are consistent with legislation and are still meeting the needs of the municipality. Administration would also like to the bylaw to address enforcement of ATV and snowmobiles on public roadways, which would allow the RCMP to act on complaints on behalf of the municipality. Council supported a review of the Traffic Control Bylaw, however, believe the Snow Removal Policy is sufficient as is. Councillor Slager expressed apprehension with ATV and snowmobile enforcement and does not want to see this heavily enforced and deter the use of ATVs and snowmobiles within the municipality. Administration will conduct a full bylaw review and bring forward recommended amendments for consideration.

MOTION 026-03-27

Moved by Councillor Paquette, seconded by Councillor Hanchar THAT:

Council direct Administration to procced with a review of the Traffic Control Bylaw.

- CARRIED -

Admin Report – Municipal
Service Agreement Bylaws

Council was provided an Admin Report which explained the need for municipal service agreement bylaws for any service that the municipality is providing outside of the municipality to First Nation and/or Yukon governments, as per the *Municipal Act*. Administration will commence work with YG, Community Services to draft the bylaws, which will be brought back to Council for future adoption.

BYLAWS
Vacant and Unoccupied
Buildings Bylaw 2026-01

The Unoccupied and Vacant Buildings Bylaw was before Council for discussion. A minor amendment to the section regarding penalties was requested. Council also discussed holding a Town Hall meeting to discuss the draft bylaw with the public. The draft bylaw has been posted to the Town's website and will be brought back to Council for Second Reading once requested amendments are made.

NEW & UNFINISHED
March Meeting Schedule

Mayor Hanchar proposed that the Council meeting scheduled for March 17th be moved to March 24th, as both Mayor Hanchar and Councillor Slager will be away. Councillor Slager was also appointed as Chair for the March 3rd Committee of the Whole meeting.

MOTION 026-03-028

Moved by Councillor Slager, seconded by Councillor Paquette THAT:

The Council Meeting scheduled for March 17, 2026, be moved to March 24, 2026.

- CARRIED -

**Watson Lake Court
Registry Office**

Based on information circulated in the community, Administration reached out to Yukon Court Registry management to inquire about the status of the Watson Lake Court Registry Office, which has been closed and unstaffed. Court Services Director, Andrea Bailey, confirmed that the office has been closed for close to a year and has been challenging to staff consistently. The department is conducting an organizational review of the positions in Watson Lake and Dawson City and is inviting the municipality to provide feedback on court registry in the community. Council and Administration discussed the impact of the office closure and would like to arrange a meeting to discuss further.

Letter from Auditor

Council received a letter from BDO, who conducts the Town's financial audit. The letter outlined the audit timelines and standards. Administration advised Council that services for the 2026 financial audit will be put out to tender this spring.

<u>COUNCILLOR OPEN FORUM</u>

Councillor Paquette:
- Asked for an update on the snow pile being removed from the right-of-way next to the hospital. Administration confirmed that the issue was discussed with the Yukon Hospital Corp. and they have committed to removing the hazardous snow pile.
- Asked for an update on AYC AGM planning. Administration is working with AYC and plans are moving ahead nicely. Mayor Hanchar suggested the municipality create swag bags for attendees, if the budget allows.

Mayor Hanchar:
- Asked for clarification on the Idle Land Taxation priority that was proposed during Elevator Yukon's HAF report. Administration clarified that if approved, the initiative would be to address vacant land.
- Requested an update on various positions posted for Fire, Public Works, and Utilities departments. Administration explained that hiring processes were still underway.
- Acknowledged Jenny Skelton as the recipient of the Commissioners Award for Public Service. The Commissioner is planning to come to Watson Lake to present Jenny with the award.
- Advised Council of the spring sitting of the FCM Northern and Remote Forum. Council was invited to attend the sitting to participate in discussions.
- Advised that Mayor Hanchar and CAO Lockwood would be meeting with AYC later in the week to discuss the HAF Mortgage Access in Rural Yukon report.

Administration received a response from Yukon Housing, Premier Dixon, NDP Leader, Kate White, Minister Bellmore, and AYC.

CAO Lockwood:
- Advised Council that federal CHIF funding for the inground infrastructure project and GICB funding for Rec Centre upgrades were both denied. Administration will be meeting with Infrastructure and Development Branch to discuss how to move forward. There is still no update on the Active Transportation Fund application. Council expressed dissatisfaction with the funding decisions and timelines.
- Will be attending the Sustainable Communities Forum with members of the management team and may be away during the meeting with Yukon Housing on February 10th.

GALLERY OPEN FORUM

C. Craft:
- Explained the impact of the court registry office closure as a Notary Public and urged Council to lobby for the position to be filled.
- Asked for details about the dump truck accident last year, including accident expenses and what changes had been made to operations to ensure there is not a repeat incident. Administration explained the actions taken to mitigate future risk.
- Suggested activities for the upcoming AYC AGM.

IN-CAMERA

MOTION 026-03-029

Moved by Councillor Paquette, seconded by Councillor Slager THAT:

Council move in-camera to discuss a legal matter.

- CARRIED -

MOTION 026-03-030

Moved by Councillor Paquette, seconded by Slager THAT:

Council revert back to an open meeting.

- CARRIED -

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION 026-03-031

Moved by Councillor Paquette, seconded by Councillor Slager THAT:

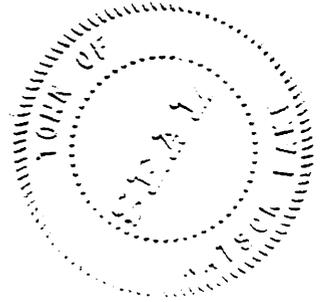There being no further business to discuss that the meeting be adjourned.

- CARRIED -

(signature)

Lauren Hanchar – Mayor

(signature)

Tiffany Lund – Municipal Clerk