



**CITY OF BATHURST**  
**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**  
**MINUTES**

**Monday, May 12, 2025**  
**6:30 pm**  
**Council Chambers - City Hall**

Recording of Attendance	Mayor K. Chamberlain Councillor P. Anderson Councillor R. Hondas Councillor J.-F. LeBlanc Councillor S. Legacy Councillor M. Skerry Deputy Mayor M. Willett
Absent	Councillor D. Branch Councillor S. Brunet Councillor D. Knowles
Appointed Officials	T. Pettigrew, CAO M. Abernethy, City Engineer L. Foulem, Corporate Communications Manager M. A. LaPlante, Assistant City Manager C. Roy, Executive Administrator G. Theriault, Chief of Police J-P. Oudin, Executive Director of Fire Services

**1. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

No conflicts of interest were declared.

**2. PUBLIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE PRESENTATIONS**

**2.1 New Police Recruits**

The Chief of Police formally introduced several new recruits, with more introductions planned for future meetings. Some officers were unable to attend, and others are still in training and expected to begin fieldwork in June. The Bathurst Police Force is in a strong position and appreciates the City's ongoing support.

The following members were introduced:

Constable Marc Poitras

Constable Isabelle Haché

Constable Alexandre Gagnon

Constable Justin Dupuis

Constable Sonny Levesque

## **2.2 New Executive Director of Fire Services**

The Chief Administrative Officer formally introduced the newly appointed Executive Director of Fire Services. In line with the Fire Services' Strategic Plan, the City of Bathurst has appointed Mr. Jean-Philippe Oudin to the role, effective April 28. Mr. Oudin brings a distinguished career in firefighting, spanning both France and Canada since 1997, with extensive expertise in fire prevention, emergency management, and operational leadership. Most recently, he served as Deputy Chief in Edmundston, where he was instrumental in establishing a dedicated Fire Prevention Division and implementing safety initiatives that significantly improved public protection across the region.

## **2.3 Festival Chaleur Bantou 2025 by Pecos Neutchawo**

The Chaleur BANTOU Festival is a major cultural event that will take place from July 30 to August 3, 2025, in the Chaleur region, primarily in Bathurst and Belle-Baie. Organized by Deep Mindset Consulting, it celebrates the richness of African cultures and their diasporas, highlighting values of diversity, inclusion, creativity, and sharing. The name of the festival pays tribute to the warmth of the Bantu people as well as the host region. The event features a varied program including a conference-debate on African entrepreneurship, a pitch competition to showcase innovative ideas, an African dance workshop in the open air, an artisan market, a sports tournament (the Chaleur Region Nations Cup), children's activities, and a major musical concert at Coronation Park. The festival aims to strengthen community ties, promote African artistic talents, support local entrepreneurship, and provide a platform for intergenerational cultural expression. They are seeking financial support from both businesses and the City

## **2.4 École Secondaire Népisiguit Joël Godin et Etienne Noël**

Nepisiguit High School (ESN), which will welcome 756 students for the 2025–2026 school year, is proposing a transformative project: the purchase of a bus to support its many extracurricular and co-curricular activities. This initiative aligns with the educational goals of the District Education Framework, which focuses on lifelong learning, promoting a healthy and balanced lifestyle, and affirming community, linguistic, and cultural identity. Each year, ESN supports more than 24 sports teams and hosts over 200 workshops through its “École Réimaginée” initiative. Acquiring a bus would reduce long-term transportation costs for families, increase logistical flexibility for activities, encourage greater student participation, and strengthen students' sense of belonging to the school and the region.

To date, \$247,375 has already been raised. ESN is now seeking to establish an agreement with the City of Bathurst for an annual contribution of \$6,250 over a four-year period. This project, born from true community collaboration, is unifying, hopeful, and sustainable.

## **2.5 Road Rebuild Selection Process by City Engineer, Matthew Abernethy**

### **The City Engineer presents an Overview of the Street Repair Prioritization Process.**

Street repair prioritization is a critical part of maintaining a city's infrastructure. Municipalities are faced with the challenge of managing a vast network of roads with limited budgets. Much of the infrastructure is aging and in need of strategic, long-term planning to ensure sustainability. The goal is to maximize both the short- and long-term value of repair investments while ensuring fairness in how repair decisions are made.

One of the key challenges in this process is what's often referred to as the "Asset Management Dilemma." There are two traditional approaches to road repair: the "worst first" method, which focuses on fixing the most damaged roads, and the "best first" approach, which aims to preserve roads in good condition to avoid higher costs down the line. Modern asset management strategies typically use a combination of both, supported by pavement management systems that help make more informed, data-driven decisions.

### **How Priorities Are Determined**

To create a priority list for repairs, the city evaluates the current condition of streets, taking into account safety concerns. Traffic volume data is also collected using stationary devices, and scores are adjusted depending on the type of street. Other factors play a role as well, including proximity to school zones, entry points into the city, tourism destinations, and the central business district. This ensures that decisions reflect not just technical condition but also community impact.

During the presentation, an extensive list of streets requiring paving-only repairs and those slated for full reconstruction was reviewed.

### **Efficient Planning: Avoiding the "Pave, Then Dig" Problem**

Coordination with utility services such as water, sewer, and power utilities is crucial. Roadwork must align with utility maintenance schedules to avoid the costly mistake of paving a street, only to dig it up again shortly afterward. Adjusting the timing of repairs to match utility plans helps reduce waste and extend the lifespan of infrastructure.

### **Understanding the Scope and Cost**

The total cost to completely rebuild all streets in the city is estimated at \$638 million in today's dollars. At the current investment rate of approximately \$6.38 million per year, it would take around 100 years to rebuild the entire network.

For context, the average lifespan of infrastructure assets is 60 years for water and sewer piping, 15 to 20 years for asphalt surfaces, and 60 years for road base and concrete structures.

### **Conclusion**

Street repairs are driven by data and shaped by available resources. Coordinating road work with utility upgrades is essential to effective planning. Ultimately, reaching a sustainable level of infrastructure renewal will require a significant increase in financial support from all levels of government — municipal, provincial, and federal.

## **2.6 Council composition, Salaries and Voting Privileges of the Mayor by Jacques Dubé**

### **Summary: City of Bathurst Governance Review**

The City of Bathurst hired Strategic Engagement Stratégique Chaleur Inc. (SESC) to assess and make recommendations on:

1. The salaries of the Mayor and Councillors
2. The composition of City Council (currently 9 Councillors-at-Large + Mayor)
3. Whether the Mayor should have full voting rights

## **Methodology**

SESC reviewed data from 18 municipalities in Atlantic Canada, examined local by-laws, historical salary data, and relevant legislation. Consultations with the Mayor, Council, staff, or public were not included.

## **Council Composition Findings & Options**

Bathurst has fewer residents per councillor than the average municipality reviewed.

Five options were proposed:

1. Status quo: 9 Councillors + Mayor, no change to voting (1,678 residents per Councillor)
2. 6 Councillors + Mayor gets vote (2,518 residents per Councillor)
3. 7 Councillors, Mayor keeps current voting role (2,158 residents per Councillor)
4. 8 Councillors + Mayor gets vote (1,889 residents per Councillor)
5. 8 Councillors, no voting change for Mayor (1,889 residents per Councillor)

## **Consultant's Recommendation**

- Primary recommendation: Petition the Minister of Local Government by July 1, 2025 to reduce Council to 6 Councillors-at-Large, and amend By-law #2023-07 to grant the Mayor full voting privileges.
- Alternative recommendation: If six Councillors is not acceptable, reduce to 8 Councillors-at-Large and allow the Mayor to vote.

## **Mayor's Voting Privileges – Why It Matters**

The consultant supports giving the Mayor a vote on all matters, arguing that:

- The Mayor is elected city-wide and should have a say in all decisions.
- Voting reinforces the Mayor's leadership and role in shaping priorities.
- It ensures transparency and shows where the Mayor stands on key issues.
- In a "weak mayor" system, one vote does not give undue power but ensures representation.

## **Salary Review Findings**

- The Mayor's salary is above average and does not require adjustment.
- The Deputy Mayor and Councillors are paid below average and should receive increases.

Decisions will be brought back to Council at a later date.

Councillors	Mayor votes	Composition	Salary options	Mayor	Deputy Mayor	Councillors
Legacy	No	7	1	\$ 63,369.00	\$ 33,000.00	\$ 28,000.00
Anderson	No	7	2	\$ 63,369.00	\$ 31,000.00	\$ 26,000.00
Knowles	No	7	2	\$ 63,369.00	\$ 31,000.00	\$ 26,000.00
<i>Branch</i>	<i>Absent</i>					
<i>Brunet</i>	<i>Absent</i>					
Hondas	Yes	8	3	\$ 63,369.00	\$ 33,000.00	\$ 29,000.00
Leblanc	Yes	8	3	\$ 63,369.00	\$ 33,000.00	\$ 29,000.00
Skerry	Yes	8	3	\$ 63,369.00	\$ 33,000.00	\$ 29,000.00
Willett	Yes	8	3	\$ 63,369.00	\$ 33,000.00	\$ 29,000.00
Mayor	yes	6	3	\$ 63,369.00	\$ 33,000.00	\$ 29,000.00

### 3. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

#### 3.1 Discussion: ATV Club Proposal Presented May 5

The ATV Club's three requests were presented at the Regular Public Meeting of May 5, 2025, during which Council also heard opposing views from Chaleur Green Trails and the Nepisiguit Mi'gmaq Trails. Two of the requests fall under an existing by-law process and could not be discussed at this meeting. The third request, seeking access for ATVs through the walking trail in East Bathurst, was considered, and Council unanimously decided not to proceed with a vote to grant access to the walking nature trails.

### 4. GRANT REQUESTS

#### 4.1 Grant Committee Recommendations

The Grant Committee presented its recommendations for the new funding requests, which were approved by Council. However, Council specified that the funding for the Art Society will be contingent on the Children's Festival activity taking place. A resolution will be brought forward at the next regular public meeting on May 20, 2025.

### 5. CITY CLERK

#### 5.1 Nominations for Deputy Mayor

Council is currently seeking nominations for the position of Deputy Mayor, with the appointment to be made at next week's Regular Public Meeting.

Councillor Hondas nominated Councillor Dale Knowles for the role, and Councillor Knowles accepted the nomination. The official appointment will take place during the Regular Public Meeting on May 20, 2025.

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**6. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

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Carolle Roy, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK