



TOWN OF LAKE COWICHAN

Minutes of a Regular meeting of Council held and transmitted electronically via Council Chambers located at 39 South Shore Road, Lake Cowichan, BC on Tuesday, February 24th, 2026

PRESENT: Councillor Lorna Vomacka, Deputy Mayor
Councillor Carlyne Austin
Councillor Aaron Frisby
Councillor Kristine Sandhu

REGRETS: Tim McGonigle, Mayor *(leave of absence)*

STAFF: John Thomas, Chief Administrative Officer
Jas Sandhu, Superintendent, Public Works and Engineering Services
Dalton Smith, Manager, Cowichan Lake Education Centre
Brigid Reynolds, Contract Planner
Roni-Lee Roach, Executive Secretary

PUBLIC: None.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Deputy Mayor called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

None.

3. AGENDA

No. R.024/26
Agenda

Moved: Councillor Austin
Seconded: Councillor Frisby
That the agenda be approved as presented.

CARRIED.

4. PUBLIC INPUT

None.

5. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

No. R.025/26
Regular Council
Meeting Minutes

(a) Moved: Councillor Sandhu
Seconded: Councillor Frisby
That the minutes of the Regular meeting of Council held on January 27th, 2026, be adopted.

CARRIED.

(b) The minutes of the Advisory Planning Commission meeting held on January 22nd, 2026, were treated as information.

No. R.026/26
Committee of the
Whole Meeting
Minutes

(c) Moved: Councillor Frisby
Seconded: Councillor Austin
That the minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting on Operating and Capital Budgets held on February 10th, 2026, be adopted.

CARRIED.

6. BUSINESS ARISING AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

No. R.027/26
Actionable Resolutions –
February 10th, 2026

(a) Moved: Councillor Frisby
Seconded: Councillor Sandhu
That Council adopt the actionable resolutions from the February 10th, 2026, Committee of the Whole as presented:

1—General Administration – Meeting Management Software

That Council approves the addition of \$15,000 to general administration budget for meeting management software for 2026.

2—Public Works – Parking Programme

That Council approve that the “parking meters” be changed to “parking programme” for 2026.



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3—Public Works – Fern Road

That Council approve the addition of \$15,000 to Public Works General fund Capital budget for researching, report and possible implementation of the opening of Fern Road onto Point Ideal Drive.

4—General Government – Ohtaki Expense

That Council reduce the Ohtaki Expense budget of \$15,000 to \$10,000 for 2026.

5—Sewer Parcel Tax - 2027

That the proposed budget reflects an increase to the Sewer fund Parcel Tax budget by \$25 annually, starting in 2027 with increase of \$25 per year to 2030 year.

6—Water and Sewer Parcel Tax Review

That staff review the amounts of the sewer and water parcel tax annual increase, starting in 2027, with directions to staff to report back on the possible amendments to the Parcel Tax bylaws.

7—2026 Taxation Rate Increase

That Council set a 4% tax increase for the Town of Lake Cowichan for 2026.
CARRIED.

(c) The Chief Administrative Officer presented the updated consolidated 2026 draft budget and reviewed the following:

- general fund – five-year budget (2026-2029);
- general fund 2026;
- 2026 budget – capital and special projects expenditures;
- 2026 budget – sewer and water capital expenditures; and
- general fund – 5-year capital.

The Chief Administrative Officer presented the general fund expenditure review by department; General government, Fire Department, Bylaw and Development, Public Works, Visitor Centre, Lakeview Park and Cowichan Lake Education Centre (CLEC).

No. R.028/26
Lakeview Park Public
Beach Budget 2026

Moved: Councillor Frisby
Seconded: Councillor Austin
That Council increase the Lakeview Park public beach budget from \$20,000 to \$40,000 for 2026.

CARRIED.

Councillor Sandhu requested Council’s reconsideration of the proposed tax increase of 4%. This request was not endorsed by Council.

The Chief Administrative Officer continued to review the Sewer and Water Funds with respect to the Five-Year Plan (2026-2030), 2026 budgets and capital 2025-2026.

The matter of the parking program will be brought forward to the next Committee of the Whole meeting to discuss implementation in 2026.

No. R.029/26
2026 Budget

Moved: Councillor Frisby
Seconded: Councillor Austin
That Council approves the draft budget as presented; and

That Council direct staff to proceed with public consultation.



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CARRIED.

7. DELEGATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

None.

8. CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence Items –
Received and Filed

The correspondence from BC Parks on its proposed additions to Cowichan River Provincial Park was treated as information.

9. COUNCIL AND OTHER COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committee of the
Whole

(a) Refer to item 5c on the agenda.

Cowichan Lake
Recreation Commission

(b) Councillor Sandhu reported that the next Recreation Commission meeting would be held on March 30th, 2026.

Vancouver Island
Regional Library

(c) Councillor Vomacka reported on the Annual General meeting held on February 21st, 2026.

Councillor Vomacka shared the Regional Board Trustee handbook which had some valuable information and details.

Advisory Planning
Commission

(d) Councillor Austin reported that the meeting of the last Advisory Planning Commission has been made available on the agenda. Councillor Sandhu reported that the upcoming Advisory Committee meeting on February 26th, 2026, had been cancelled.

Community Forest Co-
operative

(e) No report for the Forest Co-operative.

Cowichan Valley
Regional District

(f) Councillor Sandu reported on her attendance at the recent Cowichan Valley Regional District meetings.

Community Outreach
Team

(g) Councillor Austin provided a report on her attendance at the recent Community Outreach meeting.

Our Cowichan

(h) Councillor Austin reported that the Our Cowichan meeting was scheduled for March 12th, 2026.

Cowichan Watershed
Board

(i) Councillor Sandhu reported on the Watershed Board meeting held on February 23rd, 2026, which was a roundtable discussion on the lack of snowpack and how it may impact the Cowichan River in 2026. The next meeting will be held on March 30th, 2026.

Ohtaki Twinning

(j) Councillor Austin provided a report on the plans underway for 2027 travel to Ohtaki, Japan.

10. OTHER REPORTS

None.

11. STAFF REPORTS

No. R.030/26
Development Permit
DP2026-01 and

(b) Moved: Councillor Frisby
Seconded: Councillor Sandhu
That Council approve DP2026-01 to permit development within Watercourse and Streamside Protection Development Permit Area (DPA 1) to allow for the



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Development Variance Permit DVP2026-01
The "Slopes" – Phase 6

application of subdivision at the property known as the "Slopes" Phase 6 on the lot legally described as Remainder Lot A, Section 6, Renfrew District Plan EPP103677 except Part on Plans EPP104021 and EPP109124 and EPP138345 (PID: 031-159-851); and

That Council approve DVP2026-01 to vary Section 6.11 of the Subdivision, Works and Services Bylaw No. 1082-2022 to increase the size of the Streamside Protection and Enhancement Area within proposed lots 1, 2, 13, 14 & 15 that may be permitted in the proposed subdivision SD2025-01, as shown in Attachment 1 and subject to

- a. all works being consistent with the Conditions and Impact Assessment (CIA) Report prepared by Brittany Brooks, dated 2025-10-30, as shown in Attachment 2 including
 - i. the replanting plan
 - ii. submission of the landscape bond in the amount of \$5,903.41
 - iii. installation of a split rail fence along the SPEA as a condition of subdivision approval,
 - iv. registration of a watercourse protection section 219 covenant as a condition of subdivision approval; and
 - v. addition of a required 2 metre setback from edge of SPEA.

CARRIED.

No. R.031/26
Development Permit DP2025-04 Amendment
276 Tal Road

- (c) Moved: Councillor Frisby
Seconded: Councillor Austin
That Council approve the amendment to DP2025-04 to accept the Condition & Impact Assessment Report prepared by QEP Environmental, dated November 11, 2025 for the property located at 276 Tal Road, on the lot legally described as Lot 5, District Lot 13, Cowichan Lake District, Plan VIP88703 (PID: 028-497-023), subject to the following conditions:
 1. The revised replanting plan as identified in Attachment 1 be implemented;
 2. Within 30 days of grass seeding and planting completion, a post-restoration report is required to be prepared by a qualified environmental professional and submitted to the Town of Lake Cowichan;
 3. The required landscape bond of \$3,000 is to be paid before issuance of the permit.
 4. After one year from planting, a report is required to be prepared by the QEP confirming the health of the plantings and submitted to the Town of Lake Cowichan for the bond to be released.

CARRIED.

No. R.032/26
LCRB Referral –
Riverside Inn at 56 North Shore Road

- (d) Moved: Councillor Sandhu
Seconded: Councillor Frisby
That Council agrees to accept the preliminary request to change opening hours from 11:00 am to 9:00 am for the Riverside Inn and Pub, located at 56 North Shore Road, legally described as Parcel B Section 6, Renfrew District, Plan DD33019i (PID:008-725-713) so a formal application to the LCRB can be made; and

T Council directs staff to engage the RCMP and post public notice during the public consultation process for the referral application, once received.

Councillor Austin AGAINST
CARRIED.

12. BYLAWS



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No. R.033/26
Zoning Amendment
Bylaw – R-3
No. 1124-2025

- (a) Moved: Councillor Austin
Seconded: Councillor Frisby
That the “Town of Lake Cowichan Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 1124-2025” may be adopted.

CARRIED.

13. NEW BUSINESS

No. R.034/26
Leave of Absence

- (a) Moved: Councillor Sandhu
Seconded: Councillor Austin
That Council approve a leave of absence for Councillor Aaron Frisby from the Committee of the Whole meeting to be held on March 10th, 2026.

CARRIED.

14. MAYOR’S REPORT

Councillor Vomacka gave a verbal Deputy Mayor report as follows:
It’s been a real eye-opener in five weeks as I’ve fulfilled my role as Deputy Mayor. I’ve had a great insight into the daily operations and challenges that our staff and management endure on a daily basis.

On Council, we’ve been busy working on our Development Approval Procedures Bylaw and our 2026 draft budget, as well as attending our committee meetings. I sat in on staff interviews, met with Domtar regarding the weir, issued a statement with other elected officials against racism in the Cowichan Valley, and extended our Town’s sympathies to the Tumbler Ridge community.

Thank you to all our staff that keep our town running smoothly, even taking on increased workloads while others are off for extended timelines.

To my fellow Council members, my appreciation for your support and confidence as we all stepped up during Mayor McGonigle’s absence. I couldn’t have done it without your help.

Our CAO, Mr. John Thomas, thanks for having regular meetings with me to keep me up to date on daily happenings and in aiding me through decisions that had to be made. Your guidance and faith in me did not go unnoticed.

We have a remarkable team from the top down, and I will defend everyone of you in this organization amidst public complaints and criticisms, which seem to be occurring with great frequency. As it is also being witnessed in neighboring communities by elected officials. This would also be an opportunity to announce Pink Shirt Day tomorrow, February 25th, to stand against bullying.

You all come to work every day, and you do your best to make Lake Cowichan a wonderful place to live. Please know that you are all appreciated by this Council.

And with that—Mayor McGonigle, if you are listening, glad to see you returning and your gavel is waiting for you.

15. NOTICES OF MOTION

None.

16. QUESTION PERIOD

None.



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No. R.035/26
Retire to In-Camera

17. IN CAMERA

Moved: Councillor Austin
Seconded: Councillor Frisby
That the Council close the meeting to the public to deal with matters which falls under s. 90(1) (c) and (i) and s.90(2) of the Community Charter. (5:25 pm).

CARRIED.

No. R.036/26
Adjournment

18. ADJOURNMENT

Moved: Councillor Frisby
Seconded: Councillor Austin
that Council arise without report and adjourn the meeting 6:24 pm.

CARRIED.

Certified correct _____.

Confirmed on the _____ day of _____, 2026.

Deputy Mayor

DRAFT