REGULAR MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES

Monday, February 23, 2026
5:00 pm
Council Chambers and Video Conference

Present:	Mayor M. Shoemaker, Councillor S. Hollingsworth, Councillor S. Spina, Councillor L. Dufour, Councillor L. Vezeau-Allen, Councillor A. Caputo, Councillor R. Zagordo, Councillor M. Bruni, Councillor S. Kinach (by video), Councillor C. Gardi, Councillor M. Scott
Officials:	T. Vair, R. Tyczinski, S. Hamilton Beach, B. Lamming, N. Thibault, S. Schell, J. King, N. Thomas, P. Tonazzo, C. Rumiel, D. Perri, N. Maione, F. Coccimiglio, T. Anderson, M. Zuppa, T. Vecchio, E. Cormier, D. Morrell, K. Pulkkinen

14. Closed Session

Moved by: Councillor L. Vezeau-Allen
Seconded by: Councillor M. Bruni

Resolved that this Council move into closed session to discuss:

- one item concerning labour relations or employee negotiations;
- one item supplied in confidence to the municipality, which, if disclosed, could reasonably be expected to prejudice significantly the competitive position or interfere significantly with the contractual or other negotiations of an organization; and
- one item concerning a position or plan to be applied to negotiations.

Further Be It Resolved that should the said closed session be adjourned, the Council may reconvene in closed session to continue to discuss the same without the need for a further authorizing resolution.

Municipal Act R.S.O. 2001 – 239 (2)(d) labour relations or employee negotiations; (i) a trade secret or scientific, technical, commercial, financial or labour relations information, supplied in confidence to the municipality or local board, which, if disclosed, could reasonably be expected to prejudice significantly the competitive position or interfere significantly with the contractual or other negotiations of a person, group of persons, or organization; (k) a position, plan, procedure, criteria or instruction to be applied to any negotiations carried on or to be carried on by or on behalf of the municipality or local board

Carried

1. Land Acknowledgement

2. Adoption of Minutes

Moved by: Councillor L. Vezeau-Allen
Seconded by: Councillor M. Bruni

Resolved that the Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting of February 2, 2026 be approved.

Carried

3. Questions and Information Arising Out of the Minutes and not Otherwise on the Agenda

4. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

4.1 Councillor L. Dufour – Emergency Treatment Fund Agreements

Employee of DSSAB

4.2 Councillor L. Dufour – By-law 2026-21 (Agreement) Canadian Mental Health Association Outreach and Wellness Response

Employee of DSSAB

4.3 Councillor L. Dufour – By-law 2026-22 (Agreement) District of Sault Ste. Marie Social Services Administration Board Outreach and Wellness Response Team Fleet

Employee of DSSAB

5. Approve Agenda as Presented

Moved by: Councillor L. Dufour
Seconded by: Councillor S. Kinach

Resolved that the Agenda for February 23, 2026 City Council Meeting as presented be approved.

Carried

6. Presentations

6.1 Community Safety Well-Being Plan: 2025-2029

Iain De Jong, President and CEO, and Chris Gorman, Senior Associate, OrgCode Consulting, Inc. were in attendance.

6.2 PUC Group of Companies – Essex Transmission Project

Paul Skeggs, Vice-Chair and Robert Brewer, President and CEO were in attendance.

7. Communications and Routine Reports of City Departments, Boards and Committees – Consent Agenda

Moved by: Councillor L. Dufour
Seconded by: Councillor M. Bruni

Resolved that all the items listed under date February 23, 2026 – Agenda item 7 – Consent Agenda save and except Agenda item 7.1 be approved as recommended.

Carried

7.2 Listing and Marketing – Access to Land Residential Properties

The report of the Manager of Purchasing was received by Council.

Moved by: Councillor L. Vezeau-Allen
Seconded by: Councillor M. Bruni

Resolved that the report of the Manager of Purchasing dated February 23, 2026 concerning Listing and Marketing Access to Land Residential Properties as required by CDES Planning Division and Legal Department be received and that the services be awarded to Exit Realty True North for the two-year period commencing March 1, 2026 at rates quoted (with option to extend up to an additional three one-year periods by mutual agreement).

Carried

7.3 Sewer Cleaning Bucket Machine System Purchase from Rental

The report of the Manager of Purchasing was received by Council.

Moved by: Councillor L. Vezeau-Allen
Seconded by: Councillor S. Kinach

Resolved that the report of the Manager of Purchasing dated February 23, 2026 concerning sewer cleaning equipment purchase as requested by Public Works and Engineering Services be received and that the purchase from Braywood Services Inc. in the amount of $168,739 plus HST be approved.

Carried

7.4 Outdoor Recreation and Parks Improvements – NOHFC Contribution Agreement

Moved by: Councillor L. Vezeau-Allen
Seconded by: Councillor M. Bruni

Resolved that the report of the Manager of Recreation and Culture dated February 23, 2026 concerning the Outdoor Recreation and Parks Improvements – NOHFC Contribution Agreement be received and that the remaining funding from the North Street Park lighting be reallocated to Strathclair Park.

The relevant By-law 2026-24 is listed under item 12 of the Agenda and will be read with all by-laws under that item.

Carried

7.5 Tourism Development Fund Applications – February 2026

The report of the Director of Tourism and Community Development was received by Council.

Moved by: Councillor L. Vezeau-Allen
Seconded by: Councillor M. Bruni

Resolved that the report of the Director of Tourism and Community Development dated February 23, 2026 concerning Tourism Development Fund Applications – February 2026 be received and that the recommendation of the Tourism Sault Ste. Marie Board of Directors to allocate $77,000 as detailed below, be approved.

1.Ice Fest ($2,000);

2.Sault Female Hockey Association ($10,000);

3.Sault Major Hockey Association ($15,000); and

4.Killarney Air Services Ltd. ($50,000).

Carried

7.6 Municipal Participation in Canada's 30 x 30 Conservation Target

Moved by: Councillor L. Dufour
Seconded by: Councillor S. Kinach

Resolved that the report of the Sustainability Coordinator concerning Municipal Participation in Canada's 30 x 30 Conservation Target be received and that staff be authorized to undertake the following actions:

- Submission to Ontario Nature of the following municipally-owned lands for assessment under the Municipal Protected Areas (as shown on the attached maps) Project:
    - Block 1 – 321 Walls Side Road (Shore Ridges Wetland);
    - Block 2 – Finn Hill Area;
    - Block 3 – the City-owned parcels within the Carp River Wetland Complex west of Carpin Beach Road in the Herkimer area; and
    - Block 4 – 1173 Fourth Line East – Wishart Park parcel;

- Further that the Chief Administrative Officer and City Solicitor be authorized to execute the consent letter between City and Ontario Nature to facilitate the municipal assessment and the submission of qualifying lands to the Canadian Protected and Conserved Areas Database.

Carried

7.7 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2026-2030

The report of the Accessibility Coordinator was received by Council.

Moved by: Councillor L. Dufour
Seconded by: Councillor S. Kinach

Resolved that the report of the Accessibility Coordinator dated February 23, 2026 concerning the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2026-2030 be received and that the Plan be approved.

Carried

7.1 Emergency Treatment Fund Agreements

Councillor L. Dufour declared a conflict on this item. (Employee of DSSAB)

The report of the Chief Administrative Officer was received by Council.

The relevant By-laws 2026-21 and 2026-22 are listed under item 12 of the Minutes.

8. Reports of City Departments, Boards and Committees

8.1 Administration

8.2 Corporate Services

8.3 Community Development and Enterprise Services

8.3.1 Community Safety and Well-Being Plan

The report of the Deputy CAO, Community Development and Enterprise Services was received by Council.

Moved by: Councillor L. Vezeau-Allen
Seconded by: Councillor M. Bruni

Resolved that the report of the Deputy CAO, Community Development and Enterprise Services dated February 23, 2026 concerning Community Safety and Well-Being Plan be received and that the Plan be approved;

Further that a contract position for a Community Safety and Well-Being Coordinator be created utilizing $50,000 in previously approved funds, community partner contributions, and remaining funds of approximately $19,000 in the FutureSSM reserve.

	For	Against	Conflict	Absent
Mayor M. Shoemaker	X			

Councillor S. Hollingsworth	X			
Councillor S. Spina	X			
Councillor L. Dufour	X			
Councillor L. Vezeau-Allen	X			
Councillor A. Caputo	X			
Councillor R. Zagordo	X			
Councillor M. Bruni	X			
Councillor S. Kinach	X			
Councillor C. Gardi	X			
Councillor M. Scott	X			
Results	**11**	**0**	**0**	**0**

Carried

8.4 Public Works and Engineering Services

8.5 Fire Services

8.6 Legal

8.7 Planning

8.8 Boards and Committees

Moved by: Councillor L. Dufour
Seconded by: Councillor S. Kinach

Resolved that City Council is now authorized to meet in open session as the sole shareholder of PUC Inc.; and

Further Be It Resolved that City Council appoints Mayor Matthew Shoemaker as Council's proxy to vote on the resolution of the shareholder of PUC Inc.

Carried

8.8.1 PUC – Essex Transmission Project Entities Shareholder Resolution

Whereas PUC Inc. is a wholly owned municipal corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie; and

Whereas the City of Sault Ste. Marie as the shareholder of PUC Inc. has established a shareholder declaration that requires PUC Inc. seek and receive shareholder approval with respect to the taking, holding, subscribing for or agreeing to purchase the acquired shares in the capital of any body corporate other than the Subsidiary Corporations by PUC Inc., and

Whereas PUC Inc., along with its partners, are proposing to advance the Essex Transmission Project, a strategic infrastructure initiative intended to support regional energy reliability, enable economic development, and generate long-term financial returns through new transmission asset; and

Whereas the Essex Transmission Project is expected to deliver direct and indirect benefits to the City of Sault Ste. Marie by supporting local employment, enhancing PUC Inc.'s long-term financial sustainability, and increasing municipal-related revenues that can be reinvested in community services and infrastructure.

Now Therefore Be It Resolved that the shareholder of PUC Inc. hereby approves PUC Inc. acquiring shares in Essex Transmission GP Inc. and PUC Development Inc.

9. Unfinished Business, Notice of Motions and Resolutions Placed on Agenda by Members of Council

9.1 Planned Closure of LifeLabs Laboratory in Greater Sudbury

Moved by: Councillor S. Hollingsworth
Seconded by: Councillor M. Bruni

Whereas LifeLabs has announced its intention to close its Greater Sudbury laboratory, and the transfer of medical specimen processing from Northern Ontario to laboratories in southern Ontario; and

Whereas the Greater Sudbury laboratory provides essential diagnostic services to communities across Northern Ontario, including urban, rural, and remote municipalities, and plays a critical role in ensuring timely and reliable medical testing for Northern residents; and

Whereas patients with chronic illness, newborns, long-term care residents, and individuals on time-sensitive medications depend on predictable laboratory turnaround times to support clinical decision-making; and

Whereas transporting medical specimens long distances to southern Ontario increases the risk of delays, specimen degradation, and retesting, particularly during frequent winter highway closures—potentially jeopardizing patient outcomes; and

Whereas Northern Ontario is already experiencing shortages of health-care professionals, and the closure of this laboratory further undermines regional workforce stability, training capacity, and recruitment and retention efforts;

Now Therefore Be It Resolved that the City of Sault Ste. Marie call on the Province of Ontario and the Ministry of Health to take immediate action to ensure that essential medical laboratory services remain accessible within Northern Ontario, including maintaining local laboratory processing capacity in Greater Sudbury; and

Be It Further Resolved that the Province be urged to ensure reliable, timely, and medically appropriate laboratory turnaround times for Northern Ontario patients, recognizing the unique geographic and climatic challenges of the region; and

Be It Further Resolved that the Province be requested to protect and support the Northern Ontario health-care workforce, including medical laboratory technologists, by preventing further service centralization that disproportionately impacts Northern communities; and

Be It Further Resolved that copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Minister of Health, local Members of Provincial Parliament, FONOM, ADMA, AMO, and ROMA.

	For	Against	Conflict	Absent
Mayor M. Shoemaker	X			
Councillor S. Hollingsworth	X			
Councillor S. Spina	X			
Councillor L. Dufour	X			
Councillor L. Vezeau-Allen	X			
Councillor A. Caputo	X			
Councillor R. Zagordo	X			
Councillor M. Bruni	X			
Councillor S. Kinach	X			
Councillor C. Gardi	X			
Councillor M. Scott	X			
Results	**11**	**0**	**0**	**0**

Carried

10. Committee of the Whole for the Purpose of Such Matters as are Referred to it by the Council by Resolution

11. Adoption of Report of the Committee of the Whole

12. Consideration and Passing of By-laws

Moved by: Councillor L. Vezeau-Allen
Seconded by: Councillor S. Kinach

Resolved that all By-laws under item 12 of the Agenda under date February 23, 2026 save and except By-laws 2026-21 and 2026-22 be approved.

Carried

12.1 By-laws before Council to be passed which do not require more than a simple majority

12.1.3 By-law 2026-23 (Traffic) Amending Traffic By-Law 77-200

Moved by: Councillor L. Vezeau-Allen
Seconded by: Councillor S. Kinach

Resolved that By-Law 2026-23 being a by-law to amend "Part 1 – Definitions and Interpretation", "Part VI – Turning, Direction and Speed Regulations", Section 6(5), Section 16A, Section AA, A, BB, D, F, G, K, VV, X, and add Schedule CC" to Traffic By-law 77-200 be passed in open Council this 23rd day of February, 2026.

Carried

12.1.4 By-law 2026-24 (Agreement) Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) Contribution Agreement Outdoor Recreation and Parks Improvements

Moved by: Councillor L. Vezeau-Allen
Seconded by: Councillor S. Kinach

Resolved that By-law 2026-24 being a by-law to authorize the execution of the Agreement between the City and Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation for funding to complete a series of park, recreation, and community infrastructure upgrades to enhance accessibility, safety and enjoyment for residents be passed in open Council this 23rd day of February, 2026.

Carried

12.1.1 By-law 2026-21 (Agreement) Canadian Mental Health Association Outreach and Wellness Response

Councillor L. Dufour declared a conflict on this item. (Employee of DSSAB)

Moved by: Councillor L. Vezeau-Allen
Seconded by: Councillor S. Kinach

Resolved that By-Law 2026-21 being a by-law to authorize the execution of the Agreement between the City and Canadian Mental Health Association Algoma for operational delivery of the Sault Ste. Marie Outreach and Wellness Response Team (OWR-Team) be passed in open Council this 23rd day of February, 2026

	For	Against	Conflict	Absent
Mayor M. Shoemaker	X			
Councillor S. Hollingsworth	X			
Councillor S. Spina	X			
Councillor L. Dufour			X	
Councillor L. Vezeau-Allen	X			
Councillor A. Caputo	X			
Councillor R. Zagordo	X			
Councillor M. Bruni	X			
Councillor S. Kinach	X			

	For	Against	Conflict	Absent
Councillor C. Gardi	X			
Councillor M. Scott	X			
Results	**10**	**0**	**1**	**0**

Carried

12.1.2 By-law 2026-22 (Agreement) District of Sault Ste. Marie Social Services Administration Board Outreach and Wellness Response Team Fleet

Councillor L. Dufour declared a conflict on this item. (Employee of DSSAB)

Moved by: Councillor L. Vezeau-Allen
Seconded by: Councillor S. Kinach

Resolved that By-Law 2026-22 being a by-law to authorize the execution of the Agreement between the City and The District of Sault Ste. Marie Social Services Administration Board for operational delivery of the Sault Ste. Marie Outreach and Wellness Response Team (OWR-Team) be passed in open Council this 23rd day of February, 2026.

	For	**Against**	**Conflict**	**Absent**
Mayor M. Shoemaker	X			
Councillor S. Hollingsworth	X			
Councillor S. Spina	X			
Councillor L. Dufour			**X**	
Councillor L. Vezeau-Allen	X			
Councillor A. Caputo	X			
Councillor R. Zagordo	X			
Councillor M. Bruni	X			
Councillor S. Kinach	X			
Councillor C. Gardi	X			
Councillor M. Scott	X			
Results	**10**	**0**	**1**	**0**

Carried

12.2 By-laws before Council for FIRST and SECOND reading which do not require more than a simple majority

12.3 By-laws before Council for THIRD reading which do not require more than a simple majority

13. Questions By, New Business From, or Addresses by Members of Council Concerning Matters Not Otherwise on the Agenda

15. Adjournment

Moved by: Councillor L. Dufour
Seconded by: Councillor M. Bruni

Resolved that this Council now adjourn.

Carried

Mayor

City Clerk