

**Minutes of the Special Closed Meeting of Council of the
Township of Douro-Dummer
March 18, 2025, 4:00 PM
Council Chambers**

Member Present: Mayor Heather Watson
Deputy Mayor Harold Nelson
Councillor Thomas Watt
Councillor Adam Vervoort
Councillor Ray Johnston

Staff Present: C.A.O. – Todd Davis
Clerk - Deputy C.A.O. – Martina Chait-Hartwig
Treasurer – Paul Creamer
CBO – Don Helleman

Guest: John Mascarin, Aird Berlis – Township Solicitor

1. Reason for Closed Session Meeting

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 4:29 p.m. and stated the reason for the special closed meeting is to allow Council to enter the Close Session to meet with Township Solicitor and receive an update on an ongoing file.

The meeting started at 4:29 p.m. following a delay caused by technical issues in the Council Chamber.

2. Land Acknowledgement

The Mayor recited the Land Acknowledgement.

3. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

The Mayor reminded members of Council of their obligation to declare any pecuniary interest they might have. None were declared.

4. Approval of Closed Session Agenda - March 18, 2025

Resolution Number 087-2025

Moved by: Councillor Johnston

Seconded by: Deputy Mayor Nelson

That the agenda for the Closed Session Meeting, dated March 18, 2025, be adopted, as circulated.

Carried

5. Closed Session

Resolution Number 088-2025

Moved by: Councillor Watt

Seconded by: Deputy Mayor Nelson

That Council move into Closed Session for the following items:

A review of legal matters with the Township Solicitor, and

A discussion of Building Department Matters

This action is being taken under the following exemptions in Section 239 (2) of the Municipal Act, as amended:

(b) personal matters about an identifiable individual, including municipal or local board employees;

(e) litigation or potential litigation, including matters before administrative tribunals, affecting the municipality or local board;

(f) advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege, including communications necessary for that purpose; (4:32 p.m.).

Carried

6. Rise Out of Closed Session with or without a Report

Resolution Number 089-2025

Moved by: Deputy Mayor Nelson

Seconded by: Councillor Vervoort

That Council come out of closed session at 5:20 p.m. with a report in the open portion of the Closed Council meeting.

Carried

7. Matters Arising from Closed Session

Resolution Number 090-2025

Moved by: Councillor Watt

Seconded by: Councillor Johnston

Municipalities were created by the Province to be responsible and accountable governments for the core purpose of providing good government on matters within their jurisdiction.

The Township of Douro-Dummer is committed to delivering excellent, impartial and accessible customer services. Every member of Council and every member of staff strives to provide the best service to all the residents of the Township.

In the interests of openness, accountability and transparency, the Township has always attempted to address questions and queries from constituents and others doing business with the municipality in a prompt, proportionate and professional manner.

Recently, however, a small number of individuals and a largely anonymous group have commenced what can only be viewed as a crusade of disruption in our Township.

These individuals and group have embarked upon a campaign which appears designed to target certain members of our staff and to monopolize their time in a wholly disproportionate manner. Members of Council are not immune as they have been bombarded with demands for responses to matters that will be discussed, debated and deliberated upon in formal meetings of Council.

To date, these individuals and group have primarily targeted our staff with multiple, repetitious and time-consuming questions and demands which far exceed our limited capacity to properly respond. When answers are provided, they are more often than not alleged to be insufficient and unsatisfactory. Seemingly, each response appears to trigger exponentially multiplying additional questions. Follow-up demands often materialize before any realistic timeframe for providing an adequate and considered response has passed.

Such behaviour impedes our staff from providing essential service to others who are equally and fully entitled to have their matters addressed with a proper degree of care and attention.

Moreover, the tone and tenor of these communications is becoming increasingly impolite, discourteous and plainly uncivil. These communications bear the typical hallmarks of online harassment: passive-aggressive stances; micro-aggressions; hostility; false politeness; veiled criticism; sarcasm; continuing persistence.

This is effectively a form of harassment – these individuals and group are attempting to exploit our staff resources and their good patience. They are also attempting to prod and coerce Council members to speak out of turn and away from the Council table.

Such actions will not be tolerated by Council. First, we have a duty as the decision-making body for the Township and that is as an employer under the ESA to ensure that all members of staff are protected from workplace harassment. Second, we have a fiduciary duty to provide equal services and treatment to all residents of the Township and not just to those comprising a vocal minority. Lastly, we have a Public Conduct Policy which is being flouted by what has become vexatious conduct.

Going forward, this Council will not tolerate communications from any person or group that constitutes vexatious conduct as outlined in the Public Conduct Policy.

The public is forewarned – communications to our staff or to members of Council that are vexatious will not be responded to – FULL STOP. **Carried**

Resolution Number 091-2025

Moved by: Councillor Vervoort

Seconded by: Deputy Mayor Nelson

That the staff be directed to apply fees for Routine Disclosure Requests in accordance with Township Policy and the User Fees and Charges By-law.

Carried

8. Adjournment

Resolution Number 092-2025

Moved by: Councillor Watt

Seconded by: Deputy Mayor Nelson

That this meeting adjourn at 5:26 p.m.

Carried

Mayor, Heather Watson

Clerk, Martina Chait-Hartwig