



Special Council Meeting

Minutes

December 1, 2025, 3:30 p.m.

Council Chambers - Hybrid

City of Kitchener

200 King Street W, Kitchener, ON N2G 4G7

Present:

Mayor B. Vrbanovic
Councillor S. Davey
Councillor D. Schnider
Councillor J. Deneault
Councillor C. Michaud
Councillor A. Owodunni
Councillor P. Singh
Councillor B. Ioannidis
Councillor M. Johnston
Councillor D. Chapman
Councillor S. Stretch

Staff:

D. Chapman, Chief Administrative Officer
V. Raab, General Manager, Corporate Services
J. Readman, General Manager, Development Services
J. Lautenbach, Chief Financial Officer, Financial Services
D. McGoldrick, General Manager, Infrastructure Services
J. Miller, Director, Corporate Customer Service
A. Fusco, Director Legislated Services / City Clerk
D. Saunderson, Deputy Clerk
M. Blake, Committee Coordinator

1. Commencement

The meeting began at 3:39 p.m. with a Land Acknowledgement given by the Mayor.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

None.

3. Notice All-Council Meeting / Region of Waterloo & Area Municipalities - For Information

The Mayor noted for information that all Members of Kitchener City Council have been invited to participate in a joint meeting with the Councils of the Regional Municipality of Waterloo and all Area Municipalities within the Region of Waterloo on Friday December 19, 2025 to be held at the Woolwich Township, Council Chambers, 24 Church Street West, Elmira, further notice of the meeting and start time will be published at www.regionofwaterloo.ca.

4. Presentations

4.1 Certificates of Achievement

Mayor B. Vrbanovic presented certificates of service to Councillors S. Davey, P. Singh and B. Ioannidis acknowledging their 15-years of service as Members of Council.

5. Mayoral Business and Updates - Mayor B. Vrbanovic

5.1 Mayor's Proposed 2026 Budget, FIN-2025-492

Councillor C. Michaud entered the meeting at this time.

Council considered Financial Services Department report FIN-2024-492, dated November 27, 2025, introducing the Mayor's proposed 2026 Budget.

Mayor B. Vrbanovic provided opening remarks related to the proposed 2026 Budget. Mayor Vrbanovic stated the budget is being presented in a manner consistent with strong mayor legislation implemented on July 1, 2023 by the Ontario government requiring the Mayor to be responsible for proposing the municipal budget.

Mayor Vrbanovic noted the proposed 2026 Budget was presented in accordance with legislation and timelines that were outlined during the budget process and agreed to by Council. It was noted Council was provided the opportunity to review and discuss the draft budget material which was presented by staff at the Finance and Corporate Services Committee meeting on November 24, 2025. Mayor Vrbanovic further advised, the meeting this date was not intended for Council to discuss, debate, or ask questions regarding the Proposed Budget, rather it was for the budget to be formally proposed. Mayor Vrbanovic stated after reviewing the Proposed 2026 Budget, if any member of Council wishes to put

forward an amendment for consideration, formal amendments must be received by the Clerk by December 8, 2025, any amendments will be dealt with at a December 11, 2025 Special Council (Final Budget Day) meeting.

Mayor Vrbanovic advised Kitchener has continued to demonstrate its commitment to considering affordability when setting its budget, consistently delivering tax rate increases that are aligned with the rate of inflation in Ontario. Kitchener's track record speaks for itself when it comes to balancing affordability, service demands, and responding to growth-related pressures. Mayor Vrbanovic commented on the 2026 Draft Budget prepared by staff and presented to Council last week, reporting that it builds on the success of previous budgets, by continuing to address priorities that are important for Kitchener, including:

- Affordable City Services that deliver the programs and services that residents and businesses rely on every day,
- Smart Investments in Infrastructure that help to address the City's asset replacement and growth-related needs, and,
- Focusing on the Future and providing funding to implement the City's 2023- 2026 Strategic Plan that will help shape Kitchener's future.

The 2026 Draft Budget balances several priorities and ensures Kitchener is Affordable Today, Ready for Tomorrow.

Mayor Vrbanovic highlighted the proposed tax increase of 2.2% as outlined in the budget, maintains existing services levels for the approximately 50 core services that the City provides, and still responds to growth related pressures that come with welcoming new residents to Kitchener each year. Mayor Vrbanovic indicated as noted by the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) J. Lautenbach during the budget presentation last week, Kitchener has one of the lowest tax levies per capita in the province, when compared to other large municipalities in Ontario. It also has a low municipal burden which accounts for property taxes and utilities rates, which means Kitchener is one of the most affordable cities in the entire province.

Mayor Vrbanovic highlighted the 2026 Budget also makes important investments in infrastructure, recognizing the need to take care of the \$15B worth of assets the City is responsible for, noting the City's \$1.8B capital budget identifies the infrastructure that is planned to be replaced over the next 10 years. Mayor B. Vrbanovic commented the City's planned investment over 10 years is significant, but the budget is still not enough to address all of the City's infrastructure replacement needs, noting staff have also pursued federal and provincial grant opportunities, successfully securing over \$200M in federal and provincial funding over the past five years to make important investments in our infrastructure.

Mayor Vrbanovic further advised in addition to these investments, as part of the Draft Budget, there was \$1M in one-time capital funding unallocated and available to further advance strategic priorities that are important to the community. Mayor Vrbanovic stated based on feedback received from Council, the Proposed Budget allocates the funding to three priority areas:

- \$100,000 for the continuation of Pitch Kitchener, an initiative that allows local start-ups at Communitech to “Pitch” innovative solutions that can be used to enhance municipal service delivery; and,
- \$400,000 for improvements to parks amenities, such as seating and shade structures, BBQ pits, and other minor enhancements in parks across the City; and,
- \$500,000 for the implementation of the City’s priorities for community building and special events including the purchase and operation of equipment that is currently rented by the City and other groups that organize these events.

Mayor Vrbanovic concluded that the with positive comments on the proposed 2026 Budget, stating the budget continues to advance the City towards the vision of the Strategic Plan while remaining Affordable Today, Ready for Tomorrow.

6. In-camera Meeting Authorization

Moved by Councillor M. Johnston

Seconded by Councillor D. Schnider

"That an in-camera meeting of City Council be held immediately following the special council meeting this date to consider a solicitor-client privilege, a labour relations matter and a land acquisition and position/procedure to be applied to negotiation matter as authorized by Sections 239 (c) (d) (f) and (k) of the Municipal Act, 2001, respectively."

Carried

7. By-laws

7.1 Three Readings

Moved by Councillor A. Owodunni

Seconded by Councillor S. Stretch

"That the by-laws be given third reading, namely:

7.1.a To confirm all actions and proceedings of the Council for December 1, 2025.

(By-law 2025-137)

Carried

8. Adjournment

On motion the meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

Mayor

Clerk