

Middlesex County Council Meeting Highlights – October 24, 2023

Council Highlights is an informal summary of selected actions taken by Middlesex County Council or Committee of the Whole at business meetings. The Council Highlights are not an official record of County Council proceedings. To view official agendas and minutes, please visit [Council Meetings and Minutes](#).

► What's New at Middlesex County Library?

In an update presented to Committee of the Whole, staff from Middlesex County Library showcased many successes and advancements in services so far for 2023. In partnership with the County of Middlesex Social Services department, and with provincial funding through the Social Services Relief Fund, Middlesex County Library now offers 4 Quiet Meeting Pods for use at the Ailsa Craig, Komoka, Strathroy, and Thorndale Branches. This year, Middlesex County Library also launched a new online library catalogue and discovery layer to their website. This innovative system combines accessibility with modern data standards, promising an enriched user experience. Middlesex County now proudly hosts eight storytelling trails under the Tales & Trails initiative. These trails weave together pages from children's storybooks and local community narratives, allowing people of all ages to immerse themselves in storytelling amidst the beauty of nature. EarlyON has had many successful community engagement efforts in 2023, with the completion of a remarkable 471 programs in the first two quarters of 2023 bringing programming closer than ever to Middlesex County communities. For more information, see the [Library Services Update](#) and check out the [Middlesex County Library](#) website to stay up to date on initiatives and events in your local library.

► Middlesex Workforce Development Partnership Update

The Department of Economic Development provided Committee of the Whole with an update on the achievements of the Middlesex Workforce Development Partnership so far in 2023. The Middlesex Workforce Development Partnership plays a crucial role in the County's Economic Development Strategy, aligning with the County's broader goals. With a focus on supporting local employers and building a sustainable workforce, the partnership actively engages in rural revitalization efforts, emphasizing the unique pace of rural life and the appeal of nearby urban amenities to attract skilled workers and entrepreneurs. A few of these successful initiatives include the production of a small business succession planning video series, employer-focused workshops, facilitating the annual business plan competition for local youth, and launching an online portal for co-op/work-integrated learning opportunities. Check out the [Middlesex Workforce Development Partnership Update](#) and visit [Work in Middlesex](#) for more information.

► Middlesex County Exploring Wraparound Support Services

Middlesex County Council has given the green light to staff to engage with the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc to explore wraparound support services, particularly concerning diverse housing options within the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc. Currently, the Middlesex Accommodation Program, launched in collaboration with the Canadian Mental Health Association Thames Valley Addiction and Mental Health Services, Countryside Motel, and Middlesex-London Paramedic Services is operating with great reception. This program delivers emergency/transitional accommodations coupled with comprehensive support to individuals and families on the brink of homelessness in the County. Having successfully assisted over 200 individuals, including both adults and children, the program not only provides immediate shelter, food, and community support but also eases the burden on local hospitals through community paramedics. Recognizing the broader issue of housing challenges, Middlesex County emphasizes the necessity of diverse housing options, including attainable, affordable, and accessible homes, as a vital component in fostering healthy and inclusive communities amid changing demographics and market trends. Discussion may provide strategies and actions related to innovative housing and homelessness supports within Middlesex County. See the [staff report](#) for more information.

► Council receives 2022 Year End Audit and Financial Statements

KPMG presented the results of the 2022 audit of the County finances. KPMG is the auditing firm that the County uses to review its financial activities. The audit consisted of a review of the consolidated financial statements of The Corporation of the County of Middlesex and its subsidiaries as of and for the year ended December 31, 2022. For more information, see the [Audit Findings Report for the Year Ended December 31, 2022](#).

► 2022 Surplus to be Transferred to Tax Rate Stabilization Reserve

The Committee of the Whole approved a recommendation for the yearend surplus from the 2022 operating accounts in the amount of \$2,101,547 to be transferred to the tax rate stabilization reserve. The Surplus is a result of operational impacts across all County departments by the pandemic in 2022, additional provincial and federal funding received for COVID-19 costs and pressures, and additional revenue from investments such as the federal gas tax. For more information, see the [2022 Surplus Report](#).

Recommendations made by the Committee of the Whole at the October 24, 2023 meeting will be considered by County Council at its next regular meeting on November 7, 2023. The Legislative Services Department maintains the official record for all County government proceedings.

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