



ATTENDING

- Councillor Howard Williams (Chair),
- Councillor Ian Palmeter
- Mike Allen, Watershed Planner, Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change (virtual)
- Jeremy Strong, Citizen
- Councillor Peter Allen, Municipality of the County of Kings
- Peter Wallace, Kings County Representative (new member)
- John Mackay, Citizen (new member)

ALSO ATTENDING

- Colin Walker, CBCL Hydrogeologist (virtual)
- Laura Mosher, Manager of Planning, Municipality of the County of Kings

ABSENT

- Mayor, Jody Mackay (technical difficulties, not online for entire meeting)
- Meghan Swanburg
- Marcel Falkenham, Acadia University, Representative
- Devin Lake, Director of Planning and Public Works

CALL TO ORDER

Chair, Councillor Howard Williams, called the meeting to order at 2:31 pm

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion to approve the agenda as amended, agenda approved.

CARRIED

APPROVAL OF THE SOURCE WATER PROTECTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF DECEMBER 10, 2025.

Motion to approve previous meeting minutes as distributed.

CARRIED

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:

No conflicts of interest declared.

PRESENTATIONS:

None

PUBLIC INPUT:

No public attendees or online participants.



COMMITTEE MEMBER INTRODUCTION INCLUDING NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Jeremy Strong, Citizen Representative

Peter Wallace, Kings County Representative (new member)

Ian Palmeter, Councillor Town of Wolfville

Howard Williams Committee Chair and Councillor Town of Wolfville

Martin Kehoe, Manager of Environmental Services Town of Wolfville

Peter Allen Councillor District, Municipality of the County of Kings

John MacKay Citizen Representative

Colin Walker, CBCL Hydrogeologist

Mike Allen, Watershed Planner, Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change (Water Branch)

REVIEW OF THE DRAFT WOLFVILLE WATER UTILITY CONSERVATION BYLAW

Staff started reviewing the documents by addressing comments they made and looking for committee member comments.

- Section 3.10 – Golf Course
 - The definition was included as part of a standard template.
 - It was noted that there are currently no golf courses in the Wolfville area.
 - In the interest of keeping things simple golf course will be removed and can be added in the future if needed.
- Section 3.12.2 – Institutional Users
 - Currently listed: Town of Wolfville and Acadia University.
 - Members were asked to consider whether other institutional users should be included, some ideas were schools, long term care homes, breweries.
- Section 3.19 - Public Announcements
 - Communication methods approved by Council policy, which likely already includes platforms such as social media and newspapers. The committee noted that the council's communication plan likely covers multiple outreach methods. Members discussed whether other communication channels should also be included.
- Section 3.28 – Water Management Plan
 - Residents or businesses using more water than expected would need to apply to Council with a plan outlining past and future water use. Supporting templates or guidance documents may be created to help applicants.
- Section 4.1 – Seasonal Water Restrictions
 - Seasonal water restrictions have been done before, like in Greenwood (May–October), and could be used as a reference.
 - Level 1 restrictions mainly set watering schedules for residents and businesses, not strict limits.



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- There was discussion about whether Level 1 should automatically apply in the summer or only trigger when needed under a three-stage system.
 - Some concern that automatic summer restrictions might send the wrong message to the public, especially when it's raining, or be hard to enforce. On the other hand, it could serve as an educational reminder to conserve water.
 - Members suggested keeping the three-stage triggered system as an option, or presenting both approaches for feedback since the bylaw must go through committee and council.
 - A question was raised about whether Wolfville currently has a water shortage or if these measures are just proactive for future growth. We have lots of water we are just being proactive.
 - The bylaw can be adjusted if needed, so we're not in crisis mode.
 - With rentals, water use sometimes spikes, and it takes a while to catch because meters are only read every three months.
 - It would be more useful if meters were read monthly or even had automatic alerts for unusually high use—like a hot tap running for months. Catching problems sooner could save a lot of water and help manage usage better.
 - Moving from quarterly to monthly meter readings would probably have to be council-driven, since it costs money. There is technology available, drive-by readers, collectors in the system, even aerial surveys—that can report water use automatically, similar to how electricity meters work. Cost is a factor, but the cost of running out of water is much higher, so it's worth exploring.
 - Section 5.1 – Duration of Water Management Plan
 - The question is whether it should be a month, three months, six months, etc.
 - We want it long enough, so staff aren't constantly redoing permits, but still makes sense for the applicant—like a new soccer field that needs watering.
 - Six months seems reasonable since that lines up with the growing season.
 - Section 5.2 – Fees For Water Management Plan, Offences, Penalties and Town Exemption
 - Fees would be up to council, but we could just note it in the bylaw.
 - Getting a plan wouldn't be automatic—it depends on what's going on with water at the time. The plan isn't automatic year after year, one year it might be approved, another year it might not, depending on the situation.
 - Making fees official makes it clear, but it could be a lot of work for staff and a bit tough on residents, since they already have restrictions.
 - Then we looked at Part 7 – Offenses and Penalties.
 - There's a wide range in fines—from \$275 to \$10,000—so we might need more info and legal input because the town has several types of fines already. There can be two different fines, one from the Town the other from the province.
 - It's important to really look at what Town Exemptions would actually cover. People are going to get frustrated if the Town makes a bunch of rules and then exempts itself from them. Exemptions should be about real health and
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safety—like firefighting, which should just be clearly listed. Watering soccer or sports fields or hanging baskets shouldn't be considered an exemption.

- Schedule B
 - Requires clarification of non-residential users. Non-residential user" is about the type of building or use, not whether someone owns or rents. Commercial isn't clearly spelled out, could we not use Property Assessments Clarification. that water policy should focus on how much and when water is used, not who uses it. It was suggested that restricting usage after companies invest heavily could be legally and ethically problematic, so rules should be clearly defined in planning documents (LUB).
 - As far as the Levels 1, 2, 3 of restrictions we need to are they enforceable? Will they be welcomed and will they accomplish what we want?

In an ideal world, having it ready for summer 2026 would be great, but the more the committee digs, the more questions pop up, so it's looking unlikely. That said, we can still encourage people to cut back voluntarily, even if we can't enforce anything yet.

ROUNDTABLE

DISCUSSION WELLS AND GEOTHERMAL SYSTEMS:

- Some properties in town use groundwater wells for geothermal heating systems. These systems are supposed to reinject water back into the ground, but some may discharge it to sewers or lawns instead. Geothermal use is increasing, but there is no complete inventory of these systems. Well drilling records exist, but they are not precise enough to locate all geothermal wells. These systems are not included in current groundwater modelling. A provincial approval is only required if water withdrawal exceeds 22,000 L per day. Smaller systems do not trigger regulatory approval requirements. Most geothermal systems are designed to recirculate water, often using closed-loop systems (especially when chemicals are involved) that circulate fluid underground to capture heat from the ground.

STANDING AGENDA ITEM

- It was noted by a committee member that the mandate of this committee under section 2.2 is to review and comment on water monitoring programs. A member asked whether future meetings should include a brief report on water quality and quantity monitoring for the Wolfville source water protection area. The report would cover:
 - Recent water testing results since the last meeting
 - Any issues or problems detected
 - A general explanation of testing procedures (source water and distribution water)
- The chair agreed this would be appropriate and it will be added as a regular agenda item for future meetings.



KINGS COUNTY AMENDMENT TO THE LUB

- Laura Mosher, Manager of Planning, Municipality of the County of Kings updated the committee on the planning application submitted to the Kings County to amend the land use bylaw, to include Wolfville’s well protection overlay.
The amendments were adopted at Kings County Council in early March 2026. They’re now headed to the province for approval.

OIL TANKS

- Revive the discussion around the removal of oil tanks and supplying educational materials to existing owners of oil tanks.
- Other utilities have already prepared materials we could draw from. Of course, these would need to be customized for our specific customer base and how we want to distribute the educational resources. For example, we could produce something like a brochure on maintaining your oil tank.

MOTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Source Water Protection Committee recommend to Council to encourages the removal of oil tanks located within our source water protection areas to reduce environmental risk.

To directs staff to send a letter to the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) requesting that they recognize the importance of this initiative and support municipalities in promoting oil tank removal in source water areas.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Review and refine Levels 1-3 restrictions to ensure they are enforceable, practical and effective; narrow Town exemptions, update “institutions” definitions, clearly define non-residential users
 - Future agenda item water quality updates include any issues and testing summaries.
 - Investigate cost-benefit of high frequency meter reading equipment for faster leak detection.
 - Continue to work on the oil tank removal and educational materials.
- **NEXT MEETING:** June 10, 2026, 2:30-4:30
 - **ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting adjourned at 3:11 pm.

As recorded by Microsoft Teams, summarized by ChatGPT (checked by K Outerleys).