

Valley Regional Services Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, September 17, 2025, 10:00 a.m.

Valley Waste-Resource Management Boardroom with Virtual Attendance Option

APPROVED MINUTES

A meeting of the Valley Regional Services Board of Directors was held on Wednesday, September 17, 2025, at 10:00 a.m., based in the Valley Waste-Resource Management Boardroom with a virtual attendance option.

Attendees:

Board Members

Municipality of Annapolis County:	Diane Le Blanc, Warden
Town of Annapolis Royal:	Amery Boyer, Mayor
Town of Berwick:	
Town of Kentville:	Andrew Zebian, Mayor
Municipality of the County of Kings:	Dave Corkum, Mayor
Town of Middleton:	Gail Smith, Mayor
Town of Wolfville:	Jodi MacKay, Mayor
Mun of Digby:	Linda Gregory, Warden

Also in Attendance:

Town of Annapolis Royal	Sandi Millett-Campbell, CAO
Town of Berwick:	Jen Boyd, CAO
Town of Kentville:	Chris McNeill, CAO
Town of Middleton:	Ashley Crocker, CAO
Municipality of the County of Kings:	Scott Conrod, CAO
Municipality of Annapolis County:	Rob Frost, CAO
Town of Wolfville:	
Municipality of Digby:	Tyler Pulley, CAO
Valley Waste:	Andrew Garrett, General Manager
Kings Transit:	Meg Hodges, General Manager
Kings Transit and Valley Waste:	Dan L'Abbe, Director Finance & Corporate Services
Recording Secretary:	Andrea Garrett, Administration Manager VWRM

Agenda Item No. 1 –Welcome and Call to Order

Chair Corkum welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

Special welcome to the new CAO for the County of Annapolis, Rob Frost.

Agenda Item No. 2 – Approval of Agenda

ON MOTION OF MAYOR MACKAY AND SECONDED BY MAYOR SMITH that the Valley Regional Services Board of Directors approve the September 17, 2025, Agenda, with the additions of *Agenda Item 4.4: Kings Transit Authority – Request for Decision, Policy Development Policy; Agenda Item 4.5 Kings Transit Authority – Request for Decision, Free Transit Service Policy; and Agenda Item 5.3 Valley Waste Resource Management – Fire Incidents Summary.*

MOTION CARRIED.

Agenda Item No. 3 – Approval of the Minutes

Agenda Item No. 3.1 – Approval of the Meeting Minutes held July 16, 2025

ON MOTION OF MAYOR MACKAY AND SECONDED BY MAYOR ZEBIAN that the Valley Regional Services Board of Directors approve the July 16, 2025, Meeting Minutes, as circulated.

MOTION CARRIED.

Agenda Item No. 4 – Kings Transit Authority

Agenda Item No. 4.1 – General Manager's Report

General Manager Hodges presented the Kings Transit Authority (KTA) General Manager's Report, as circulated in the meeting package and attached to these minutes. Key highlights included:

- The five used buses, acquired from Grand River Transit, have arrived. KTA is working to have them in service as soon as possible.
- Two previously out-of-service buses have been repaired and are ready to return to circulation.
- Staffing remains a challenge. Some routes were shut down early due to a shortage of drivers. The operations team has been actively recruiting and training new drivers throughout July and August.
- The ICIP project is ongoing. KTA has contracted Colliers to assist with the development of a scope change application for ICIP Phase 2. A recommendation and motion will be made to the Board at the October meeting.
- The Youth Pass was very popular over the summer.
- The August Open House and participation in local parades were highly successful.
- KTA is exploring potential partnership opportunities with HRM to improve alignment.
- Although not activated by Annapolis REMO during the recent wildfires, KTA continues to work closely with them.

CAO Boyd and Warden Gregory entered the meeting at 10:13 a.m.

In response to an inquiry regarding the engagement of a consultant, it was noted that Colliers was retained to support the scope change related to the future of the bus fleet. When KTA requested a scope modification under the ICIP funding, internal processes within the Province proved inconsistent, with shifting procedural requirements.

With support from Minister Lohr, KTA received clear guidance and the necessary documentation to proceed, including a formal Board motion authorizing the scope change. Colliers expects to present a comprehensive report at the October meeting.

A comment was made noting that KTA's parade float was particularly impressive.

ON MOTION OF MAYOR SMITH AND SECONDED BY WARDEN GREGORY that the Valley Regional Services Board of Directors Receive the September 17, 2025, Kings Transit Authority General Manager's Report.

MOTION CARRIED.

Agenda Item No. 4.2 – Kings Transit Authority – Financial Statements as of June 2025

As circulated in the meeting package, Director L'Abbé presented the financial results for the first quarter of fiscal year 2026. Key highlights from the operational financial statements included:

- Ridership was lower than budgeted, contributing to a shortfall in projected revenue.
- Unexpected staff changes impacted the budget, leading to adjustments in personnel costs.
- Increased medical benefit costs, bus repairs, and the hiring of additional cleaning staff resulted in higher-than-expected expenses.
- The purchase of used buses was the primary capital expense during the first quarter.

ON MOTION OF WARDEN GREGORY And SECONDED BY MAYOR SMITH, that the Valley Regional Services Board of Directors receive the September 17, 2025, Kings Transit Authority Financial Statements as of June 2025.

MOTION CARRIED

Agenda Item No. 4.3 – Request for Decision - Kings Transit Authority – Renaming of Kings Transit Authority

As presented at the July 16, 2025, Board meeting, General Manager Hodges proposed rebranding Kings Transit, noting that the current name no longer accurately reflects all the areas served. At that time, the Board directed GM Hodges to consult the Registry of Joint Stocks to determine the availability of proposed names, including *Tidal Transit* and *Tri County Transit*.

Following this review, only one proposed name - *Tidal Transit* - was approved by the Registry and appropriately reflects both current and future service areas. GM Hodges emphasized that renaming an established organization is a significant step and should be viewed not as a rejection of the past, but as a forward-looking move that embraces the organization's evolving identity.

After careful consideration, the recommendation is to rename Kings Transit Authority to *Tidal Transit Authority*. However, GM Hodges noted that alternative options were outlined in the report provided to the Board in July 2025.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that other potential names - *Valley Transit*, *Western Transit*, *Harvest Moon Transit*, and *Apple Blossom Transit* - were considered. Ultimately, *Tidal Transit* was deemed the most suitable, meeting all necessary criteria.

It was also clarified that while the legal name of the organization will continue to include "Authority," the operating name will be simplified to *Tidal Transit*.

ON MOTION OF WARDEN GREGORY AND SECONDED BY MAYOR MACKAY, that the Valley Regional Services Board of Directors approves the renaming of Kings Transit Authority to Tidal Transit Authority.

MOTION CARRIED.

Agenda Item No. 4.4: Kings Transit Authority – Request for Decision, Policy Development Policy

As circulated in the July 16 meeting package, the Policy Development Policy (KTA-00) is intended to provide guidance for the creation of organizational policies. It acknowledges that Valley Regional Services operates under the Municipal Government Act (MGA), which requires specific levels of discussion and review for new policies.

Following a Board motion allowing a 7-day review period, General Manager Hodges is now seeking Board approval of the policy.

During the review, minor wording amendments were suggested for Section 4.5.3 and Section 5.1. Additionally, it was recommended that future Requests for Decision presented to the Board include clearly defined options, each accompanied by more substantive details to support informed decision-making.

ON MOTION OF MAYOR SMITH AND SECONDED BY WARDEN GREGORY, that the Valley Regional Services Board of Directors approves the *Policy Development Policy*, KTA-000 with the proposed amendments to Sections 4.5.3 and 5.1.

MOTION CARRIED

Agenda Item No. 4.5: Kings Transit Authority – Request for Decision, Free Transit Service Policy

As circulated in the July 16 meeting package, the Free Transit Service Policy is designed to allow municipalities, at their own initiative and expense, to offer subsidized “Free Ridership” days. This policy formalizes existing practices, such as Digby’s seasonal free transit days, and provides a framework for other municipalities to offer similar services if they choose.

In response to the question, it was clarified that this policy does not apply to requests for additional bus routes within a municipality or for expanded services, such as transportation outside of regular operating hours.

ON MOTION OF MAYOR MACKAY AND SECONDED BY WARDEN GREGORY, that the Valley Regional Services Board of Directors approves the Free Transit Ride Policy, KTA-001, with annual cost review.

MOTION CARRIED

Agenda Item No. 5 – Valley Region Solid Waste-Resource Management Authority

Agenda Item No. 5.1 – General Manager’s Report

General Manager Garrett provided the Board with an overview of the Valley Waste-Resource Management General Manager’s Report, dated September 17, as circulated and attached to these minutes. Key highlights included:

- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for Packaging and Paper Products (PPP): New regulations take effect in 75 days. While several contracts remain to be finalized, the provincial solid waste managers and directors committee met recently to express concerns.
- Post-Collection Contract: Circular Materials will reimburse VWRM for offloading recyclables at both facilities. The official announcement of the processing provider and location is still pending.
- Scotia Recycling Contingency: If Scotia Recycling is not selected as the processing provider, lease agreement clauses are in place to address this scenario. The Authority must be prepared to activate these provisions if necessary.
- ICI Business Survey: As required by Circular Materials, VWRM's Bylaw Officer conducted a full review of collection routes to identify small Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional (ICI) businesses participating in curbside recycling. To date, 400 stops have been recorded.
- Miller Waste has been awarded the contract by Circular Materials to provide recycling collection services to campgrounds, apartment buildings, and schools.
- Capital Projects:
 - Awaiting bids for the expansion of the Eastern Management Centre tipping floor building.
 - Awaiting bids for new doors at the Western Management Centre building.
 - An electric wheeled loader has been purchased for use in the construction and demolition yard. Expansion of the yard began this week.
 - VWRM will conduct its first ground and surface water well testing this fall.
- Salary Review: Gerald Walsh and Associates has been awarded the contract to conduct a salary review for both KTA and VWRM.
- Emergency Response – Long Lake Fires: VWRM is working with Annapolis County and Annapolis REMO to support residents returning home after the fires. The curbside collection contractor, EFR Environmental, has been highly supportive in bagged waste placed at curbside. A key challenge has been the disposal of spoiled food in refrigerators, which many residents no longer want. While no additional costs have been incurred yet, VWRM may need to provide extra services beyond regular operations. If required, a motion and Board approval could be coordinated via email to ensure a timely response.

In response to the question, it was clarified that there is currently no policy in place for special resolutions in emergency situations. It was also noted that the CAO working group had not identified this issue as a priority, though a declared state of emergency may trigger specific actions.

GM Garrett added that VWRM is facing challenges in finding a market for drywall and that the wind turbine may be repairable by a company based in PEI.

ON MOTION OF MAYOR MACKAY AND SECONDED BY MAYOR SMITH that the Valley Regional Services Board of Directors receive the September 17, 2025, Valley Waste-Resource Management General Manager's Report.

MOTION CARRIED.

Agenda Item No. 5.2 – Valley Waste-Resource Management – Financial Statements

General Manager Garrett referred to the financial report included in the meeting package. Key variances noted include:

- Tipping fees from Scotia residuals and initial payments for diversion credits were higher than anticipated.
- Slight discrepancies were observed due to adjustments in dwelling counts, with approximately 1,000 new dwelling units added in the Valley region.
- VWRM is realizing substantial savings by processing and marketing its own Construction & Demolition materials.

In response to the suggestion, future status updates will include variance explanations alongside each project and year-to-date figures for any substantive variances.

In response to the question, it was confirmed that the Request for Proposals for the Western Management Centre warehouse was not awarded due to all submissions being significantly over budget. Management plans to revisit the project next year.

ON MOTION OF MAYOR MACKAY AND SECONDED BY MAYOR SMITH that the Valley Regional Services Board of Directors receive the September 17, 2025, Valley Waste-Resource Management Financial Statements as of June 2025.

MOTION CARRIED.

Agenda Item No. 5.3 – Valley Waste Resource Management – Fire Incidents Report

General Manager Garrett referred to the report included in the meeting package, which summarizes transfer station fires over the past two years. The report does not include fires originating from contractors' waste loads or incidents at facilities outside of VWRM's transfer stations. All data was compiled from JOHSC incident reports.

GM Garrett noted that VWRM has been fortunate in managing recent fire incidents without major damage. Of the 13 recorded fires, 8 were traced to lithium batteries. VWRM is actively promoting proper battery disposal through public education initiatives. One fire was caused by malfunctioning compaction equipment in the loading bay, prompting improved maintenance practices. The metal storage area fire is currently under investigation and remains unconfirmed. These incidents have led VWRM to review its fire management plan, particularly at the Western Management Centre (WMC).

In response to the question, GM Garrett welcomed the idea of joint public awareness campaigns with municipalities, including initiatives such as designated battery drop-off days.

ON MOTION OF MAYOR MACKAY AND SECONDED BY SMAYOR SMITH that the Valley Regional Services Board of Directors receive the September 17, 2025, Valley Waste-Resource Management Fire Incidents Report.

MOTION CARRIED

Agenda Item No. 6 – In Camera session in keeping with Section 22(2)(e) of the Municipal Government Act

As the matter involved Transit, Mayor Boyer excused herself from the In Camera session.

ON MOTION OF WARDEN GREGORY AND SECONDED BY MAYOR MACKAY that the Valley Regional Services Board of Directors move to an In Camera session in keeping with section 22(2)(e) of the Municipal Government Act.

MOTION CARRIED.

The September Regular Monthly Meeting of the Valley Regional Services Board of Directors was called back to open session at 11:20 a.m.

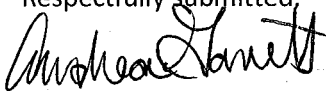
Agenda Item No. 7 – Next Meeting

The October Regular Monthly Meeting of the Valley Regional Services Board of Directors will be held on **Wednesday, October 15, 2025, beginning at 10:00 a.m.** in keeping with the normal meeting schedule.

Agenda Item No. 8 – Adjournment

Being no further business, the September regular monthly meeting of the Valley Regional Services Board of Directors, Chair Corkum called for adjournment at 11:22 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Andrea Garrett

Recording Secretary

Administration Manager, Valley Waste-Resource Management