

**MINUTES OF THE POLICIES & PRIORITIES COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2026, 1:00 P.M.
CARSTAIRS MUNICIPAL OFFICE**

- IN ATTENDANCE:** Mayor Allan, Councillors Ball, Fricke, Selanders, Tolley, Roberts & Wilcox; Director of Corporate Services Shannon Allison; Director of Emergency Services Rob McKay; Manager of Legislative Services Jessica Pryde; Director of Planning & Development & Deputy CAO Kirk Williscroft; CAO Rick Blair; & Executive Assistant Kayleigh Van Es
- ABSENT:** Nil
- CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Allan called the Policies & Priorities Committee meeting of Tuesday, April 21, 2026, to order at 1:00 p.m.
- ADDED ITEMS:**
- 1. RCMP Acting Detachment Commander-Shane O’Neill to Delegations 5.a**
 - 2. Section 19 Closed agenda item to Closed Meeting 12.a**
- ADOPTION OF AGENDA:** Motion by Councillor Wilcox to adopt the Policies & Priorities Committee meeting agenda of April 21, 2026, as amended. **CARRIED**
- ADOPTION OF MINUTES:** Motion by Councillor Fricke to adopt the Policies & Priorities minutes of March 17, 2026, as presented. **CARRIED**
- DELEGATIONS:**
- 1. RCMP Acting Detachment Commander-Shane O’Neill**

S. O’Neill addressed the Committee and introduced himself, noting he will be leaving his current role and transitioning responsibilities to the incoming Detachment Commander. He advised that discussions had taken place with the RCMP Detachment in Didsbury regarding opportunities to maintain a community policing presence.

He explained that a Community Police Officer position would require a \$240,000 commitment over three years under an enhanced policing model; however, the position cannot be filled until 2029. Didsbury has also expressed interest in obtaining a general duty member, which could potentially be filled immediately, subject to approval by the Detachment Commander. Didsbury could then partner with Carstairs and share the position between the two municipalities.

CAO R. Blair advised that due to tight timelines, Administration wished to gauge Council’s interest, as the enhanced position would no longer be available. A general duty member may provide a suitable interim solution.

Councillor Wilcox inquired how often the RCMP is called to the schools. S. O’Neill did not have a confirmed answer but estimated 3-4 calls per week between school in Carstairs and Didsbury. He noted that the goal would be to retain the enhanced position so Constable Walkey could continue focusing on youth both in and out of school.

Councillor Tolley asked if the school has requested to continue this presence in the school. It was answered that yes, the schools find it valuable and wish to continue the engagement.

Councillor Ball asked whether the proposal involved one dedicated officer or duties shared among officers. S. O’Neill confirmed it would be one dedicated position.

The CAO added that Administration is seeking ways to replace the position that was lost and explore how it may be accommodated.

Councillor Selanders asked whether the loss of the enhanced position would reduce police presence. S. O'Neill confirmed that it would, though efforts are being made to maintain community contact through other means.

CAO R. Blair thanked S. O'Neill for his efforts in securing valuable support through Constable Walkey's presence in the schools.

Councillor Fricke asked for an approximate cost of sharing the officer with Didsbury. S. O'Neill advised that figures are approximate and may be subject to inflation. He reiterated that Carstairs' share would be approximately 35% if the Town remained under the Provincial Police Service Agreement (PPSA) while Didsbury remained under the MPSA. A dedicated School Resource Officer would not be available until 2029.

CAO R. Blair noted that Carstairs would need to negotiate separately with Didsbury and, following the next census, the Town may be one year away from entering an MPSA, with an estimated two-year implementation timeline.

Councillor Fricke asked whether pursuing this option would impact Carstairs' future policing requests. S. O'Neill advised it would not and confirmed the current focus is on frontline positions.

Councillor Tolley requested clarification on the previous model, noting the role was not exclusively school-based but was an enhanced community position. He suggested that any future model should provide guidelines to ensure the member is not stationed exclusively in schools, but instead serves both communities, including facilities such as seniors' residences.

CAO R. Blair stated that Administration is exploring transition options for the Town's future policing model and detachment needs, while maintaining enhanced community policing services where possible.

Mayor Allan thanked S. O'Neill for his work and wished him success in his future endeavours.

Motion by Councillor Ball to accept the Delegation from RCMP Acting Detachment Commander S. O'Neill as information.

CARRIED

2. Tread Smart Carstairs Business License Denial-Appeal-Jesse Metcalfe

J. Metcalfe presented to the Committee with updated information, including a letter of support from the Carstairs Chamber of Commerce. He advised that he is not seeking to operate a full-time business from his home, as he works away for half the year. He stated the business would also provide an opportunity to teach his children the value of perseverance and responsibility.

J. Metcalfe acknowledged concerns regarding traffic and advised that vehicle volume would be minimal, estimating only a few vehicles per day at most. Proposed operating hours would be between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on a scheduled basis, with no additional on-street parking required. He confirmed that no hazardous materials would be stored on site. He noted that he is a certified automotive and heavy-duty mechanic and is currently employed. He added that if demand justified it in the future, he would consider opening a commercial shop

location. He also noted that several neighbors had expressed support and that the business had raised approximately \$700 towards the Carstairs Elementary School Outdoor Classroom project before operations ceased due to licensing issues.

Councillor Tolley asked whether the proposed hours of operation could be adjusted if concerns arose. J. Metcalfe confirmed they could be flexible. Councillor Tolley also inquired whether the garage door would remain mostly closed during operations, to which J. Metcalfe responded yes. He added that he did not wish to create a nuisance and would consider quieter compressors to reduce noise levels, noting that any equipment used would remain within permitted decibel limits and that the compressor would not run continuously.

Councillor Tolley asked about tire storage. J. Metcalfe advised he may store approximately 20 tires. Councillor Tolley also asked whether there would be deliveries, and J. Metcalfe confirmed there would be no heavy deliveries.

Councillor Wilcox thanked J. Metcalfe for attending and for the thoughtful presentation. She asked how many customers would be served per day. J. Metcalfe advised that at present it would be no more than four vehicles per day and reiterated that he was not seeking to run a full-time operation.

Councillor Ball asked what timeframe would be needed to determine whether a brick-and-mortar business would be viable. J. Metcalfe stated it would depend on business demand but that he would like to assess busy and slow periods over approximately two years and could not see operating longer than that from home. Councillor Ball also asked the ages of his children, and J. Metcalfe advised they are 23 and 19 and currently attending post-secondary education.

Councillor Selanders thanked J. Metcalfe for attending and asked about the noise associated with tire changes, noting concerns regarding the use of tools. J. Metcalfe responded that he had switched from air tools to electric tools, which are quieter. He added that any louder noises would be intermittent and of short duration, with the air compressor being the loudest equipment used.

Councillor Fricke thanked J. Metcalfe for the level of preparation and information provided, noting his passion and perseverance for entrepreneurship. She noted that her primary concern was that automotive repair businesses are not permitted within R1 zoning and asked whether the Town had received similar applications previously. CAO R. Blair advised there were no known automotive business approvals within R1 zoning.

Mayor Allan thanked J. Metcalfe for his time and presentation. Council will deliberate, and Administration will contact him with the decision.

Motion by Councillor Roberts to accept the Tread Smart Carstairs Business License Denial-Appeal Delegation from J. Metcalfe as information.

CARRIED

3. Carstairs Mechanic Inc. Business License Denial-Appeal-Bradley Norris

B. Norris and his wife, Jackie Norris, presented to the Committee regarding the business license denial appeal for Carstairs Mechanic Inc. J. Norris spoke on behalf of B. Norris for much of the presentation. She advised that the business has been operating for approximately five years. She stated that concerns were raised regarding noise, storage, and property maintenance once the license denial was received. She noted that no complaints had been received during the previous five years of operation. She explained that the license application was submitted to

formalize the business within the community. She added that they have attempted to secure a commercial location for a shop, but none are currently available. She expressed that approval would provide an opportunity to continue serving the community. She further stated that they respect their neighbors and are fortunate to have positive relationships with them. J. Norris advised that B. Norris is a journeyman Heavy Duty mechanic and wishes to continue applying his skill set locally.

Councillor Wilcox thanked the delegation for attending and asked how many customers are served and how many days per week the business operates. B. Norris advised that he typically serves two to three customers per week and outsources additional work to contractors in the surrounding area. He added that he had attempted to obtain a service truck; however, because the business license has not been approved, insurance coverage could not be obtained.

Councillor Wilcox also asked whether there had been any issues related to fluids or storage during the past five years. B. Norris advised there had not. He stated that his long-term intention is to operate an in-town business with a service truck. He further noted that many properties within Town limits do not accommodate semi-trucks, and no heavy equipment would be stored in the residential area.

Councillor Tolley asked whether heavy-duty equipment would be serviced on the property. B. Norris advised that it would not, and that heavy-duty work would instead be completed through service truck jobs off site.

Councillor Ball asked about proposed hours of operation. B. Norris advised that any work conducted on the property would occur between 5:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. He added that, if insurance were approved, more work could be completed off site through the service truck.

Councillor Fricke commended the applicants for their entrepreneurial efforts. She noted that her current concern related to the R1 zoning district and asked whether the garage was attached. B. Norris confirmed that it was. She also asked about parking availability for personal and customer vehicles. B. Norris advised that only one customer vehicle would be on site at a time, with no parking on the street, and that all vehicles would be accommodated on the three-car driveway.

Councillor Ball asked what type of vehicle would be used as a service truck. B. Norris advised it would be a Ford F-550, noting that similar vehicles are already present in the neighbourhood.

Mayor Allan thanked B. Norris and J. Norris for attending and advised that Council would discuss the matter and have Administration return with a decision.

Motion by Councillor Wilcox to accept the Carstairs Mechanic Inc. Business License Denial-Appeal Delegation from B. Norris as information.

CARRIED

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: 1. Mill Rate 2026 Discussion

S. Allison spoke to assessment values and options regarding the 2026 mill rate. There have been 11 data corrections, 9 resident-requested assessment corrections and 9 Town-identified adjustments, as well as 2 formal assessment appeals. She noted that the mill rate cannot be finalized until all assessment values are confirmed.

Councillor Tolley asked for a balance sheet outlining current reserves.

Councillor Selanders requested an update on assessed values for linear properties. S. Allison advised she was unable to provide an update at this time.

Councillor Fricke asked for a ballpark number of assessed residential properties. S. Allison responded that there are approximately 2,300 assessed homes. Councillor Fricke noted that this would indicate only approximately 0.01% of residents have formally appealed their assessments.

Councillor Selanders inquired how many discussions have been held with the assessor. S. Allison indicated she would confirm this information with the assessor.

Motion by Councillor Tolley to accept the Mill Rate 2026 Discussion as information.

CARRIED

BYLAW & POLICIES:

1. Declaration of Interest Policy

CAO R. Blair spoke to the Policy to gauge Committee input on where to go with the Policy. He advised that questions and proposed changes should be compiled for review. The policy will be brought back on an ongoing basis for further consideration and discussion, and Council was encouraged to forward any amendments to Administration as they are identified.

Councillor Fricke commented that she had already submitted proposed changes and requested that the policy be converted into a bylaw.

Motion by Councillor Wilcox to accept Declaration of Interest Policy as information.

CARRIED

NEW BUSINESS:

Nil

REPORTS:

1. Development Reports

The Committee reviewed the Development Reports. To date, 65 permits have been issued, including 27 new home buildings and 19 compliance certificates.

Councillor Fricke provided positive feedback to Planning & Development staff member K. Ranson for assistance with permits.

- a. Permit listing
- b. Compliance listing

Motion by Councillor Wilcox to accept Permit and Compliance Listing as information.

CARRIED

- c. Relaxation & Variances

CAO R. Blair notified the Committee that Planning & Development have not issued any variances under Land Use Bylaw 2060. Councillor Selanders raised questions regarding a couple of properties, and it was clarified that those properties were not governed by the current bylaw. She also inquired about deck compliance and setback requirements.

Motion by Councillor Fricke to accept Relaxation & Variance report as information.

CARRIED

2. City-Wide Monthly Reports

The Committee reviewed the following City-Wide Monthly reports.

- a. Fire Reports
- b. Bylaw Reports

Motion by Councillor Roberts to accept City-Wide Monthly Reports as information.

CARRIED

3. Emergency Services

The Committee reviewed the following Emergency Services reports.

a. Emergency Services Report

Councillor Fricke inquired whether the Carstairs Fire Department provides complimentary CO2 checks. R. McKay confirmed that they do.

b. Carstairs Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) Report

Motion by Councillor Selanders to accept Emergency Services Reports as information.

CARRIED

4. Quarterly Facility Utilization Reports

The committee reviewed the following Facility Utilization Reports

a. Carstairs Memorial Arena

Councillor Tolley inquired about the total ice time available. CAO R. Blair responded that it depends on usable/bookable time, but he would obtain a more precise answer for Council. Councillor Tolley also asked how other user groups would be allocated ice time. CAO R. Blair advised that a formal letter should be submitted to Administration.

b. Carstairs Community Hall

Councillor Fricke inquired when the Campground will be opening, as well as the Golf Course, and whether the Sani-dump is available for use out of season. CAO R. Blair responded that the campground is currently closed, including the Sani-dump, and will not reopen until weather conditions permit. He further advised that the Golf Course is scheduled to open on April 29, with the restaurant opening on April 23.

Motion by Councillor Wilcox to accept Quarterly Facility Utilization Reports as information.

CARRIED

CORRESPONDENCE: Nil

GENERAL DISCUSSION: Nil

CLOSED MEETING: **1. Disclosure Harmful to Business Interests of a Third Party-Section 19**
Section 197 of the Municipal Government Act requires that Council and Council Committees conduct their meetings in public unless the matter to be discussed falls under one of the exceptions to disclosure outlined in Division 2 of Part 1 of the Access to Information Act (ATIA), including, but not limited to, matters related to business interests, personal privacy, individual or public safety, confidential evaluations, or law enforcement. (Sections 19 to 34).

Motion by Councillor Wilcox that Council close the meeting to the public to discuss Disclosure Harmful to Business Interests of a Third Party, as per Section 19, of the ATIA, at 2:20 p.m.

CARRIED

Motion by Councillor Ball to come out of the closed meeting session at 3:09 p.m.

CARRIED

Consensus from the Committee was to direct Administration to move forward with the proposed memorandum of understanding discussed in Closed Session.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, May 19, 2026

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Councillor Tolley to adjourn the Policies & Priorities Committee meeting of Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 3:10 p.m.

CARRIED

Dean Allan, Mayor

Rick Blair, CAO