

HILTON UNION FIRE BOARD

Regular Meeting

MINUTES

November 26, 2025

7:00 p.m.

Present: Chairperson Brian Delvecchio
Fire Chief Robert Hope
Deputy Fire Chief Dan See
Janet Gordanier
Mike Garside
Sarah Brown

Secretary-Treasurer Sara Dinsdale

Absent: Kelly Rathwell
Rod Wood
Dave Leask
Sally Cohen

Call to order at 7:00 p.m.

Resolution #F2025-14
Moved: Janet Gordanier
Seconded: Mike Garside

BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE BOARD OF THE HILTON UNION FIRE DEPARTMENT accepts the agenda of November 26, 2025, as presented. *CARRIED*

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

The Board reviewed minutes from the June 18, 2025 meeting. Sarah Brown noted a spelling mistake on page 2.

Resolution #F2025-15
Moved: Sarah Brown
Seconded: Mike Garside

BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE BOARD OF THE HILTON UNION FIRE DEPARTMENT does approve the minutes of the regular meeting of June 18, 2025 accepted with correction on pg. 2 (Neagel to Neabel). *CARRIED*

Fire Chief Updates:

Fire Chief Robert Hope gave an update on fire calls and volunteer status since the last meeting. There were three (3) fire calls. The Fire Department was requested to stand down from two of them. The third one that took place on September 27, 2025 involved a tractor trailer carrying boat lifting equipment. The vehicle caught fire on the corner of Hilton Road, just down from Base Line. The fire department attended, extinguished and secured the area.

There were ten (10) training events since the last meeting.

There are currently nine (9) active volunteers; four (4) are qualified.

Results of the Fire Pump Service Test that took place on June 19, 2025 were discussed. The remarks indicated, *“Discharge 1, 2, 3 leaking and needs kits, pump packing is leaking, and monitor valve is leaking. The pump struggled to reach volume numbers. Likely won’t pass in coming years.”*

Board members asked if these items were corrected. Fire Chief Robert Hope said that he would look into the kits. It was also mentioned that the plan is to hopefully retire the truck next year.

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The Fire Chief mentioned that there is a new carbon monoxide alarm requirement that takes effect on January 1, 2026. The new Ontario Fire Code regulations will require carbon monoxide (CO) alarms on every story of existing homes, not just near sleeping areas.

The Fire Chief asked if Mr. Brad Neabel sent the SharePoint access as requested at the last Fire Board Meeting. Secretary-Treasurer Sara Dinsdale replied stating that it was sent to the Fire Chief and the Secretary-Treasurer was cc'd in, via email in the summer.

The Fire Chief shared information regarding a mobile fire training unit that he is looking into. It comes with a trainer and in order to qualify for the use of it, the Township must have a large enough property to place it on, with security. The Fire Chief mentioned that he is planning to apply for the use of it and that the application needs to be submitted by November 30, 2025. The unit is available between April and October of 2026.

It was mentioned that the Fire Department's Christmas party is taking place at the Hilton Beach Community Hall on November 29 at 6:00 pm.

Further discussion regarding the need to replace the pumper and tanker took place. A pumper/tanker combination vehicle was located; however, it was over budget. It would be ideal to purchase a combo vehicle, 2012-2015 would allow the Fire Department at least 10-15 years.

The Fire Board received a report prepared by Secretary-Treasurer Sara Dinsdale regarding the Fire Protection Grant and Bunker Gear Decontamination. The report stated that \$7940.50 of the awarded funding amount of \$8592.18 was used to fund the purchase of cancer prevention items such as decontamination wipes, particle block hoods, SCBA face pieces, and gloves. The report also explained that an application was submitted on September 29, 2025 for a second grant to fund the purchase of additional bunker gear in order for the fire department to have back-up gear when the primary gear needs repaired or cleaned.

The report also explained that Secretary-Treasurer Sara Dinsdale requested from the Sault Ste. Marie Fire Department the possibility of using their decontamination unit for a rental fee and they advised that they do not provide that service.

The following information was provided in a report prepared by Secretary-Treasurer Sara Dinsdale regarding the Tanker & Pumper Retirement:

At the last Hilton Union Fire Board Meeting, Board members requested that the Secretary-Treasurer compile information regarding the Tanker and the Pumper's estimated useful life, asset retirement obligation and whether they can still be insured by the insurance company.

When asked if our insurance will continue to cover the Tanker and the Pumper, due to their age, they said, "There is no problem insuring them however, due to their age, they do not qualify for replacement cost."

When asked if the pump could be replaced on the fire truck, rather than replacing the entire vehicle, they said, "Due to the age of the fire trucks, any settlement in the event of a loss would be based on ACV (Actual Cash Value). This includes any components or parts of the vehicle, such as a pump, even if it was recently replaced. While the newly installed pump may have a higher replacement cost on its own, it becomes part of the overall unit once installed. As such, the value of the pump would be factored into the ACV settlement, but it would not be replaced on a new for old basis. The claim would reflect the depreciated value of the vehicle at the time of loss."

The 1995 Pumper's Estimated Useful Life was determined to be 15 years at the time of purchase in 2011 based on condition and assessment. The asset management plan, states that it currently has a "Very High Risk Rating" and is due to be replaced by 2026. The 2001 Tanker was initially purchased as a plow in 2019 and was modified to a Tanker the same year. Its Estimated Useful Life was determined to be 15 years from 2001. When it was modified to a Tanker in 2019, a new condition assessment was performed

and an additional six (6) years was added, from 2019. The asset management plan states that it has a “Very High Risk Rating” and is due to be replaced 2026.

Although the Estimated Useful Life of a vehicle can change periodically based on assessment, the retirement obligation is based on the Tangible Capital Asset Policy. I have included it for your reference.

There is \$145,872.00 in reserve funds for the pumper and \$38,523.35 in reserve funds for the tanker Totalling an amount of \$184,395.35. Perhaps a discussion of increasing funds to the reserve accounts should be included during the 2026 budget discussions at a later date.

There was a discussion regarding decontamination of equipment. Sarah Brown mentioned that she located a company in North Bay that repairs and decontaminates equipment. Board members discussed whether it would be best to ship equipment for decontamination and repairs or to purchase a decontamination unit to possibly share amongst neighbouring municipalities. There was a discussion of what location would keep it on their site and who would manage it. It was undecided whether either option would be feasible.

Further to the previous discussion regarding the retirement of the tanker and the pumper, a discussion regarding the rust on the tanker took place and whether rust paint could be applied to it. It was mentioned that there has also been some engine issues with it and that regardless, the search must continue for a replacement. It was asked whether it would be best to keep or sell the old vehicles when a replacement is found. Deputy Fire Chief Dan See mentioned that it might be best to keep it as a back-up.

Secretary-Treasurer Sara Dinsdale presented information regarding the formation of a fundraising committee. The report noted that while the topic of fundraising has been discussed on numerous occasions, no initiatives have yet been undertaken. It outlined potential approaches, as well as recommended roles, responsibilities, and committee composition. Board members discussed whether establishing a committee was necessary, noting that anyone is able to undertake fundraising activities. It was also recognized, however, that although anyone can conduct fundraising, no one except the Secretary-Treasurer has taken the initiative to do so, to date; therefore, establishing a committee may provide clearer direction, accountability, and momentum for moving fundraising efforts forward. Multiple fundraising ideas were discussed. Two painting fundraisers that were organized by Secretary-Treasurer Sara Dinsdale were included in the conversation. They are both taking place at the Hilton Beach Community Hall; one is Saturday, November 29, 2025 and the other is December 4, 2025.

Resolution #F2025-16

Moved: Sarah Brown

Seconded: Janet Gordanier

BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE BOARD OF THE HILTON UNION FIRE does agree to recommend to the Council of the Township of Hilton and the Council of the Village of Hilton Beach that the Hilton Union Fire Board develop a volunteer fundraising committee as described in Report #FB2025-11-26-FRC. *CARRIED*

The schedule for 2026 Fire Board Meeting dates was discussed. A request was made by Janet Gordanier to move the meeting time from 7:00 p.m. to an earlier time. Some members stated that they would not be opposed to an earlier meeting time. The Chairperson chose not to discuss the topic.

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Resolution #F2025-17
Moved: Janet Gordanier
Seconded: Sarah Brown

BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE BOARD OF THE HILTON UNION FIRE does agree to the following dates for the 2026 Fire Board Meetings:

- February 18
- May 20
- August 19
- November 25

CARRIED

The Board received a report regarding the possibility of amalgamating all the Fire Departments on St. Joseph Island. The report indicated that Fire Chief Rick Sirvio of the Jocelyn Fire Department and Fire Chief Duncan Rydall of the St. Joseph Fire Department approached Fire Chief Robert Hope with this suggestion. The report included the following variables to be considered:

1. How will each station be maintained and operated?
2. Remuneration for firefighters for training and for emergency calls.
3. Full time fire chief remuneration, St Joseph township is currently paying total salary. Would the chief's salary be split up between all parties maybe based on a percentage of the total island population or is there another formula? Would St Joseph Township invoice the other municipalities?
4. There are currently three Fire Chiefs, what happens to their roles?
5. Can we rotate training to each station monthly and complete joint training, or would training remain separate at each station?
6. Perhaps only one front line pumper would be needed to meet the 20-year replacement window.
7. Joint training and standardizing response could bring apparatus familiarity across the island for all the responders.
8. Shared resources and sharing of spares when appropriate.
9. Which location manages the budget?
10. Would sharing costs increase or reduce budget expectations for each township?

Board members discussed the possible pros and cons of an amalgamation which led to a discussion regarding how many volunteers the Hilton Union Fire Department has. Board members mentioned that advertising that the department is looking for volunteers might help; however, Deputy Fire Chief Dan See explained that the department is only set up for 10 people. It was mentioned that perhaps more information is required to proceed with any decisions regarding amalgamation of the fire departments; therefore all the Fire Chiefs will need to get together to discuss an operating plan and proposal for all municipalities involved to review.

Resolution #F2025-18
Moved: Janet Gordanier
Seconded: Mike Garside

BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE BOARD OF THE HILTON UNION FIRE does agree to recommend entering a discovery phase for the amalgamation of the St. Joseph Island Fire Department, the Jocelyn Fire Department and the Hilton Union Fire Department to the Council of the Township of Hilton and the Council of the Village of Hilton Beach for consideration. *CARRIED*

The Board reviewed and discussed by-law #1021-11; being a by-law to continue a Fire Department. Secretary-Treasurer Sara Dinsdale explained that the reason this by-law is included in tonight's meeting

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is due to the lack of clarity of Department roles. The by-law explains the responsibilities and duties of the Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chief, Captains, and the Department as a whole. It was explained that the Secretary-Treasurer has been performing the administrative duties as set out under the Fire Chief's role, and these duties have been taking place during Municipal office time. The Secretary-Treasurer explained that although pleased to assist with the administrative duties, at times, managing the administrative duties in full capacity has interfered with her regular office duties as a Municipal CAO/Clerk-Treasurer for the Township of Hilton. Fire Chief Robert Hope stated that he could provide a report of the Fire Chief Updates to be included in each meeting going forward.

Chairperson Brian Delvecchio went around the table to ask if anyone had any other business to discuss.

Deputy Fire Chief Dan See mentioned that he was in contact with Bill from PPE Solutions. Bill offered to supply the Hilton Union Fire Department with used SCBA packs that are the same as the ones the department has. These packs can be used as backup and/or parts. They should be in good working condition for at least 10 – 15 years as they are not very old. Bill shipped 17 packs and only requested the shipping cost of approximately \$230.00 be paid. They arrived last week.

Sarah Brown mentioned that a newsletter should be created that states that it's burning season. The Secretary-Treasurer mentioned that the Township of Hilton has created a newsletter which is located on their website, that includes some winter fire safety tips.

Fire Chief Robert Hope stated that Phillip Mitchell from Town and Country Towing donated spill control materials to the Hilton Union Fire Board. Springer Aerospace also donated lights for the Fire Hall. These donations are very much appreciated by the Fire Department.

Fire Chief Robert Hope also thanked Secretary-Treasurer Sara Dinsdale for organizing the two upcoming fundraising events and the administration work done for the fire department and board meetings.

Resolution #F2025-19

Moved: Mike Garside

Seconded: Janet Gordanier

BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE BOARD OF THE HILTON UNION FIRE DEPARTMENT does adjourn at 9:25 p.m. and agree to meet again at the Hilton Township Municipal Office on Wednesday, February 18, 2025, or at the call of the Chair or by petition from majority members of the Board.
CARRIED



Chairperson: Brian Delvecchio



Secretary-Treasurer Sara Dinsdale