

THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ARMOUR

MINUTES

January 13, 2026

The regular meeting of the Council of the Township of Armour was held on Tuesday, January 13, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. at the Katrine Community Centre.

Those in attendance were: Mayor Rod Ward; Councillors: Rod Blakelock, Jerry Brandt, Wendy Whitwell and Dorothy Haggart-Davis; Via Zoom: Councillor Rod Blakelock.

Municipal Staff: Charlene Watt (Municipal Clerk), Dave Gray (CAO), Alison McGregor (Treasurer), Danika McCann (Recreation Co-ordinator), Amy Tilley (Waste Management Administrator), Jason Newman (Manager of Municipal Law Enforcement) and Bryan Austin (Municipal Law Enforcement Officer).

Delegations: Dave Creasor (Roads Supervisor), Sam Soja (Municipal Senior Planner – TULLOCH Inc.), Connor Wright (Land Use Planner- Zelinka Priamo Ltd.) and Barry Burton (President of No Lithium Way – Citizens United).

Applicant Guest: Ina Lila (Director of Business, PowerBank Corporation).

Burk's Falls & District Fire Department, represented by Joe Readman (Fire Chief).

TRI Council Members: Village of Burk's Falls Mayor Chris Hope, Via Zoom: Village of Burk's Falls Councillor Ryan Baptiste and Township of Ryerson Councillor Delynne Patterson.

Guests that signed in: Elizabeth Hewitt, Grace McCoy, Marie Odorizzi, Steve Page, Laura Page, Alice Hewitt, Mark Armstrong, Doreen Monk, Yvon Dugas, Gina Price, Jim Price, Marie Stitt, Wanda Hill, Jim Shaw, Lorraine Burton, Dave Crowe, Brian Price, Doug Wright, Jim Shedden (Great North Arrow), Ashley Awan and Cassandra Balesdent, Brenda Balesdent.

Guests via Zoom: Ana Cultraro, Ashley Soundy, Carl Martin, Don Murphy, Douglas MacLean (Huntsville Doppler), Erik Chovance, James King (Graydon Smith MPP's office), Nieves Guijarro, Robert Baron, Robert MacFarlane (Zelinka Priamo Ltd.), Robert Miller, Sandra Anderson and Sarah Cooke (Almaguin News).

Mayor Rod Ward called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Mayor reported that Councillor Rod Blakelock is attending via Zoom.

VIDEO RECORDING DISCLAIMER:

Participants were informed that the meeting will be recorded to provide a record of discussions and agreements held within the meeting. By staying in the meeting, virtually or in-person, participants consented to being recorded. Participants also agreed to recordings being posted to YouTube or other distribution services.

INDIGENOUS LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

Council acknowledged the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe and recognized the historical and contemporary contributions of the local First Nations and the peoples of Turtle Island.

DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST AND GENERAL NATURE THEREOF:

No pecuniary interest and general nature thereof were declared.

CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the regular Council meeting held on December 16, 2025 were approved as circulated.

DELEGATIONS:

Dave Creasor, Roads Supervisor, presented his January 2026 report. In December 2025, the Roads Department completed 13 days of plowing, 6 days of sanding, and 3 days of ice blading, responding to an unusually early winter that began November 10 and included a significant freezing rain event from December 28–30 requiring heavy

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DELEGATIONS: cont'd.

sanding operations and public notices. Despite increased weather demands and a breakdown of a tandem plow truck on December 31, winter operations were maintained, no equipment slid off the road due to new tires and chains, and fleet maintenance continued throughout the month. Winter sand supplies declined from 2,500 to 800 tonnes, prompting the need for reserve sand and additional salt, with 2025 costs and usage highlighting that increased weather events are driving higher material needs and future tender costs. Questions were asked and answered.

Sam Soja, Municipal Land Use Senior Planner from TULLOCH Inc, presented a recommendation report to Council regarding the PowerBank Corporation and Dave Creasor Official Plan Amendment (OPA) and Zoning By-law Amendment (ZBA) applications for the proposed battery energy storage systems at 219 Peggs Mountain Road. An overview was given of the property and proposal, the land use planning analysis, and the recommendations to Council. The broad themes of public concerns were listed and summarized. The analysis concluded that the proposed battery energy storage systems (BESS) represented appropriate rural energy infrastructure, was consistent with provincial and municipal planning policy, and could be developed without unacceptable land use compatibility, environmental, or public safety impacts, provided appropriate site-specific controls and mitigation measures were implemented. The proposal was supported by numerous peer-reviewed technical studies, including an Environmental Impact Study, Vegetation Management Plan, Acoustic Assessment, and Hazard Mitigation Analysis. The Emergency Response Plan, Firefighter Training and Stormwater Management Report had not been finalized. Public and agency comments were considered and addressed through the planning analysis, technical studies, and the proposed zoning and site plan control mechanisms.

The Planner advised that Official Plan Amendment Application OPA-2025-01, to permit a battery energy storage system use on the subject lands, and Zoning By-law Amendment Application ZBA-2025-01 should be amended to support his recommendations.

Official Plan Amendment - The revisions included minor administrative and technical edits, improvements to the wording of the purpose of the amendment, insertion of the subject property's full legal description, clarification within the basis section to confirm conformity with Official Plan objectives, and reorganization of the amendment text to place it under a "Site-Specific Uses" section of the Official Plan. The Planner noted that the revisions were technical in nature and did not alter the purpose or effect of the Official Plan Amendment.

Zoning By-law Amendment - The Planner outlined recommended revisions to the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment to implement his planning recommendations and ensure the development proceeded in a manner consistent with the planning analysis and supporting technical studies. The revisions included insertion of the subject property's full legal description and the addition of site-specific zoning provisions to rezone the lands to Rural – Site-Specific Exception (Ru-108). The Planner recommended restricting the battery energy storage system facility to the location shown on the draft amending By-law's Schedule A, limiting the facility to a maximum rated power capacity of 4.99 megawatts and a maximum rated energy storage capacity of 19.96 megawatt-hours, restricting the height of buildings and structures to a maximum of 5 metres, and designating the lands as a Site Plan Control Area to secure the implementation of supporting studies, mitigation measures, and detailed site design requirements through a site plan agreement under Section 41 of the Planning Act.

A summary of public comments from the November 18, 2025 public meeting with the applicant's responses was referenced. Key concerns related to fire safety and emergency response, environmental impacts, siting and zoning, property values, municipal costs, and overall community benefit. The applicant outlined proposed mitigation measures, compliance with current safety and environmental standards, peer-reviewed technical studies, and commitments to fund required reviews, training,

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DELEGATIONS: cont'd.

and infrastructure. The report confirms that public input has been considered as part of the ongoing review of the Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment applications.

The Municipal Planner supported the applicant's proposed Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment in principle, but did not support approval of the original draft by-laws as submitted. The Planner recommended that both the OPA and ZBA be revised to incorporate site-specific policies and zoning provisions that reflect the planning analysis and the conclusions of the supporting technical studies.

Council inquired about the implications of the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) with respect to emergency services and impacts beyond municipal boundaries. It was noted that municipalities are encouraged to co-ordinate with neighbouring municipalities and to mitigate cross-boundary impacts as appropriate.

Council questioned why the Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment applied to the entire approximately 83-acre property. It was explained that this approach is typical for an OPA; however, site-specific controls are generally recommended through the ZBA. While the application permits the battery energy storage system (BESS) on the subject lands, it includes restrictions on its location. It was further noted that associated components, including the proposed stormwater management facilities, hydro poles, and site access, would extend beyond the defined BESS footprint.

Connor Wright, Land Use Planner from Zelinka Priamo Ltd., representing PowerBank Corporation, presented an overview of the Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment applications for the proposed BESS at 219 Peggs Mountain Road. In the presentation it was stated that there is policy support under the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 that encourages planning for climate change mitigation and resilience and supports the development of energy storage systems to meet current and future electricity needs. The proposal was also reviewed in the context of the Township of Armour Official Plan and Zoning By-law. PowerBank's planner was generally supportive of the amendments that were proposed by TULLOCH Inc.

Council inquired about the purpose and winter operability of a dry hydrant. The Applicant's Planner was unable to provide a response to these questions. Fire Chief Joe Readman subsequently explained the function of a dry hydrant and advised that, if properly installed, winter conditions would not impede its operation.

Council further inquired about the proposed location of the dry hydrant. Fire Chief Readman advised that the dry hydrant is proposed to be located at Katrine Beach on Ferguson Road, approximately 5 km from the subject property, and not on-site.

Barry Burton, President from No Lithium Way Citizens United Inc. spoke in opposition to the Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment applications for the proposed battery energy storage systems at 219 Peggs Mountain Road. No Lithium Way Citizens United Inc. disputed the two Planners recommendations and quoted PPS sections from the presentation. Concerns raised included public safety risks associated with recent BESS fires elsewhere; land use incompatibility with surrounding rural residential and agricultural properties; potential impacts to endangered bat species, and compliance with provincial and municipal environmental policies; proximity to a provincially significant archaeological site and the absence of an archaeological assessment; lack of consultation with Indigenous and environmental stakeholders; and reported lack of community support, including a petition with 901 signatures opposing the project. It was stated that the BESS site is within 650 metres of a Provincially Significant Archaeological Site. In 1998 the Ontario Government licensed the site giving it Borden Numbers BjGu-1-2, BjGu-1-3, and BjGu-1-4. It was explained that twenty-three artifacts were evaluated by two archaeologists and the fourteen best were donated to the Simcoe County Museum.

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ACCOUNTS FOR APPROVAL:

The list of accounts for January 2026 was approved by resolution.

APPLICATIONS:

Council reviewed consent application B-049/25, Part of Lot 21 Concession 4, for a lot addition on the property municipally known as 723 Skyline Drive from Mark and Susan Armstrong. Council discussed the application, the history of the property and passed a resolution supporting the application with conditions.

Council reviewed a Staff Report and supporting documentation from the Municipal Clerk requesting support to revise Condition #3 of Subdivision Application S-01/24 (Prentice) per the Applicant's Planner's request and MNRF comments. Council passed a resolution supporting the request to amend the Notice of Decision's condition.

Council reviewed official plan application OPA-2025-01 (Amendment No. 4) and zoning by-law amendment application ZBA-2025-01, Part Lot 3, Concession 6, to permit battery energy storage systems on the property municipally known as 219 Peggs Mountain Road from David Creasor and PowerBank Corporation.

Council reviewed the applications, including information presented by the delegations, the volume of written submissions received from residents opposing the battery energy storage system (BESS), and the recommendations provided by Planning staff. Council discussed the potential impacts of the proposal on the entire 83-acre property, noting that the proposed lease area for the BESS represents approximately 0.2 acres of the site.

Council noted the thoroughness of the planners submitted reports. Council noted that, as of the meeting date, the stormwater management plan, emergency response plan, and firefighter training documentation had not been finalized. Council was not satisfied that the requirements of the Provincial Planning Statement had been adequately addressed, particularly with respect to inter-municipal coordination and cross-boundary impacts; public safety and hazard management; the limitations of municipal emergency and fire services; infrastructure and service capacity; and regional response and joint oversight.

Council emphasized that planning matters with regional implications, including emergency management and infrastructure, should involve neighbouring municipalities. Council addressed the public, noting that while the Province is promoting this type of infrastructure and municipalities operate under provincial authority, Council was elected to represent the interests of local residents. Council further noted that the potential impacts of the proposal extend beyond the boundaries of Armour Township and expressed hope that conveying the concerns raised by the public would assist other municipalities in making informed, community-supported decisions.

Council acknowledged that BESS technology is expected to continue to evolve and that Council remains committed to acting in the best interests of its residents. Council recognized that significant public concerns had been raised, particularly regarding risks to volunteer firefighters, and agreed that such risks require careful consideration. Council noted that education and information provided on the proposal did not sufficiently address practical safety concerns. Public input consistently raised planning-related concerns that aligned with PPS and OP policy.

Following deliberation, Council passed resolutions, with recorded votes, to refuse the applications.

BY-LAWS:

By-law #1-2026 being a by-law to authorize temporary borrowing for 2026 was read in its entirety and passed by resolution.

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BY-LAWS: cont'd.

By-law #2-2026 being a by-law to provide for an interim tax levy, penalty charges and interest for 2026 was read in its entirety and passed by resolution.

By-law #3-2026 being a by-law to confirm the proceedings of Council at its December 2025 meetings was read in its entirety and passed by resolution.

By-law #4-2026 being a by-law to amend the official plan to permit battery energy storage systems on the property municipally known as 219 Peggs Mountain Road was read in its entirety and defeated.

By-law #5-2026 being a by-law to amend the zoning by-law to permit battery energy storage systems on the property municipally known as 219 Peggs Mountain Road was read in its entirety and defeated.

By-law #6-2026 being a by-law to delegate routine Council powers and duties to staff was read in its entirety and passed by resolution.

By-law #7-2026 being a by-law to stop up and close and convey the original shore road allowance in front of Part Lot 20, Concession 1, across the travelled road from 879 Three Mile Lake Road, fronting Three Mile Lake, designated as Part 1 on Registered Plan 42R-22892 was read in its entirety and passed by resolution.

REPORTS:

The Mayor presented his January 2026 Preparing for the Future in the Almaguin Highlands Report. The Mayor provided a New Year update outlining the Township of Armour's progress since November 2022 and priorities for 2026. The report focuses on six strategic areas: value for constituents, protection of natural assets, cooperation and shared services, health and wellness, economic development, and housing and growth. Council was advised of ongoing progress in regional service delivery, community and recreation investments, environmental initiatives, healthcare partnerships, economic readiness, and infrastructure planning. The report also emphasized a continued Almaguin Highlands regional approach to improve efficiency, resilience, and long-term sustainability.

Council reviewed the January 2026 Planning Report.

Council reviewed the January 2026 Building Permit Report, the Building Summary for 2025 and a comparison chart for building permits between 2021 and 2025.

Council reviewed the 2025 By-law Enforcement Services report, noting a return to more traditional service levels, year-end activity comparable to pre-pandemic years, ongoing compliance efforts, and continued winter monitoring. Council also acknowledged strong staff support, effective community and inter-agency collaboration—including mental health initiatives—and plans to further strengthen partnerships and training opportunities in 2026. Council reviewed the Annual AMPS Program Public Complaints Report for the 2025 reporting period and confirmed that no public complaints were received under the Administrative Monetary Penalty System. A resolution was passed to receive and approve the report in accordance with By-law #24-2025, Schedule F.

A verbal report was provided on the January 8, 2026 AHHC meeting and Council reviewed the minutes of the meeting held on November 6, 2025.

A verbal report was given on the January 8, 2026 DSSAB meeting.

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CORRESPONDENCE:

Council reviewed a request for a donation from The Salvation Army. Council passed a resolution approving the donation.

Council received a request from the Canadian Red Cross requesting a donation to help those going through a crisis in Canada and around the world. Council passed a resolution approving a donation.

Council reviewed an Ontario News Release advising that the province is investing in firefighter protection.

Council reviewed an Ontario News Release advising of regulations and statutes in force as of January 1, 2026.

Council reviewed the November 2025 Monthly Jobs Report and the December 2025 Labour Focus Report provided by The Labour Market Group.

Council reviewed a media release from MAHC advising that a new mammography unit will be coming to the Huntsville Hospital.

Council reviewed a media release from MAHC advising that Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare has implemented a partnership with Granite Ridge Retirement Residence to add transitional beds.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Council reviewed 18 additional submissions from the public in opposition to the official plan and zoning by-law amendment applications by PowerBank Corporation for the proposed battery energy storage systems at 219 Peggs Mountain Road.

NEW BUSINESS:

Council reviewed a letter from the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors (AOLS) advising that plans of survey are professional products and should not be distributed to the public by municipalities without the consent of the authoring surveyor, noting concerns about legality, public misunderstanding, outdated information, and potential liability. AOLS recommends municipalities cease providing copies of survey plans and instead direct the public to the original surveying firm for appropriate access and explanation.

RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution #2026-1 - Moved by Jerry Brandt, seconded by Dorothy Haggart-Davis; That the Council of the Township of Armour approve the minutes of the regular council meeting held on December 16, 2025, as circulated. Carried

Resolution #2026-2 - Moved by Wendy Whitwell, seconded by Dorothy Haggart-Davis; That the Council of the Township of Armour approve the January 2026 accounts, in the amount of \$561,267.70 for payment, and the Mayor and the Treasurer are hereby authorized to sign cheques for same. Carried

Resolution #2026-3 - Moved by Dorothy Haggart-Davis, seconded by Jerry Brandt; That the Council of the Township of Armour hereby support the consent application B-049/25, Part Lot 21, Concession 4, 723 Skyline Drive submitted by Mark and Susan Armstrong for a lot addition subject to the following conditions:

- That the owner obtain approval of an Official Plan Amendment to recognize that the consent results in no new lot for development, as the severed parcel shall merge with the abutting benefitting lands, addressing non-conformity with Section 3.1.1(g) of the Official Plan and Section 51(24)(c) of the Planning Act.
- That the owner obtain approval of a Zoning By-law Amendment, similar in intent to By-law No. 5-2024 (Exception Rural RU-107), to recognize the lot addition as legally existing as of the date of consent approval and to bring the lands into conformity with Official Plan Amendment.

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RESOLUTIONS: cont'd.

- That the consent be approved for lot addition purposes only, and that the severed lands shall not be conveyed separately or developed independently and shall merge in title with the benefitting abutting lands.
- That a digital copy of the final reference plan be provided to the Township
- That the transfer of the severed lands be completed concurrently with or immediately following the required conveyance, such that the severed lands legally merge with the benefitting parcel and remain as one lot for all planning purposes. Carried

Resolution #2026-4 - Moved by Wendy Whitwell, seconded by Dorothy Haggart-Davis; Whereas a request has been made by Lanny Dennis Planning, to revise Condition #3 of Subdivision Application S-01/24 (Prentice) to require that a Zoning By-law Amendment be applied for and approved recognizing a minimum lot frontage of 61 metres for Lots 1–5, and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry has advised that it does not review or comment on site-specific planning proposals where the municipality or planning board is the approval authority;

Now Therefore Be It Resolved That the Council of the Township of Armour supports the requested revision to Condition #3. Carried

Resolution #2026-5 - Moved by Jerry Brandt, seconded by Dorothy Haggart-Davis; Whereas the Applicants, PowerBank Corporation and David Creasor, have submitted an Official Plan Amendment Application OPA-2025-01 (Amendment No. 4) for Council's consideration;

And Whereas Council has reviewed the application pursuant to Section 17 of the Planning Act;

And Whereas Council has considered the written and/or verbal recommendations provided in the report prepared by TULLOCH Inc., dated January 13, 2026;

And Whereas Council has considered public submissions, including written and/or verbal representations received in respect of the application;

Now Therefore Be It Resolved That Council does not accept the application as presented by the Applicant;

And Be It Further Resolved That the application as presented by the Applicants is hereby refused.

<u>Recorded Vote</u>	<u>For</u>	<u>Opposed</u>
Blakelock, Rod	X	
Brandt, Jerry	X	
Haggart-Davis, Dorothy	X	
Ward, Rod	X	
Whitwell, Wendy	X	Carried

Resolution #2026-6 - Moved by Wendy Whitwell, seconded by Rod Blakelock; Whereas the Applicants, PowerBank Corporation and David Creasor have submitted a Zoning By-law Amendment Application ZBA-2025-01 for Council's consideration;

And Whereas Council has reviewed the application pursuant to Section 34 of the Planning Act;

And Whereas Council has considered the written and/or verbal recommendations provided in the report prepared by TULLOCH Inc., dated January 13, 2026;

And Whereas Council has considered public submissions, including written and/or verbal representations received in respect of the application;

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RESOLUTIONS: cont'd.

Now Therefore Be It Resolved That Council does not accept the application as presented by the Applicant;

And Be It Further Resolved That the application as presented by the Applicants is hereby refused.

<u>Recorded Vote</u>	<u>For</u>	<u>Opposed</u>
Blakelock, Rod	X	
Brandt, Jerry	X	
Haggart-Davis, Dorothy	X	
Ward, Rod	X	
Whitwell, Wendy	X	Carried

Resolution #2026-7 - Moved by Wendy Whitwell, seconded by Dorothy Haggart-Davis; That the Council of the Township of Armour have read and approve By-law #1-2026 being a by-law to authorize temporary borrowing for 2026 and that we authorize the Mayor and Clerk to sign this by-law and affix the seal of the Corporation thereto. Carried

Resolution #2026-8 - Moved by Wendy Whitwell, seconded by Jerry Brandt; That the Council of the Township of Armour have read and approve By-law #2-2026 being a by-law to provide for an interim tax levy, penalty charges and interest for 2026 and that we authorize the Mayor and Clerk to sign this by-law and affix the seal of the Corporation thereto. Carried

Resolution #2026-9 - Moved by Jerry Brandt, seconded by Wendy Whitwell; That the Council of the Township of Armour have read and approve By-law #3-2026 being a by-law to confirm the proceedings of Council at its December meetings and that we authorize the Mayor and Clerk to sign this by-law and affix the seal of the Corporation thereto. Carried

Resolution #2026-10 - Moved by Dorothy Haggart-Davis, seconded by Wendy Whitwell; That the Council of the Township of Armour have read and approve By-law #4-2026 being a by-law to approve an Official Plan amendment for Concession 6, Part Lot 3, known municipally as 219 Peggs Mountain Road to permit battery energy storage systems and that we authorize the Mayor and Clerk to sign this by-law and affix the seal of the Corporation thereto. Defeated

Resolution #2026-11 - Moved by Wendy Whitwell, seconded by Dorothy Haggart-Davis; That the Council of the Township of Armour have read and approve By-law #5-2026 being a by-law to approve a Zoning By-law amendment for Concession 6, Part Lot 3, known municipally as 219 Peggs Mountain Road to permit battery energy storage systems and that we authorize the Mayor and Clerk to sign this by-law and affix the seal of the Corporation thereto. Defeated

Resolution #2026-12 - Moved by Wendy Whitwell, seconded by Dorothy Haggart-Davis; That the Council of the Township of Armour have read and approve By-law #6-2026 being a by-law to delegate routine Council powers and duties to staff and that we authorize the Mayor and Clerk to sign this by-law and affix the seal of the Corporation thereto. Carried

Resolution #2026-13 - Moved by Wendy Whitwell, seconded by Jerry Brandt; That the Council of the Township of Armour have read and approve By-law #7-2026 being a by-law to stop up and close and convey the original shore road allowance described as Part Lot 20, Concession 1, 42R-22892, Part 1, fronting Three Mile Lake, and to transfer ownership of said shore road allowance to the property across the travelled road known as Three Mile Lake Road, described as Part Lot 20, Concession 1, 42R-10845, Part 1, to be owned by the property owner of the adjacent land and that we authorize the

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RESOLUTIONS: cont'd.

Mayor and Clerk to sign this by-law and affix the seal of the Corporation thereto.
Carried

Resolution #2026-14 - Moved by Jerry Brandt, seconded by Dorothy Haggart-Davis; That the Council of the Township of Armour receive and approve the Annual AMPS Program Public Complaints Report for the 2025 reporting period and acknowledges that no public complaints were received in respect of the Administrative Monetary Penalty System (AMPS) Program pursuant to By-law #24-2025, Schedule F. Carried

Resolution #2026-15 - Moved by Jerry Brandt, seconded by Wendy Whitwell; That the Council of the Township of Armour approve a donation in the amount of \$400 to The Salvation Army to support the work they do in our community. Carried

Resolution #2026-16 – Moved by Dorothy Haggart-Davis, seconded by Wendy Whitwell; That the Council of the Township of Armour approve a donation, in the amount of \$1,000, to the Canadian Red Cross to support the work they do in our community. Carried

Resolution #2026-17 - Moved by Jerry Brandt, seconded by Dorothy Haggart-Davis; That the Council of the Township of Armour adjourn this regular council meeting at 9:10 p.m. until the next regular council meeting scheduled for January 27, 2026 or at the call of the Mayor or the Clerk. Carried

Original signed by Rod Ward

Rod Ward, Mayor

Original signed by Charlene Watt

Charlene Watt, Municipal Clerk