



Town Council Meeting
Council Chambers – 105 Lower Main Street
Wednesday, December 17, 2025
(immediately following the 6 pm COW meeting)

AGENDA

1. Call to Order

2. Approval of Agenda
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3. Approval of Minutes – Regular Council Meeting – November 26, 2025
Pages 2 – 6 – November 12, 2025, Minutes

4. Presentation – Closing Gaps: Building Financial Resilience through Asset Management – Ruthann Brookins, Manager of Finance, Town of Oxford
Pages 7 - 18

5. Business
 - 5.1 Request from Cumberland Public Libraries
Pages 19 - 20

6. Correspondence
 - 6.1 nil

7. Adjournment



Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting

Place: Council Chambers, Zoom, streamed live to Facebook
Date: Wednesday, November 26, 2025
Presiding Officer: Mayor Greg Henley
Councillor Present: Deputy Mayor Carla Black and Councillors Brenton Colborne, Olivia Canning-Sweet, Padraic Moore, Paul Jones, and Chrystal McNutt.
Councillors Regrets: Nil

A quorum was present throughout the meeting.

Staff in attendance: Linda Cloney – CAO, Ruthann Brookins – Manager of Finance, and Stan McDougall - Admin Assistant (recording secretary)

Presenters in attendance: Nil

Gallery (media and public) in attendance: Nil

Announcements Prior to the Call to Order:

Mayor Henley announced prior to the call to order that the Oxford Christmas Parade was being held on Friday, November 28, 2025, and would start at 6:30 PM on Upper Main Street. The Wilburn Lodge Masons will be giving out hotdogs and hot chocolate at the gazebo.

1. Call to Order

Mayor Henley called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

2. **Approval of Agenda**

Moved by Deputy Mayor McNutt and seconded by Councillor Canning-Sweet to approve the agenda of the Regular Council Meeting for Wednesday November 27, 2025, as presented.

Motion Carried

3. **Approval of Minutes**

Regular Council Meeting – October 22, 2025

Special Council Meeting – October 29, 2025

Special Council Meeting – November 12, 2025

Approved by

Mayor Greg Henley, on November 26, 2025

4. **Business**

4.1 **Nova Scotia Power's request**

Staff had received an email request from Nova Scotia Power in July 2025 requesting that there would be no objection to crews working in the land that the Town of Oxford is acquiring from the Crown as part of the Source Water Protection Plan for Oxford.

Staff presented this request to the Source Water Protection committee for discussion and a few questions from the meeting were directed back to Nova Scotia Power.

The questions and Nova Scotia Power's response to the questions can be found in the council package.

Dillon Consulting, who are involved in the Town of Oxford's Source Water Protection planning is very satisfied with the responses from Nova Scotia Power. They further commented that many water supplies have Nova Scotia Power right of ways running adjacent to and within the bounds of their Protected Water Areas and, so long as the use of herbicides is done in a manner consistent with standard practices and

following the appropriate law/bylaws with notification being given in advance, there is minimal potential risk to water supplies.

The MOU agreement with the snowmobile club is still in process, and the process of the land acquisition is still ongoing, and where it is holding up the power line extension planned by Nova Scotia Power, Oxford town Council is being asked to give consideration to confirm that the Town of Oxford has no objection to Nova Scotia Power being granted the rights by the Province.

Moved by Councillor Colborne and seconded by Councillor Black to confirm that the Town of Oxford has no objection to Nova Scotia Power Incorporation being granted by the rights by the Province, in advance of the conveyance, and that to any extent that the town has control of the land, Nova Scotia Power Incorporation would be permitted to enter on the land and remove trees to clear the transmission corridor.

Motion Carried

4.2 5151 Main Street Agreement – recommendation from Planning Committee

The Planning Advisory Committee met on November 25, 2025, and recommended that Council enter into an agreement as amended and drafted to allow the operations of a Motor Vehicle Sales, Rental, and Repair Shop in addition to the existing use of residential.

The property is currently zoned residential within the Main Street Mixed-Use Zone. Approval of this agreement would support the continued growth and economic diversification of the Town of Oxford by introducing a new commercial service within proximity to the downtown core and along a key entrance corridor to the community. This aligns with the Town's broader goals of encouraging new business opportunities, increasing local employment, and enhancing the range of services available to residents and visitors.

The applicant would need to follow all regulations when operating a Motor Vehicle Sales, Rental and Repair Shop and would include all permits and environmental regulations for disposal of oil and other related car parts.

A community engagement and public participation opportunity was held on Thursday, October 16, 2025, with the applicant and supporting residents present.

Changes to the wording of the agreement were made to broaden the terminology of accessory buildings, additionally a subsection was added to ensure the site is kept in safe conditions as the applicant allows residents to pass through the property to access Main Street.

Several options were offered to the Planning Committee for consideration with a fourth option being introduced to enter into a smaller agreement with the applicant of 5151 Main Street, Dale Braby, and the Town of Oxford. This agreement would not be registered with the province and would end when/if the property sells with removal of signage and all commercial activities.

The agreement has been reviewed and accepted by the owner, Dale Braby

Moved by Deputy Mayor McNutt and seconded by Councillor Black to accept the recommendation of the Planning and Development Committee to enter into an agreement as presented to allow the operations of a Motor Vehicle Sales, Rental, and Repair Shop in addition to the existing residential use.

Motion Carried

5. Correspondence

5.1 Amendments to the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations

The proposed amendment to the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations was reviewed with the Council and was announced that it would be advertised in the Royal Gazette and posted online.

The Building Code Act requires that the proposed amendments be circulated to every municipality and be made available to the public. An opportunity for written comments on the proposed amendment to the regulations to be sent via email on or before January 2, 2026, to the attention of the senior advisor listed in the proposed amendments letter.

6. In-Camera

6.1 acquisition, sale, lease and security of municipal property

At 6:12 PM it was moved by Deputy Mayor McNutt and seconded by Councillor Jones to go in-camera to discuss the acquisition, sale, lease, and security of municipal property.

Motion Carried.

At 6:26 PM it was moved by Councillor Black and seconded by Councillor Jones to come out of in-camera and resume the Regular Council Meeting.

Motion Carried.

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:28 PM

Mayor Greg Henley

Stan McDougall, Admin Assistant

Date Approved

TOWN OF OXFORD

From Crisis to Confidence: How we used asset management to secure our infrastructure future

Ruthann Brookins
Manager of Finance



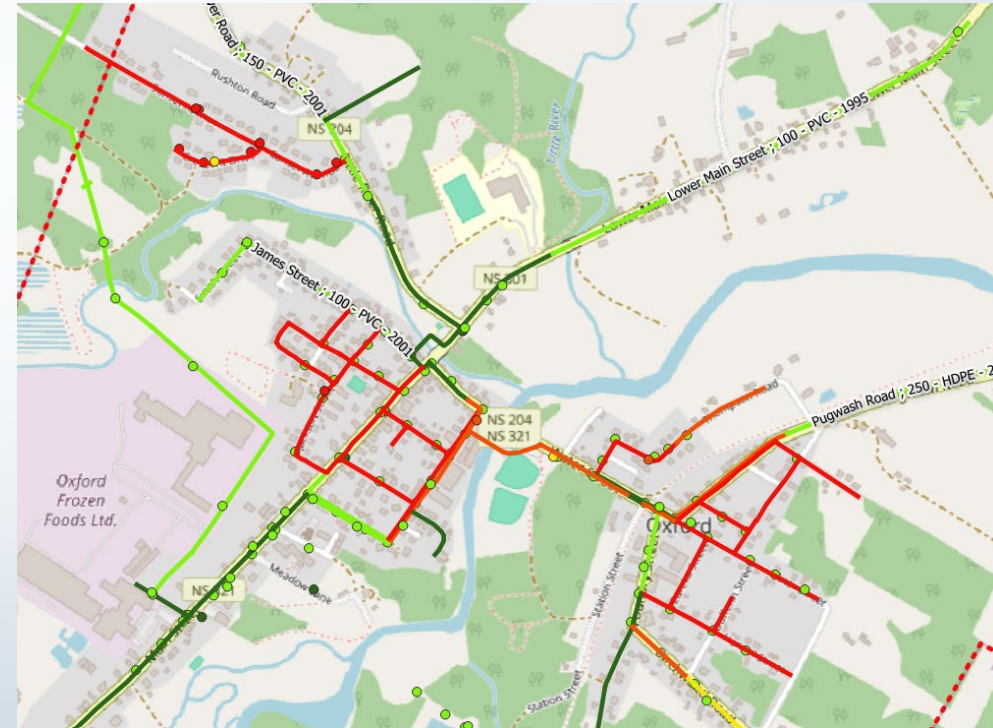
Town at a Crossroads

- ~1300 residents
- Experiencing growth since 2021
- 30% population over 60 years old
- Asset Management – not an overnight affair
 - 2019 / 2020 – MAMP – Inventory, mapping, level of service, risk assessments
 - 2021 / 2022 – MAMP – Capital plan and first asset management supported rate study
 - 2024 / 2025 – Updated capital plan and rate study
 - 2025 – Public engagement and funding strategies



Key Issues

- \$136M in assets
- Full suite of municipal services
- Aging water system (1930s – 1970s)
- 25% poor or very poor condition
- Original reservoir past end of life (SAR)
- Inflation outpacing road investment
- Main Street in poor condition
- Insufficient funding for renewal



Risk Based Prioritization

Score	Definition	Interpretation and Relation to Consequence of Failure
5	Rare	RATE: Fewer than 1 in 1000 assets with this score will experience a service disruption* in the next five years. Where failure occurs, consequences are typically minor issues that do not compromise core service delivery.
4	Unlikely	RATE: Fewer than 1 in 100 assets with this score will experience a service disruption in the next five years. Where failure occurs, consequences are typically short-term like small leaks in a pipe or surface cracks in a road that don't disrupt day-to-day life significantly.
3	Possible	RATE: Fewer than 1 in 20 assets with this score will experience a service disruption in the next five years. Where failure occurs, consequences are typically still minor issue, but a few outliers may cause the defined consequence of service failure.
2	Likely	RATE: Fewer than 1 in 10 assets with this score will experience a service disruption in the next five years. Where failure occurs, consequences are most likely to cause the defined consequence of service failure.
1	Almost Certain	RATE: Fewer than 1 in 2 assets with this score will experience a service disruption in the next five years. Where failure occurs, consequences are most likely to cause the defined consequence of service failure.

Probability of Failure	Consequence of Failure				
	1	2	3	4	5
5	1	3	6	10	15
4	2	5	9	14	19
3	4	8	13	18	22
2	7	12	17	21	24
1	11	16	20	23	25

Risk Based Prioritization

CONSEQUENCE	RANK	CULTURAL / POLITICAL	ECONOMIC	LEGAL	SAFETY	ENVIRONMENTAL	EQUITY	OPPORTUNITY COST / REWARD
INSIGNIFICANT	1	Public will not notice. No impact to cultural resources or groups. No impact to relations with other levels of government.	Costs are minor and expected within ongoing operational budget.	No regulatory or legal impacts.	No risk to safety above baseline conditions.	No impact to the environment.	Impacts to residents are experienced relatively equally	There is no potential lost opportunity
MINOR	2	Minor public notice, public contacts staff only - single point of contact. Municipality can alert the public prior to widespread social media activity. No impact to cultural resources or cultural groups. No impact to relations with other levels of government.	Unexpected operational cost can be accommodated by redistribution of yearly budget. Grant can offset the unexpected cost.	Failure may result in small claims.	Risk of "near miss" incidents, low risk of injury.	Short term effects to the environment requiring one time remediation of mitigation to restore the system to its original state. Notification to NSE.	Impacts disproportionately affect a specific economic or cultural group for the duration of the service disruption with respect to access to core services like water, transportation, recreation, etc.	Service disruption or delay in project results in a delay of planned economic development, deferred savings in operations costs.
MODERATE	3	Moderate public notice - multiple single points of contact, elected officials are contacted. Social media has a presence in terms of pictures or video. Coverage in local news, requires official municipal response. Impact to cultural groups limited.	Unexpected operational cost requires cancellation of minor planned activities to accommodate. No long-term financial impacts. Minor impact to tourism. Grant cannot offset unexpected cost.	Failure may result in litigation and informal inquiry.	More unlikely than likely to cause short- or long-term injury, no risk of loss of life.	Short term effects to the environment requiring temporary remediation or mitigation which restore the system to its original state. Submit plans for approval to NSE.	Impacts disproportionately affect a specific economic or cultural group with respect to access to core services like water, transportation, recreation, etc. that continues in the year following the service disruption.	Service disruption or delay in project could result in a long-term delay of significant economic development opportunities or major operational savings that could be diverted to capital projects.
MAJOR	4	Potential for injury. Mayor / CAO is notified. Public notice is widespread, large volume of multiple contacts. Social media has a strong awareness in terms of pictures or video. Coverage in local news, requires official municipal response. Interruption of service greater than 1 day. Coverage in provincial news. Impact to cultural groups widespread.	Unexpected operational cost requires cancellation of major planned activities to accommodate. Long term financing required to accommodate. Loss of commercial or tourism service greater than 5 days.	Failure may result in class action litigation and formal inquiry.	More likely than not to cause short- or long-term injury, low potential for loss of life.	Long term effects to the environment requiring sustained remediation or mitigation. System may not ultimately reach its original state. NSE issues a directive to the Town.	There are medium-term (<10 years) effects limited to a specific economic or cultural group resulting in displacement / relocation, health impacts or financial loss.	Service disruption or delay in project could result in lost opportunity to realize significant economic development opportunities or major operational savings that could be diverted to capital projects.
CATASTROPHIC	5	Potential for loss of life. Road sinkhole / caving in. Coverage on the National.	Property damage that the Town is liable for. Loss commercial or tourism service greater than a season. Financing requirements may render the municipality insolvent.	Failure results in contravention of laws, significant litigation, court action and multiple litigations.	More likely than not to cause short- or long-term injury, potential for loss of life.	Permanent or long-term environmental effects that cannot be remediated or mitigated. Failure to comply results in legal action.	There are long-term (>20 years) effects limited to a specific economic or cultural group resulting in displacement / relocation, health impacts or financial strain.	Service failure results in inability to achieve strategic plan goals, resulting in a need to redefine the plan. Inability to complete project results in loss of significant (>80%) funding opportunity.

Risk Based Prioritization

- **Extreme Risk** - immediate intervention. High likelihood of major or catastrophic impacts within the planning period, which is not acceptable at any time.

- If the asset has failed (still providing the service, but not at expected service levels):

Consequence = catastrophic, address in year 1 of the 5-year plan

Consequence = major, address in year 1 or 2 of the 5-year plan

Consequence = moderate, address in year 3 of the 5-year plan

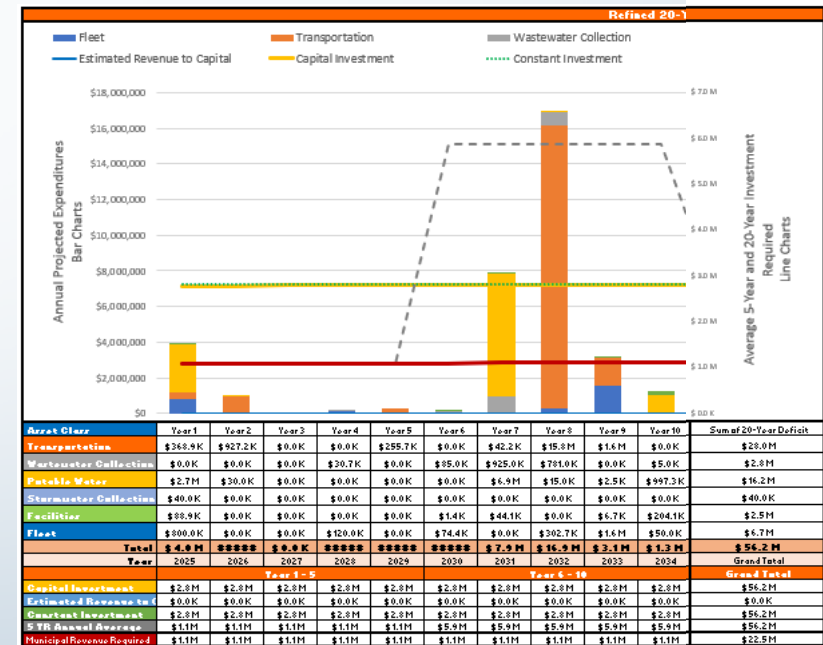
Consequence = minor, address in year 4 of the 5-year plan or defer

Consequence = insignificant, address in year 5 of the 5-year plan or defer

- **High Risk** - Fix in the 5-year program, where assets with shorter lifespans (fleet) are included earlier in the program, and those with longer lifespans (water mains) can be included later in the program.
- **Very Low to Medium Risk** are forecast for replacement outside the 5-year plan based on:
 - a) when they are forecast to become high risk, or
 - b) at a percentage of anticipated life depending on consequence of failure, or
 - c) run to failure for low and very low consequences, unless funding is available

Choosing Asset Management – A Turning Point

- Rate setting – look forward, not backward
- Requested reserve funds for future work
- Project go-ahead requires 50% funding from outside sources
- Big picture thinking – road investment driven by critical underground assets
- Level of Service focus – identify risks to services
- Sustainable thinking – incorporate climate planning and leverage funding in financial plan



Asset management is a tool used in preparing capital budgets, UARB rate studies, transparency to audit committee and funding applications.

Working Toward Buy-In

- Council Engagement
 - Condition maps and future projections
 - State of infrastructure and modern challenges
 - Risks to services without action
 - Reality of limited funding
- Community Engagement
 - Public session on infrastructure
 - Input and dialogue with press
 - Open and transparent

Town of Oxford Capital Program

2025/26 to 2029/30

April 2025



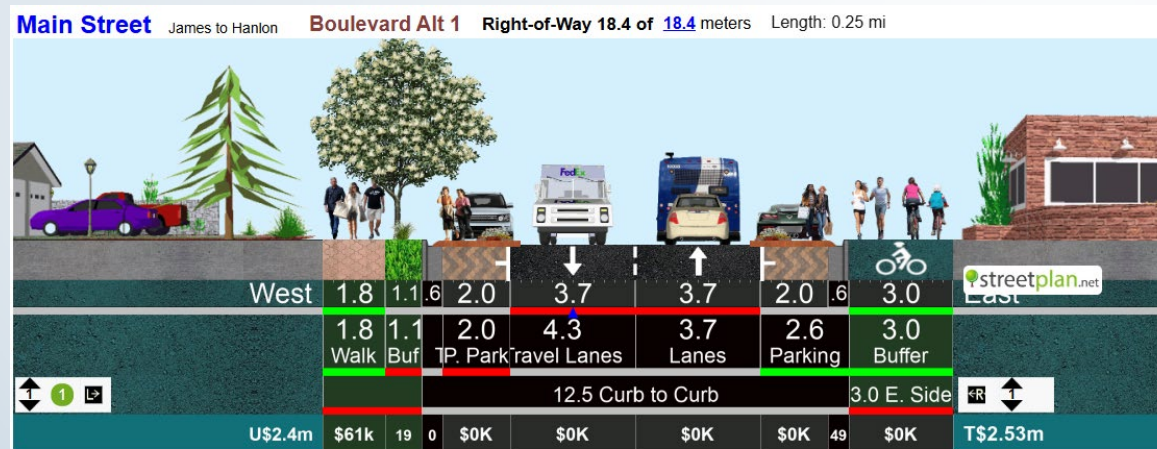
Key Takeaways

- Consider all assets together in planning
- Municipal revenue is insufficient for large projects – rely on creative outside funding
- Next major projects: Main Street and Pugwash Road (water system)
- Priority is replacing water system from the 1930s, align road replacements
- Public engagement: educate on issues and emphasize this is not “an Oxford issue.”
- Prioritize upgrades for water and wastewater regulatory compliance
- Consider feasibility of investment in big ticket facilities (arena) or adding new infrastructure

Well thought out planning can avoid further increases in spending and defer projects to make up infrastructure gap.

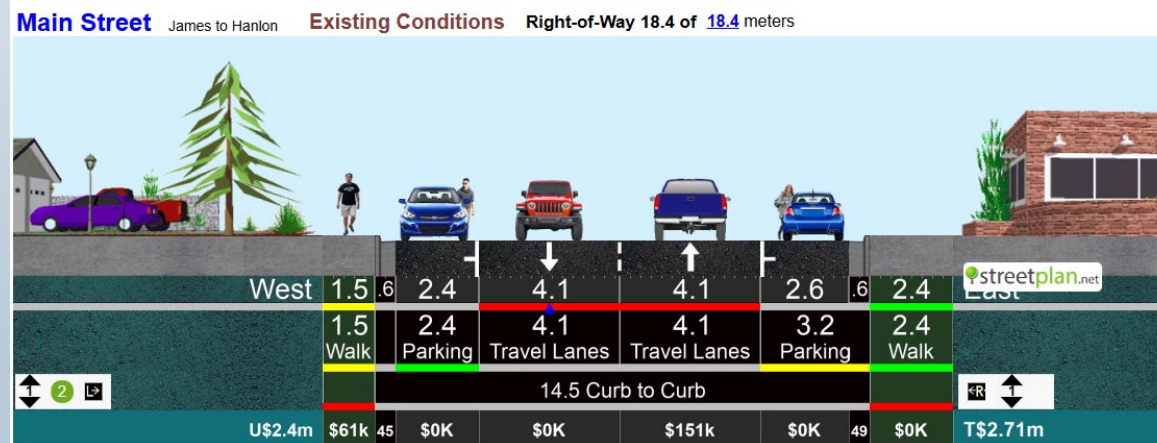
Strategic Project Design

- Community Demand: Replace Main Street Asphalt
- Used the Climate Ready Infrastructure Service to make it resilient
- Open new funding pathways (LLCA), modern design



Proposed Design

- Use natural solutions (rain gardens)
- 3690m² asphalt, 7.2m wide, 2 lanes plus permeable pavers for parking
- Accessible active transportation
- Climate resilient storm system
- \$4.4M



Existing condition

- 5200m² asphalt, 14m wide, 2 lanes plus parking both sides
- Regulatory issues
- No funding
- \$4.3M

Closing Thoughts

- You can't do everything all at once
- Services will age faster than the ability to replace them
- What are critical services – prioritize what you can't lose
- New infrastructure: cost to operate and replace
- Managing infrastructure = managing finances (tax and rates)
- Water rates are likely to go up in municipalities across Canada

We are all in this together!

Questions and Discussion





PO Box 220
21 Acadia St., 2nd floor
Amherst, Nova Scotia
B4H 3Z2
information@cumberlandpubliclibraries.ca

Mayor Henley and Municipal Council
Town of Oxford,
P.O. Box 338
Oxford, Nova Scotia
B0M 1P0

November 25, 2025

Dear Mayor Henley and Council:

I am writing to request council's input on a change to the Cumberland Regional Library Board. The Library Board has been struggling due to its small size. Currently, the board is made up of 4 appointed members, one from each of the municipalities of Cumberland, Amherst, and Oxford, and one community member appointed by the board itself to increase inclusion, equity, and/or diversity. There are also supposed to be 2 members appointed by the province of Nova Scotia, but those positions have been vacant for several years.

We wish to add two community representatives to be selected by the Library Board in an effort to strengthen the library board's connection to the community and aid us in making decisions that will benefit a larger sector of the population. The Library Board would control the selection process in order to have board members that represent different parts of the community or who have specific needed skills.

The Library Board is also seeking to have an additional Council representative from the Municipality of Cumberland.

In total, that would mean a board comprised of;

- 1 Town of Amherst councillor;
- 1 Town of Oxford councillor;
- 2 Municipality of Cumberland councillors;
- 1 Equity, Diversity, Inclusion or Accessibility community member;
- 2 community members at large;
- and 2 provincially appointed representatives,

leading to a board of 9 individuals. A board of that size would allow for much more responsible governance, give the Library Board the ability to create subcommittees, and to allow for more perspectives.

Section 10 (2c) of the Libraries Act specifies that the appointment of additional members requires agreement from all parties:

- (2) A regional library board shall consist of*
(a) one member appointed by each city, town and municipality that is a party to the agreement;
(b) two members appointed by the Governor in Council; and
(c) additional members appointed in such manner and number as the parties to the agreement agree.

Therefore I am reaching out to you to ensure that the Council is in agreement with the proposed change to the makeup of the board. The library board will be discussing this at the February 5, 2026 meeting. If council has an objections to addition of a community board member I would ask that they contact me by January 23, 2026.

Please contact me if you have any questions regarding this matter.

Sincerely,



Denise Corey
Library Director, Cumberland Public Libraries

cc. Kim Ford, Library Board Chair
Carla Black, Town of Oxford Councillor and Library Board Member