

Rideau Lakes Grassroots Group (RLGG) investigation into call from Councilor Hutchings to OPP (or not) during Rideau Lakes Council meeting of Tuesday October 6, 2025

January 8, 2025

Background

Members of the public asked if Councilor Debbie Hutchings, while acting as Council Chair, truly called the OPP or not during the council meeting

Approach taken: Freedom of Information Request

We wanted to have a full picture of the actions of Councillor Hutchings at the October 6th, 2025, council meeting. The meeting had two members of the public (including our Wendy Alford) served with Notices of Trespass. The CAO ended the meeting citing a toxic work environment as Councilor Hutchings was shouting at the Mayor. Since the meeting Councilors attend meetings virtually and that meeting also led to a provincially appointed monitor attending Council meeting.

Chronology of council meeting events (source: council video)

- 6 pm - Meeting begins
- 6:26 pm Ken Maxwell outburst - Acting Chair of the meeting Debbie Hutchings leaves the Chair to physically confront Mr. Maxwell and Mr. Maxwell exits.
- 7:45 pm Wendy Alford outburst and Ms. Alford exits - Debbie Hutchings picks up and dials a number on her phone. She shows her phone to Councilor Paula Banks. Ms. Hutchings tells whomever she called that she wants a peace officer sent to the Chantry office. The Mayor objects to Ms. Hutchings calling police and Ms. Hutchings argues. CAO ends the meeting citing a toxic work environment.

Investigation undertaken

- Undertake a Freedom of Information Request (FOI) to Rideau Lakes Township requesting "Councillor Hutchings e-mails, cell phone texts and calls (including any deleted texts/calls) for the period Oct 6/25 at 7:40 pm until Oct 7/25 at 6 pm and related to the Oct 6/25 Council meeting including any contact with law enforcement. This should include itemized phone bill for same period."

What FOI reveals

Tuesday Oct 6/25

- 7:45 pm apparent call to OPP on council video by Councillor Hutchings on cell phone. *Observation: There is no record of this call provided in FOI information provided.*
- 7:54 pm missed call from OPP Leeds County.
- 8:21 pm incoming call No Caller ID – duration of call 15 minutes.

Wednesday Oct 7/25

- Unknown date & time (but believed to be Oct 7) but the information provided appears to be a screenshot of contact information for Chris Anderson (OPP).
- 8:59 am incoming text from Herbie and (Councilor) Linda (Carr) with information "OPP Officer Will Gonthier badge #17162".
- 4:41 pm incoming text message "you have a new voice mail".
- 5:25 pm email calling for Ms. Hutchings' resignation (sender name redacted).
- 7:22 pm Incoming Call No Caller ID – duration of call 42 seconds.

We are not sure we still have a full picture, but the reader can draw their own conclusions.