

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – JULY 4, 2016

Minutes of the special meeting held on Monday, July 4, 2016 at 7 p.m. in the Council chambers.

Present: Mayor Vezina
Councillors: Alkins, Foekens, Loan
Clerk-Treasurer Buob

Visitors: Mr. Kelly Johnson, Leadhand
Mr. Beau Little and Mr. Angelo Tassone, Ministry of Transportation (MTO)

Absent: Councillor Racicot

Mayor Vezina called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Disclosure of pecuniary interest and general nature thereof: none

Mayor Vezina welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were held. The Ministry representative explained the current situation with box culvert at Cedar Creek #3 on Highway 590 and provided a map of the area and location of the culverts. The original plan was to replace this structure in 2017 and due to the recent heavy rain and flooding the structure has deteriorated significantly and the structure must be replaced this year. The Highway is currently down to one lane with traffic signals, with the traffic driving down the center of the roadway. It was also noted that the Ministry will be relooking at the timing of the replacement of the structures at the Whitewood and Pitch creek crossings which were originally scheduled for 2018.

As Highway 590 will have to be closed for this repair, the Ministry is looking at a best case, shortest route, detour for approximately 30 to 40 days, with a start date dependent on the availability of a contractor. Their internal review indicates the use of Cronk and Pool roads would be the best detour route. They have driven the route twice and feel that this is their best option. They realize that there will be more traffic than is typical on these roads and also realize that due to the extra traffic there will be more potholes, etc. They will be responsible for the maintenance during the detour. They will do a tour with the Leadhand prior to the detour opening and it was suggested the route be videotaped for reference and comparison from the current condition to the roads condition at the end of the detour, and the Ministry will bring the road back to that condition but they will not improve it.

Mayor Vezina turned the meeting over to Mr. Johnson, Leadhand, to express his concerns with this route. Mr. Johnson noted that this route will not hold up to all the extra commercial traffic, including Taranis Contracting Group gravel trucks, Firesteel Contractors Ltd. logging and chip trucks, other logging companies coming off of Boreal and Adrain Lake road, fuel trucks, etc., along with all the extra summer lake traffic. We currently have 19 culverts on Cronk road, 9 of which should be changed as they have no coverage or the bottom has rotted out. They will not hold up to all the extra heavy weight and constant traffic and the Township cannot afford to change over the culverts on our own at this time. We have already stepped up our road program projects on Earl road to accommodate the 2018 detour. The Cronk road will also need a resurfacing of between 4 and 6 inches of gravel and dust suppressant. The first half of Cronk road was last graveled in 2008 and the second half in 2010. The other main concern is the road width. The roads are too narrow for loaded pulp trucks to meet, if the shoulder is soft there will be accidents. Mr. Johnson asked them what they considered to be a safe road width for two pulp trucks to safely pass, as the current width of Cronk road in the Township of O'Connor is 7m with soft shoulder, and Marks Township is even narrower and the Township is not sure how these large trucks will negotiate when they meet. No answer was provided at this time. This option, as is, is too dangerous for this amount of traffic.

Additional concerns with regard to the curves and hills on Pool road were also expressed. It was suggested that if the detour is agreed upon, with upgrades, that the full detour remain on Cronk road and turn onto Highway 595 when the current construction is completed, rather than using Pool road.

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Mr. Little commented that if the roadway fails they will maintain and repair it. He was also noted that they have never encountered these different circumstances with a detour route. TBT Engineering has been hired by MTO and they have looked at the alternatives and the preferred option is a detour rather than diverting the traffic onto a single lane bypass and now with the timing of the project being moved up the detour is the only option.

Mr. Johnson also asked about how much an onsite detour would cost and because the Ministry representatives are telling us that in this situation they cannot have one, they should be willing to put at least that much money into the Township's road system to prevent a failure and be proactive.

Council noted that if Cronk road is the way to go, the first portion of Cronk off of Highway 590 is in Marks Township and their road system is in lesser condition than the Township of O'Connor's portion, and asked who will be preparing that portion. It was noted that they have also been talking with the Marks Township Local Roads Board.

It was noted that with approximately 100 trucks and other traffic per day, we cannot see the current road holding up in its current condition and the Township does not have the budget to fix these roads at this time.

Council's additional questions and concerns were brought forward as follows: if there is an accident, who is responsible? If the detour fails the traffic will have to move onto the next roadway, that being Connolly road. Mayor Vezina stated that any repairs on any alternate route would also have to be covered and carried out by the Ministry.

It was again noted that typically the Ministry does not pay for any upgrades prior to a detour, but Council reinforced the fact that if they want to use the suggested detoured roads as they are, they will not be safe, both in O'Connor and Marks.

As these representatives of the Ministry cannot say what the Ministry will cover with regard to preparing for the detour, they asked for a list of what the Township feels would be necessary to make this detour route safe for all the travelling public, including commercial vehicles. They will bring Council concerns and the list of work to the appropriate people for a decision.

Council asked if the Highway could be opened up part way through the construction so as to not use the detour for as long a period of time. It was noted that that would depend on the structure chosen for replacement. The original plan was to stage but that won't work.

Mr. Little and Mr. Tassone stated that they appreciate the Township's concerns and they will look at the best option. They are also in discussion with Marks Township's Local Roads Board but they haven't heard back from them yet. Marks Township did suggest possibly imposing weight restrictions on the roads. Council questioned how this could be controlled as we cannot afford to have the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) monitoring the roads for 24 hours a day. It was noted that the MTO could also monitor the situation. Council expressed their concerns with a truck being pulled over on the roadway to be inspected for an infraction and creating another hazard. It was noted that hauling is these trucking companies livelihood and that a weight restriction would impact them significantly for that period of time, with one company in their prime season.

A summary of the Township's concerns and recommended repairs prior to a detour will be put together and forwarded to Mr. Little by the end of this week. It was noted that if an agreement is put in place, it must be noted that should there be a failure on the designated detour that the Ministry will cover the expenses on the other roads, required to keep the traffic moving, as well.

Mr. Little and Mr. Tassone were thanked for attending and left the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Council discussed the situation and the options further. It was suggested that possibly two different routes could be used with one way traffic so as to not have the large trucks meeting each other on the narrow roadway. Concerns of the narrow roadways, bad vision at the intersections, as well as narrow turning at the intersection if two trucks

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arrive at the same time, going in different directions were also discussed. It was noted that some local traffic will probably use Fleming road and Mr. Johnson is preparing to have to the road allowances brushed under the currently brushing budget. There is also a bend in Cronk road at the townline of Marks and O'Connor Township which will need to be brushed back for better visibility.

If a detour is posted on the Provincial Highways 590 to 588 and then on to 595, because of the distance, most would not use this route and will use the Township roads anyway so Council have agreed that it would be in the Township's best interest to negotiate with the Ministry for a detour. The option of one way directional traffic will also be suggested but that would then mean two main routes for them to maintain. It was also suggested that perhaps Taranis and Firesteel be invited to a Council meeting to discuss this situation further with them.

Mr. Johnson will draft up his concerns and estimated costs associated with the required maintenance prior to a detour. This information will first be sent to Council for review and comment and then will be forwarded to Mr. Little.

- 1. Moved by B. J. Loan
Seconded by K. Foekens

THAT THE SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING ADJOURN TO THE COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON MONDAY, JULY 11, 2016 AT 7:00 P.M.

TIME BEING: 8:20 P.M.

Carried

Mayor

Clerk-Treasurer