

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – NOVEMBER 28, 2016

Minutes of the meeting held on November 28, 2016 at 7 p.m. in the Council chambers.

Present: Mayor Vezina
Councillors: Alkins, Loan, Racicot
Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Racicot

Visitors: Fire Chief Henry Matts
Mr. Rick Bodnar

Absent: Councillor Foekens

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

Disclosure of pecuniary interest and general nature thereof: none

1. Moved by B.J. Loan
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

**THAT THE MINUTES FROM THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY,
NOVEMBER 28, 2016 BE ACCEPTED AS PRINTED.**

Carried

Mr. Rick Bodnar was welcomed to the table. And introductions where made. Mr. Bodnar wanted to speak to Council with regard to the increase in his property assessment and the impact it will have on his property taxes. By 2020 his property assessment will have increased by 81.7% and as municipal taxes are levied based on property assessment, he is concerned that his taxes will also reflect this increase.

Mayor Vezina commented that the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) is a flawed system and it has been discussed at various municipal organizations, however, it is the system that we have to use. MPAC does have a system of addressing property owner's concerns with regard to the amount of their assessment. MPAC encourages property owners to submit a Request for Reconsideration (RfR) which will result in a review of the property assessment. However, before submitting an RfR, property owner should ask themselves, if they were to sell their property today, would they be able to get the value that the property is assessed at. If the answer is no then submit an RfR. If the answer is yes then the assessment is correct.

In response to tax rates, Council explained the Township of O'Connor's budget process. Department heads determine what dollar amount they will need to operate for the current year. Council review the amounts and if the amount of tax revenue needed to be raised would have too big an impact on the ratepayers then the departments are asked to revisit their budgets and find areas to cut back. Council does take into consideration inflation and municipal reserve funding during the budget process, however, the final tax rate set by Council is based on the amount of taxation revenue required. It was pointed out that the 2016 tax rate did not increase from 2015 as a result of the increase in assessment based on new homes in the Township and the phased in assessment.

In 2005 Mr. Bodnar contacted MPAC regarding his assessment, however, he was not happy with the attitude of the MPAC representative and did not move forward with a RfR. His second attempt in 2009 resulted in MPAC confirming that his assessment was correct and his assessment was not changed. Council again emphasized that property owners need to take action if they feel their assessment is too high by submitting an RfR.

Mr. Bodnar also addressed the issue of hydro costs in rural areas, policing costs that keep rising and insurance increases resulting from not having a fire hydrant located in their front yard. Council acknowledged the issue of rising hydro rates and pointed out that with the new policing costing formula the cost per household for the Township went from \$90.00 to \$260.00. Mr. Bodnar is concerned that with the rising cost of living in the rural areas that property owners like him will not be able to continue to live in their homes. With regard to the increase in insurance rates, Councillor Loan will inquire at

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the next Thunder Bay District Municipal League if other municipalities are experiencing the same rate increases.

Mr. Bodnar was thanked for attending tonight's meeting and left the room.

Fire Chief Henry Mattas was welcomed to the table. The fire department report was read. There was no fire or first response calls since the last report to Council. Council asked if there were any fire department issues that needed to be address and he replied no, however Chief Mattas did comment on the hard work of the two new recruits that have recently joined the department.

Fire Chief Mattas invited Council to participate in a research study titled "Enhancing capacity for mental health with rural, volunteer emergency first responders". The study would involve a workshop involving first responders from O'Connor and surrounding areas and will be held on Tuesday, January 3, 2017 in the O'Connor Community Centre. Dr. Kristen Jones Bonofiglio, RN, MPH(n), PhD and Dr. Sara Hagstrom, Psychologist are conducting the study and will be facilitating the workshop. Fire Chief Mattas strongly encouraged Council to participate in the session. This issue will be brought back to Council in December.

The O'Connor Fire Department Auxiliary minutes from their meeting held on November 8, 2016 were read.

Item 15 a) was moved forward on the agenda to discuss with Fire Chief Mattas. The Ontario Power Generation will be holding their annual Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan for the Kaministiquia River System meeting on Tuesday, December 13, 2016. This year the meeting will be held via Webex and it was

2. Moved by B.J. Loan
Seconded by Chantal Alkins

THAT THE FOLLOWING PERSON/S PARTICIPATE IN THE ONTARIO POWER GENERATION'S EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLAN (EPRP) FOR THE KAMINISTQUIA RIVER SYSTEM MEETING TO BE HELD ON DECEMBER 13, 2016 VIA WEBEX.

COUNCILLOR LOAN, FIRE CHIEF HENRY MATTAS AND CLERK-TREASURER BUOB.

Carried

The Clerk-Treasurers office will be used to join in on the meeting.

Fire Chief Mattas was thanked for attending the meeting and left the room.

Bills to be paid were passed around the table and it was

3. Moved by Bishop Racicot
Seconded by Chantal Alkins

THAT THE FOLLOWING BILLS FOR NOVEMBER 2016 BE PAID. THESE BILLS WILL BE INCLUDED ON THE NOVEMBER 2016 ADMINISTRATION AND ROAD VOUCHER.

CK#13939	HYDRO ONE	\$ 998.91
CK#13940	BRENT DENNHARDT (SAFETY ATTIRE)	\$ 175.00
CK#13941	IAN ROBSON (POA OFFICER)	\$ 170.00
CK#13942	MICHAEL CARLI (BACKHOE REPAIRS)	\$ 161.00
CK#13943	BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES CENTRE	\$ 56.00
CK#13944	SUNLIFE ASSURANCE COMPANY OF CANADA	\$1,071.83
		<u>\$2,632.74</u>

Carried

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The Statement of Revenue and Expenditures to October 31, 2016 was reviewed.

The draft by-law regarding Off-Road Vehicles on Municipal Roadways was reviewed. Council had no issues with the draft and it will be brought back to the next meeting to be passed.

Resolutions for endorsement were read as follows:

- a) The Town of Pelham endorsing the resolution of the Township of the Archipelago regarding improving Ontario's intensive therapy funding/service for children with autism. Council at their meeting held on October 24, 2016 endorsed this same resolution.
 - b) The Township of Georgian Bay regarding Hydro Bill Costs in Rural Areas and it was
4. Moved by Chantal Alkins
Seconded by B.J. Loan

THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE TOWNSHIP OF GEORGIAN BAY REGARDING THE COST OF HYDRO FOR RURAL RESIDENTS AS COMPARED TO URBAN RESIDENTS DUE TO HIGHER DISTRIBUTION CHARGES AND REQUESTING THE PROVINCE TO RE-EVALUATE THE STRUCTURE OF HYDRO IN TERMS OF ACCESS AND DELIVERY AND IMPLEMENT STRUCTURAL CHANGES TO ADDRESS THE UNFAIR PRACTICE OF CHARGING MORE FOR DELIVERY FOR RURAL RESIDENTS BE ENDORSED.

Carried

- c) The Corporation of the Township of Madawaska Valley regarding Bill 7 – Promoting Affordable Housing Act, 2016 was filed.

A letter addressed to the Lakehead Area One Municipalities regarding the meeting with the Assistant Deputy Ministers, Erin Hannah and Richard Steele of the Ministry of Community and Social Services was read. The meeting was held to discuss the current issue with the Thunder Bay District Social Services Board.

Correspondence was read as follows:

- a) Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
 - i) Watch File dated November 16, 2016.
 - ii) Watch File dated November 24, 2016.
 - iii) AMO Communication - Member/s Update: Province Releases Discussion Paper on Expanding Medical Responses through Fire Services.
 - iv) AMO Communication – Provincial 2016 Fall Economic Statement Highlights.
 - v) AMO Communication – New Legislation Changes Introduced that have Direct Impact for Municipal Governments.
- b) AMCTO regarding Government Releases Changes to Municipal Legislation.
- c) Ministry of Municipal Affairs regarding Bill 68 – The proposed Modernizing Ontario's Municipal Legislation Act, 2016.
- d) Municipal Finance Officers' Association regarding Bill 68 and Bill 70 Have Passed First Reading.
- e) Environment and Land Tribunals Ontario regarding ARB Fee Increase.
- f) Minister of Small Business and Tourism reply letter to Council regarding their resolution with respect to the tax treatment of campgrounds.
- g) Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) December Newsletter. Council would like the information with regard to the Thunder Bay OPP 5th Annual Stuff a Cruiser placed in the December issue of the Cornerstone.
- h) Ministry of Transportation's Notice of Study Commencement.
- i) Ontario Power Generation Minutes of the Meeting held on December 11, 2015.
- j) Northern Policy Institute regarding After the Healing: Safeguarding Northern Nishnawbe First Nations High School Education.

The balance of the correspondence was passed around the table.

Under old business Council discussed.

- a) Administrative Report with regard to the FireSmart Program. In April of this year an application for funding under the FireSmart Program submitted. The funding was to

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be used to assist with the development of a Community Wildland Fire Protection Plan. The Township's was approved for up to \$15,000.00. The deadline to have the mapping component of the plan done had to be done within 10 months of signing the agreement for funding, By-law 2016-06. This deadline cannot be met and the Deputy Clerk-Treasurer is recommending that the Township ask for an extension or reapply for the funding. The Ministry of Natural Resources will be holding training sessions for consultants who may be interested in undertaking the mapping that will identify the level of fire hazard associated with forest stands in municipalities. They are also suggesting that the Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC) also be involved in the training sessions. Council were in agreement that the program funding be extended or reapplied for and that training be taken by the CEMC.

b) Administrative Report with regard to TBayTel WIFI Hotspots. At the Council meeting held on Monday, November 14, 2016 Council discussed the possibility of having WIFI made available to residents in the Community Centre. The Township of Conmee has recently had TBayTel install equipment in their community centre which would provide a WIFI Hotspot to community centre users. The Deputy Clerk-Treasurer has inquired as to whether or not our community centre would be able to host one of these WIFI Hotspots and has asked that Mr. Dan Pella, Manager, TBayTel contact the Municipal office. There is no cost to the Municipality to neither install the equipment nor maintain the equipment if a WIFI Hotspot was to be located in the Community Centre. Council would like this looked into further.

Under new business Council discussed;

- a) Ontario Power Generation webex meeting. This item was discussed with the Fire Chief under item 6 of the agenda.
- b) Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) invitation from the Municipality of Neebing to join them at ROMA delegation meetings. Council Racicot will be attending the 2017 ROMA conference and will join them.
 - ii) Copy of the Municipality of Neebing's delegation request was reviewed.
 - iii) LRMC request for list of concerns that can be addressed at the ROMA delegations. Council would like to see sustainable municipal funding addressed during the delegations at ROMA.

Under further new business Council discussed the possibility of having the trees cut down and cleared along Hwy 595, in front of the Municipal Office and Community Centre. Council was in agreement that the trees should be removed and this issue will be discussed further at a later date.

Councillor Loan updated Council on the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) Review workshop that was held on November 24, 2016. A major point of concern was the cost associated with legal fees resulting from OMB Hearings. Suggestions made include mediations taking place prior to bringing issues before the OMB and that local area mediators be trained in order to represent both the property owner and municipality to help facilitate discussion on issues in question and that if an appeal is made to the OMB that there be an option of choosing an adjudicator or an adjudicator board comprising three members. It was also suggested that municipalities be provided with tools that can be put on their websites, such as a YouTube video, that can explain the whole process.

Councillor Loan updated Council on the Thunder Bay District Municipal League's (TBDML) 100th Anniversary planning. He also informed Council that he has stepped down from the position of Vice-President of the League due to personal commitments, however, he will still be the Township's representative on the board.

At the TBDML Conference in October the subject of New Councillor Training was raised with Mayor Vezina by the Township of Hornepayne's newest Council member Councillor Fort. Councillor Fort indicated that she was interested in some training and she was also informed that the Township of O'Connor also had a new Councillor. As a result, Gail Jaremy, CAO/Clerk, Township of Hornepayne, has extended an invitation for Councillor Alkins to take part in a training session to be held by an interactive webinar on December 7, 2016. The cost of the webinar would be \$175.00 per person. Councillor Alkins did indicate that she would be interested in the training and it was

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5. Moved by Bishop Racicot
Seconded by B.J. Loan

THAT THE FOLLOWING PERSON/S PARTICIPATE IN A 2 HOUR COUNCILLOR TRAINING SESSION WITH FRED DEAN VIA WEBINAR ON DECEMBER 7, 2016 WITH THE TOWNSHIP OF HORNEPAYNE COUNCILLOR FORT.

**FEE: \$175.00
COUNCILLOR ALKINS.**

Carried

9. Moved by B. J. Loan
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

THAT THE MEETING ADJOURN TO THE COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2016 AT 7:00 P.M .

TIME BEING: 8:45 P.M.

Carried

Mayor

Deputy Clerk-Treasurer