

## TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – APRIL 12, 2021

Minutes of the Council meeting held virtually on April 12, 2021 at 7 p.m. from the Township office.

Present: Mayor Vezina  
Councillors: Crane, Handy, Loan, Racicot  
Clerk-Treasurer Buob (In the Township office)  
Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Racicot (In the Township office)

Visitors: Kristen Spithoff, BDO Canada LLP  
Candace Phillips, BDO Canada LLP  
Kelly Johnson, Leadhand arrived at 7:15 p.m. (in the Council Chambers)  
Erin Laforest, Administrative Assistant  
Henry Mattas, Fire Chief  
Janice LeBoeuf, Paul LeBoeuf, Stephen Wiebe,

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

1. Moved by A. Crane  
Seconded by J. Loan

**THAT THE AGENDA FOR THE MEETING BE APPROVED.**

Carried

Disclosure of pecuniary interest and general nature thereof: None

2. Moved by J. Loan  
Seconded by W. Handy

**THAT THE MINUTES FROM THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, MARCH 22, 2021 BE ACCEPTED AS PRINTED.**

Carried

The visitors were recognized as being in attendance.

Ms. Spithoff and Ms. Phillips, auditors from BDO Canada LLP were welcomed to the meeting. Mayor Vezina turned the meeting over to them and they proceeded to present the Township of O'Connor's 2020 Financial Statements. Ms. Spithoff provided a breakdown of the audit process and the responsibilities of the Township and auditor.

Ms. Phillips then continued with an explanation of the 2020 Financial Statements. She confirmed that the Township of O'Connor was debt free at the end of 2020. The COVID-19 requirements and challenges were discussed. The Landfill Closure and Post-Closure Liability for anticipated future costs related to the closing and monitoring of the existing landfill site was explained. She also noted that there was a change in the discount rate due to the cost of long-term borrowing, which has now increased significantly the Liability for 2020. This liability is recognized over the operating life of the waste disposal site, in proportion to the site's utilized capacity. Ms. Phillips recommended that Council continue to put money away for this future expense and stressed that these numbers are always only an estimate.

It was stated that the Township of O'Connor is in a strong financial position at year-end. Council did not have any questions with regard to the Financial Statements.

Ms. Spithoff discussed the final letter explaining the theory of the auditing process and noted that in the management letter there were no items of concern as all of their concerns over the last few years have been addressed. She thanked the staff for their cooperation throughout the audit process.

Council thanked Ms. Spithoff and Ms. Phillips for their presentation and it was

3. Moved by J. Loan  
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

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**THAT COUNCIL APPROVE THE DRAFT 2020 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR AS PRESENTED BY BDO, THE AUDITOR, AT THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON APRIL 12, 2021.**

Carried

Ms. Spithoff and Ms. Phillips were thanked for presenting and they left the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Mr. Johnson, Leadhand, was welcomed to the meeting. Mr. Johnson provided an update from the Road Department and roadwork in general. The roads are soggy following all the rain we have received in the last couple of weeks. There will be lots of grading required once the rain stops. The creeks are getting high and Mr. Johnson will keep an eye on the levels and he hopes that no beaver dams let go. There has been some roadside tree removal required and a few sunken culverts, which they are dealing with.

A letter from the Ministry of Transportation was read. They are requesting approval from the Township of O'Connor to access water from the Whitefish River on Diana Road right-of-way for the upcoming Highway 595 construction during the 2021 and 2022 construction season. Mr. Johnson did not have any concerns. He has spoken with the Ministry and they will only be using it when the road is dry to control the dust and they do have more than one location. It was

4. Moved by A. Crane  
Seconded by J. Loan

**THAT THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR APPROVE OF THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION OBTAINING WATER FROM THE DIANA ROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY ALONG THE WHITEFISH RIVER WITHIN THE TOWNSHIP, FOR CONSUMPTIVE PURPOSES DURING THE HIGHWAY 595 RESURFACING PROJECT. THE ACTIVITY MUST FOLLOW THE MOECC'S REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS.**

Carried

A letter was read from the Minister of Infrastructure in regard to the Township of O'Connor's application for funding under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure stream – Local Government Intake. The federal government has approved the Township's project to retrofit the O'Connor Municipal Garage. The funding is conditional on entering into a comprehensive transfer payment agreement with the Province and meeting the conditions outlined therein.

Information with regard to the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) - People and Talent Program – Workforce Development Stream was discussed. The Clerk-Treasurer would like to recommend that the Township apply for an intern for the Road Department, as a part of succession planning. The program covers payroll costs for one employee for 52 weeks up to a maximum of \$35,000.00. The employee must work a minimum of 35 hours per week. There is no commitment to hire this person at the end of the 52 weeks if it doesn't work out, or we do not feel that this person is the fit we are looking for. The Ministry of Northern Development and Mines representative will review our application prior to submission to ensure that it is complete and looking favourable for the program. There is a six weeks approval process once the application has been submitted. If the Township is successful in an application, we could possibly start advertising in May/June with hopefully a start date in late June or early July.

Council discussed the information provided and Mr. Johnson confirmed that this would be a good opportunity. There is a lot to learn and a year with this program would be very beneficial. The Union will be contacted to ensure that there is no conflict. It was

5. Moved by W. Handy  
Seconded by J. Loan

**THAT THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR SUBMIT AN APPLICATION TO THE NORTHERN ONTARIO HERITAGE FUND CORPORATION (NOHFC) UNDER**

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**THE PEOPLE AND TALENT PROGRAM – WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
STREAM FOR AN INTERN FOR THE ROAD DEPARTMENT.**

Carried

It was noted that there is a compactor garbage truck located at the Ritchie Bros. Auction site on Highway 11/17. There is an upcoming auction from May 11 – 13, 2021. Mr. Johnson has spoken with the representative and they will be providing the specifications on it to him and he will go and take a look at it. There are also bins available with it.

Mr. Johnson was thanked for attending and he left the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

The Administration and Roads Voucher for April 12, 2021 was reviewed and it was

6. Moved by J. Loan  
Seconded by W. Handy

**THAT THE ADMINISTRATION AND ROADS VOUCHER #2021-07 DATED  
APRIL 12, 2021 TOTTALLING \$32,055.56 BE APPROVED AND PAID.**

Carried

The Statement of Revenue and Expenditures will be available at the next meeting, now that the Financial Statements for 2020 have been approved.

A By-law to authorize the execution of an Agreement for funding under the Fire Safety Grant was reviewed and it was

7. Moved by A. Crane  
Seconded by W. Handy

**THAT BY-LAW NUMBER 2021-09 BEING A BY-LAW TO AUTHORIZE THE  
EXECUTION OF A FIRE SAFETY GRANT TRANSFER PAYMENT  
AGREEMENT BE PASSED AND ENTERED IN THE BY-LAW BOOK.**

Carried

Resolutions for endorsement were read as follows:

- a) Township of Conmee lobbying the Provincial Government to amend the Municipal Act and Municipal Elections Act so that people with criminal records, who have not had the record cleared from the RCMP be prohibited from becoming a candidate in municipal elections was filed.
- b) Town of Kingsville opposing the adoption of any by-laws restricting the possession, storage and transportation of legally obtained handguns and it was

8. Moved by W. Handy  
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

**THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE TOWN OF KINGSVILLE OPPOSING  
THE ADOPTION OF ANY BY-LAWS RESTRICTING THE POSSESSION,  
STORAGE AND TRANSPORTATION OF LEGALLY OBTAINED HANDGUNS  
BE ENDORSED.**

Carried

- c) Township of Hudson requesting support for Fire Departments and asking the Federal and Provincial governments to include apparatus, training and equipment as eligible categories to any further infrastructure programs. It was

9. Moved by J. Loan  
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

**THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE TOWNSHIP OF HUDSON RESOLVING  
THAT THE FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT INCLUDE  
APPARATUSES, TRAINING, EQUIPMENT AND STRUCTURES FOR THE**

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**FIRE DEPARTMENTS AS ELIGIBLE CATEGORIES TO ANY FURTHER INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAMS WHICH WILL NOT ONLY PROVIDE IMMEDIATE STIMULUS TO THE LOCAL, PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL ECONOMIES GIVEN THE CURRENT ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY BUT ALSO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF CANADIANS AND DEDICATED FIREFIGHTERS BE ENDORSED.**

Carried

- d) City of Kitchener urging the Province of Ontario to review and reconsider the current timelines established for review of the Planning Act applications before an appeal is permitted and it was

10. Moved by J. Loan  
Seconded by A. Crane

**THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE CITY OF KITCHENER URGING THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO TO REVIEW AND RECONSIDER THE CURRENT TIMELINES ESTABLISHED FOR REVIEW OF PLANNING ACT APPLICATIONS BEFORE AN APPEAL IS PERMITTED TO THE LOCAL PLANNING APPEAL TRIBUNAL AND TO RETURN TO THE TIMELINES THAT WERE IN EFFECT UNDER BILL 139, THE BUILDING BETTER COMMUNITIES AND CONSERVING WATERSHEDS ACT, 2017 BE ENDORSED.**

Carried

- e) Town of Orangeville requesting the withdrawal of Schedule 3 from Bill 257 was filed.  
f) Niagara Region respecting Homelessness, Mental Health and Addiction in Niagara was filed.  
g) Town of Cochrane with regard to the MeeQuam Youth Residence Closure was discussed and it was

11. Moved by W. Handy  
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

**THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE TOWN OF COCHRANE REQUESTING THAT THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO REVERSE THEIR DECISION TO CLOSE THE YOUTH JUSTICE FACILITY IN COCHRANE, KNOWN AS MEEQUAM YOUTH RESIDENCE, AS THESE VULNERABLE CHILDREN NEED TO BE AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE TO THEIR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES BE ENDORSED.**

Carried

Correspondence was read as follows:

- a) Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) regarding the Province-wide assessment update. As a part of the Ontario Government's 2021 spring budget, the Minister of Finance announced the decision to once again postpone a province-wide property assessment update due to the pandemic.  
b) Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) – i) Policy Update – March 22, 2021 – OPP Detachment Board Composition Process, Personal Support Worker Temporary Pay Extended and By-Name Lists.  
ii) Policy Update – March 24, 2021 – Provincial Budget Highlights + Bill 257 Referred to Committee.  
iii) Policy Update – March 25, 2021 – Federal Gas Tax and Updated COVID-19 Regulations.  
iv) Gas Tax Update – One-Time Doubling of Gas Tax Funds in 2021. The Township of O'Connor's Top-Up Allocation is \$40,428.00.  
v) Policy Update – March 29, 2021 – OCLIP Final Payment, AMO's Bill 257 Submission, and Amended COVID-19 Orders.  
vi) Policy Update – April 1, 2021 - Provincial COVID-19 Lock Down, Water Taking Changes, and Long-Term Care Medication Safety.  
vii) Policy Update – April 7, 2021 - Province Declares a Third State of Emergency and Issues a Province-Wide Stay-at-Home Order.  
c) COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Task Force update March 26, 2021.

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- d) Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) – i) regarding the East Lake Superior Long-term Electricity Plan Posted.
- ii) Ontario Waterpower Association press release – Waterpower Day.
- e) Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) regarding the Implementing Adaptive Phased Management 2021 to 2025.

Under Old Business, Council discussed

- a) An email from Len Day with a Shabaqua Trail update was read. Things are still progressing with the trail. The entire length of the trail has been identified and GPS'd. They are still waiting to hear back from one stakeholder, and the Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park will also need to amend their use management plan. There is an alternate option if this is not possible. Mr. Day is currently working on securing land owner/land manager liability coverage for the trail. He is looking to convene a group of like-minded trail enthusiasts to look into starting a non-profit incorporated multi-use trail group, whereby they would have to access liability coverage and potential future funding. The first meeting will be held the week of April 5, 2021.

In addition to the Shabaqua Trail, Mr. Day has identified a potential route to connect Thunder Bay and Shabaqua, and a route to connect Kakabeka Falls to the Pigeon River Trail. He has also identified a potential route east of Nipigon/Red Rock. The intent still remains to have these trails become part of the Trans Canada Trail land-based route through our area to help complete the Manitoba border to Sault Ste. Marie trail.

Under further old business, Council would like administration to look into whether or not any components of the new construction of the garage could be covered under the Federal Gas Tax fund.

Under New Business, Council discussed

- a) Ministry of Finance regarding the update on the Ontario Cannabis Legalization Implementation Fund (OCLIF) – i) Letter to Council regarding announcement.
- ii) Letter to the Treasurer with detail on the fund. The Township of O'Connor will be receiving \$5,000.00.
- b) Ministry of the Solicitor General regarding the 2020 EMCPA Compliance results. The Township of O'Connor, based on the analysis of the information provided by Township's Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC), has been determined to not be fully compliant for 2020. Ms. Racicot, CEMC and Ms. Laforest, Alternate CEMC, will be meeting with Ms. Bak, Field Officer for the Ontario Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management to discuss the issues and confirm why.
- c) AMCTO – Annual General Meeting and Professional Development Institute – to be held virtually from June 14 – 16, 2021. The Clerk-Treasurer reported that Ms. Laforest has been provided a voucher in the amount of \$200.00 from AMCTO, to use towards any AMCTO training or towards the Annual General Meeting (AGM). As the AGM will be held virtually and there would be no travel expenses associated with attending, the Clerk-Treasurer is looking for Council's approval to have her participate and use her voucher towards the registration fee. Council discussed this opportunity and it was

- 12. Moved by W. Handy  
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

**THAT THE FOLLOWING PERSON/S ATTEND THE AMCTO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE TO BE HELD VIRTUALLY FROM JUNE 14 TO 16, 2021.  
ERIN LAFOREST – ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT  
REGISTRATION: \$490.00 + HST.**

Carried

- d) Report to Council from Erin Laforest, Administrative Assistant, with regard to a possible O'Connor Day event was read. As Ms. Laforest was present at the meeting, Council asked her to also discuss her thought with them. She explained that she would like to reinstated O'Connor Day with some changes. Due to her personal time

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commitment with the Hymers Fair, and the previous date of O'Connor Day being only one week apart, she would like to reinstate it but possibly move it to the second Saturday evening in December. As the drive thru Christmas parade held in December 2020 was such a success, she would like to build on that. It could remain a drive-thru event if COVID continues into next year and possibly open it up more in future years. Including music, fireworks, a beer gardens and invite local vendors. The O'Connor Community Club and Fire Department Auxiliary would still be asked to participate. There are funding opportunities that the Township could apply for to assist with such an event. The deadline to apply for the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries covering up to 50% of the event costs, however applications are due by April 20<sup>th</sup>.

Council discussed these suggestions, and their concerns with calling this event O'Connor Day. They felt that with its history it was not appropriate, and it was agreed that with the uncertainty of COVID-19 and time required to prepare an event like this, it was agreed not to move forward with it at this time.

- e) The current Building Permit fees for the Township and a request from the Mr. Yanishewski, Chief Building Official (CBO) to increase these fees was discussed. Mr. Yanishewski is proposing that Council consider increasing the fees to be in alignment with the other municipalities in which he is working for. A comparison sheet was provided. If Council would like to increase these fees a public meeting would have to be held. The fees were last increased in 2016.

Council discussed this suggestion and do not feel that this is an appropriate time to hold a public meeting and they would like to try to keep our rates affordable for the Township residents at this time. It was agreed to keep these fees at the current rate. The Clerk-Treasurer will follow up with the CBO on this matter.

Issues brought forward or letters received after the agenda was sent out were read as follows:

- a) Ministry of the Solicitor General regarding virtual information sessions being held in regard to the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) proposal submission process for the OPP detachment boards. There are two possible dates available. It was

13. Moved by A. Crane  
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

**THAT THE FOLLOWING PERSON/S PARTICIPATE IN THE OPP VIRTUAL INFORMATION SESSION REGARDING THE PROPOSAL SUBMISSION PROCESS FOR OPP DETACHMENT BOARDS, TO BE HELD ON TUESDAY, APRIL 20, 2021 AT 10:30 A.M.**

**COUNCILLOR LOAN**

Carried

Councillor Loan reported that he will update Council on the Lakehead Police Services Board's approach to the March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021 letter from the Solicitor General with regard to the new Ontario Provincial Police detachment boards, and the meeting to be held on April 20<sup>th</sup> at the next meeting.

For information purposes, building permits were issued for a new home on Blaikie Road and alterations and repairs to a home on Broome Road.

14. Moved by W. Handy  
Seconded by A. Crane

**THAT THE COUNCIL MEETING ADJOURN TO THE ROAD AND FIRE DEPARTMENT BUDGET MEETING TO BE HELD VIRTUALLY ON APRIL 19, 2021 AT 7:00 P.M.**

**TIME BEING: 9:45 P.M.**

Carried

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Mayor

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Clerk-Treasurer