

## TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – APRIL 24, 2023

Minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday, April 24, 2023 at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers and virtual.

Present: Mayor Vezina  
Councillors: Crane, Racicot, Sobolta, Torkkeli  
Clerk-Treasurer Buob  
Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Racicot

Visitors: Fire Chief Henry Mattas  
Deputy Fire Chief Greg Biloski  
Brendan Rea, Chris Currie arrived at 7:05 p.m.  
Candace Phillips, BDO

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

1. Moved by A. Crane  
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

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

Carried

Disclosure of pecuniary interest and general nature thereof: None

2. Moved by Carly Torkkeli  
Seconded by J. Sobolta

**THAT THE MINUTES FROM THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, APRIL 11, 2023 BE ACCEPTED AS PRINTED.**

Carried

The visitors were asked if they would like to address Council and they replied no.

Fire Chief Mattas was welcomed to the table. The Fire Department Report for the period of March 23 to April 20, 2023, was read. There were two First Response calls in that period. Fire Chief Mattas noted that after the report was submitted to Council, one First Response call and one fire related call came in. Training is continuing with the Nolalu fire team. Two new members have applied to join the Fire Department. Fire Chief Mattas still has to meet with them. Fire Chief Mattas expressed his concerns with one of the applicants as he is only 17. The Office of the Marshall requires members to be at least 18 years of age on their teams. Council would like to look further into whether or not a junior member could join the department and if so if they would require a mentor.

Fourteen Fire Permits have been issued to date.

Fire Chief Mattas was thanked for attending the meeting and he and Deputy Fire Chief Biloski left the meeting at 7:13 p.m.

Ms. Phillips was welcomed to the table and introductions were made. Ms. Phillips presented the Audit Report for the Township of O'Connor. The Report explained the Auditors' responsibilities, fraud risk, materiality, and the status of the audit. The findings and the unadjusted differences were explained. Ms. Phillips also reminded Council of the new PS 3280 requirements, which are effective for March 31, 2023, and December 31, 2023, year ends. The Township will be required to recognize, identify, and measure the obligation and the different options available this year to prepare for a smooth transition during next year's audit. For the Township of O'Connor, the disposal site landfill closure and post closure liability will be replaced, the municipal buildings will have to be inspected to identify if they currently have asbestos and if so, determine the best estimated cost for asset retirement activities. Options to achieve these requirements were briefly discussed and this will be discussed further at the budget meeting. The Township of O'Connor's 2022 Financial Statements and the Trust Fund Financial Statements were reviewed, and the Management letter received. No further questions or comments were made. Ms. Phillips was thanked for attending the meeting and making the presentation and she left the meeting at 8:17 p.m.

## TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – APRIL 24, 2023

As Council had no concerns with the Financial Statements as presented it was

3. Moved by A. Crane  
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

**THAT COUNCIL APPROVE THE DRAFT 2022 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR AS PRESENTED BY BDO, THE AUDITOR, AT THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON APRIL 24, 2023.**

Carried

The Administration and Roads Voucher for April 24, 2023 was reviewed and it was

4. Moved by J. Sobolta  
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

**THAT THE ADMINISTRATION AND ROADS VOUCHER #2023-08 DATED APRIL 24, 2023 TOTTALLING \$3,853.58 BE APPROVED AND PAID.**

Carried

By-laws and Policies were reviewed as follows:

- a) i) Email from Service Canada regarding the Summer Student Program application  
The Township of O'Connor has been approved for one summer student starting on July 4 for eight weeks. A By-law will have to be passed to enter into an Agreement with Service Canada.  
ii) By-law Number 2023-13 – Being a By-law to enter into an agreement to participate in the Canada Summer Jobs Program was reviewed and it was

5. Moved by Bishop Racicot  
Seconded by A. Crane

**THAT BY-LAW NUMBER 2023-13 BEING A BY-LAW TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH HIS MAJESTY THE KING IN RIGHT OF CANADA, AS REPRESENTED BY THE MINISTER OF EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT BE PASSED AND ENTERED INTO THE BY-LAW BOOK.**

Carried

Resolutions for endorsement were read as follows:

- a) The Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities regarding Bail Reform and it was

6. Moved by J. Sobolta  
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

**THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE FEDERATION OF NORTHERN ONTARIO MUNICIPALITIES REGARDING BAIL REFORM BE ENDORSED.**

Carried

Correspondence was read as follows:

- a) The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board – i) Update from the Board - April 21, 2023.  
ii) Seeking Expressions of Interest – Transitional and Supportive Housing. The Board is currently seeking expressions of interest now with the deadline for submissions being June 30, 2023, at 4:00 p.m.  
b) Ministry of Transportation News Release – regarding Ontario Investing in Municipal Road and bridge Repairs.  
c) Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) – i) Municipal Waste Update. New Federal Regulations on recycled content and labelling rules for plastics, methane emissions and Provincial Day of Action on litter were some of the topics included.  
d) Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) regarding April ROMA Board Meeting Highlights.

The balance of the correspondence was passed around the table.

Under Old Business, Council discussed

## TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – APRIL 24, 2023

- a) Ministry of Transportation – Heather Boyer – follow up information requested during the deputation to Council held on April 11, 2023, including contact information and information to include in the Township's newsletter.
- b) Northwestern Ontario Recreational Trail Association
  - i) Notes from the April 18, 2023 Information Session Open House held in the O'Connor Community Centre. Fourteen people were in attendance. There will be two more Open Houses upcoming, one in Rosslyn and one in Conmee. A summary of the results and the report to the Ministry of Natural Resources will be provided to Council once they are prepared.
  - ii) Revised Trail Proposal – Kakabeka Falls to Sovereign Road. As a result of some of the concern with the proposed route of Loghrin Road and Smart Road, Mr. Day provided a map showing a couple of other possible routes which will be considered.
  - iii) Another option suggested by a resident of the Township, following the Open House was also provided to Council for discussion. As the residents along this route have not been notified, it was agreed to not suggest this route to Mr. Day at this time.

Council discussed the proposed trail project further, and agreed that they are in support of the trail and are willing to work with Mr. Day to make a trail work through the Township if the other communities adjoining the Township of O'Connor's portion of the trail agree. As the Minister's of Transportation and Natural Resources will be in attendance at the upcoming Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) conference, Council will speak to them regarding the required Environmental Assessment, which is the reason for the temporary alternate routes Mr. Day is proposing.

- c) Infrastructure Ontario - update on loan/debenture application. Clerk-Treasurer Buob reported that the Township's application has been completed and has been submitted to the manager for approval. Once approved, it will move on to the Credit Department for formal approval.
- d) Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) regarding an invitation to sit on AMO's New Land Use Planning and Resources Task Force. Mayor Vezina is interested and it was

- 7. Moved by Bishop Racicot  
Seconded by A. Crane

**THAT MAYOR VEZINA SIT ON THE AMO'S LAND USE PLANNING AND RESOURCES TASK FORCE.**

Carried

Mayor Vezina reported on a recent meeting that he attended with the Task Force and some of the concerns that were discussed regarding the Province of Ontario's push to build more homes.

Under Further Old Business, Councillor Crane asked Mayor Vezina if he received a resolution from Mr. Tupker, from the Thunder Bay and Ontario Health Coalition regarding the privatization of Health Care to include on the NOMA agenda at the upcoming conference. Mayor Vezina confirmed that he did receive one and it will be on the agenda for further discussion. Clerk-Treasurer Buob asked Council about the offer to have a ballot box located at the Township for the Coalitions vote to stop privatization of the public hospitals, as the vote is on a Friday and Saturday. Council confirmed that they were only offering the Community Centre and not the employees to man the vote. To date Mr. Tupker has not made a request for the Community Centre.

Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Racicot asked Council if they were still wanting to offer the option of joining the Council meeting virtually, as in the past, COVID-19 funding was being used to cover the extra expense. As the balance of the governments COVID-19 funding was used in the 2022 budget this will now be an administrative cost to continue. Council requested a report be provided at the budget meeting as to how much this option is costing and ask the residents for their opinion on whether or not they would like Council to continue with this option.

Under New Business, Council discussed

- a) Lakehead Rural Municipal Coalition (LRMC) draft letter to NorWest Community Health Centres Board regarding services at the Kakabeka Falls Clinic. Council would

## TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – APRIL 24, 2023

like to have a letter submitted to the Board, further expressing their concerns with the services promised and not be offered at this time, however, they would like to suggest some changes be made to the wording in the draft letter, after updated information on some of the issues expressed have advanced.

- b) Westland Insurance regarding binding subjectivity for the upcoming insurance policy. Following Administration response to insurance questionnaires for the upcoming renewal of the Township's insurance, the provider is stating with 60 days of binding or effective date of renewal, two changes to the Township's policy and procedures regarding abuse be amended. As well as including the requirement of background checks of all employees and volunteers. Administration will draft a policy for Council's review for the next meeting and will also confirm what the cost is to get a background check for both employees and volunteers.
- c) Intact Public entities regarding virtual education sessions for elected officials. Three sessions were being offered. It was
8. Moved by A. Crane  
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

**THAT THE FOLLOWING PERSON/S PARTICIPATE IN THE VIRTUAL EDUCATION SESSION HOSTED BY IPE ENTITLED – MINIMUM MAINTENANCE STANDARDS: A COUNCILLOR'S GUIDE TO THE IMPORTANCE OF MMS COMPLIANCE TO BE HELD ON MAY 18, 2023. COUNCILLOR TORKKELI  
REGISTRATION: N/C**

Carried

9. Moved by Bishop Racicot  
Seconded by A. Crane

**THAT THE FOLLOWING PERSON/S PARTICIPATE IN THE VIRTUAL EDUCATION SESSION HOSTED BY IPE ENTITLED – CLIMATE EMERGENCIES: CREATING RESILIENCE IN OUR COMMUNITIES AND DEALING WITH EMERGENCIES WHEN THEY OCCUR TO BE HELD ON JUNE 1, 2023. COUNCILLOR SOBOLTA  
COUNCILLOR TORKKELI  
REGISTRATION: N/C**

Carried

- d) Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks regarding 2023 Ontario Community Environment Fund.  
No Further New Business was brought forward.

Issues brought forward or letters received after agenda was mailed were discussed as follows:

- a) Ministry of Infrastructure regarding Accelerated High Speed Internet Program (AHSIP). A reply to Council's question regarding a comment in a recent letter stating that properties within the Township of O'Connor are being removed from the program was received. The letter stated that the Ministry of Infrastructure is unable to share the list of addresses removed from the program.

10. Moved by J. Sobolta  
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

**THAT THE COUNCIL MEETING ADJOURN TO THE ZONING BY-LAW PUBLIC MEETING TO BE HELD ON FRIDAY, MAY 5, 2023 AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE O'CONNOR COMMUNITY CENTRE.  
TIME BEING: 9:35 P.M.**

Carried

---

Mayor

---

Clerk-Treasurer