

## TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – DECEMBER 20, 2021

Minutes of the Council meeting held virtually on Monday, December 20, 2021 at 7 p.m.

Present: Mayor Vezina  
Councillors: Crane, Handy, Loan, Racicot  
Clerk-Treasurer Buob  
Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Racicot

Visitors: Fire Chief Henry Mattas  
Deputy Fire Chief Monica Budiselic  
Administrative Assistant Erin Laforest  
Stephen Wiebe arrived at 7:30 p.m.

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

1. Moved by Jerry Loan  
Seconded by W. Handy

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

Disclosure of pecuniary interest and general nature thereof: none

2. Moved by W. Handy  
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

**THAT THE MINUTES FROM THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY,  
DECEMBER 6, 2021 BE ACCEPTED AS PRINTED.**  
Carried

Ms. Laforest was asked if she wished to address Council on any personal matters and she replied no.

Fire Chief Mattas was welcomed to the meeting. The Fire Department report from November 18, 2021 to December 16, 2021 was read. There was one First Response call since the last report. It was noted that there were two more First Response calls since the report was submitted. The list of meetings Fire Chief Mattas attended were also included in the report, as well as an update on the Equipment. All required vehicles have been safetied and mileage driven on each vehicle this past year included. Council had no questions with regard to the report.

The Bi-Annual Attendance sheet for the Fire Department members was read. The report included attendance at calls, as well as at meetings, for Council's reference.

The Fire Department Building Report was read. This report included information with regard to any maintenance or repairs that have been completed in the two buildings since the condition rating was conducted by Genivar in 2013.

The Summary of Monthly stats for 2021 from Central Ambulance Communications Centre (CACC) was read. The Township of O'Connor has had a total of four medical and nine fire related calls from January to November 2021. It was noted that some of the fire related calls were for trees down on hydro lines causing sparks. Council asked what the team does in this case. Fire Chief Mattas confirmed that the Fire Department block the road and contact Hydro One. It was asked if Hydro One is sent a bill for this service, similar to the Ministry of Transportation when a call is attended on a numbered highway. At this time the Township is not aware of this option, however the Clerk-Treasurer will follow up to see if this would be possible. Mayor Vezina will also inquire.

Fire Department issues were discussed. Fire Chief Mattas noted that the team is slowly getting back to training and a new member attended the last meeting.

The outdoor skating rink was discussed. Fire Chief Mattas has been in contact with Mr. Johnson, Leadhand, and there is a good base from the recent snow and rain and the Fire Team will be providing a flood during their training on Tuesday night.

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At the last meeting with Fire Chief Mattas, it was noted that he will be removing four members from the current roster, due to non-attendance. It was

3. Moved by A. Crane  
Seconded by Jerry Loan

**THAT COUNCIL APPROVE THE REMOVAL OF THE FOLLOWING NAMES FROM THE ACTIVE ROSTER OF THE O'CONNOR VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT AND/OR FIRST RESPONSE TEAM:**

1. KIEF KHANLARIN
2. LAURA LOAN
3. JARRYD PARKER
4. SCOTT SIMPSON

Carried

An email was read from the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry with regard to the Wildfire Community Preparedness Day funding for 2022. The application period is now open. It was agreed to submit an application for the \$500 stipend.

An email from the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) regarding mobile fire training units coming to Northern Ontario was read. Fire Chief Mattas noted that as the Gravenhurst Fire College was shutdown, the Province is launching two new mobile live training units. There are a lot of rules with regard to setting up these mobile units due to their size. In Chief Mattas' opinion, the Township of O'Connor will never be able to set it up here. If it were to come to Thunder Bay, perhaps our members could participate there.

As a requirement of the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, the Emergency Management Program Committee (EMPC) must review the Township of O'Connor's Emergency Management Program. This review was completed in May of this year, with a Tabletop Exercise completed on November 29, 2021. As a continuation of the review, CEMC, Linda Racicot, asked the members of the committee how they felt the exercise went. All members felt that it went very well and no recommended changes will be made to the Plan. Ms. Racicot also confirmed that the Emergency Plan, as amended, has been submitted to Sharon Bak, Team Lead – Northern Ontario, Field Operations with the Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management for approval.

Council thanked both Fire Chief Mattas and Deputy Fire Chief Budiselic for attending the meeting and for their service to the community and wished them both happy holidays. Deputy Fire Chief Budiselic left the meeting at 7:32 p.m.

The Administration and Roads voucher summary for December 20, 2021 was reviewed. No questions were asked and it was

4. Moved by Bishop Racicot  
Seconded by A. Crane

**THAT THE ADMINISTRATION AND ROADS VOUCHER #2021-22 DATED DECEMBER 20, 2021 TOTTALLING \$91,271.74 BE APPROVED AND PAID.**

Carried

The Statement of Revenue and Expenditures to November 30, 2021 were reviewed. The variances to date were briefly discussed.

The Clerk-Treasurer requested to have deferred revenue from the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (OCIF) transferred into the budget to cover the overrun of expenses for the 2021 OCIF projects. It was

5. Moved by A. Crane  
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

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**THAT THE AMOUNT OF \$10,112.00 BE WITHDRAWN FROM THE DEFERRED REVENUE OCIF ACCOUNT TO OFFSET THE OVER RUN OF THE 2021 PROJECTS.**

Carried

Resolutions for endorsement were read as follows:

- a) County of Simcoe regarding a request to amend Ontario Regulation 380/04: Standards under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act. The resolution was asking for an exemption to the annual exercise requirement for municipalities if they have activated their Emergency Control Group within that year. This resolution was filed.
- b) Township of Mulmur taking actions to address the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action in regard to municipal government was filed.
- c) City of Sarnia regarding "Catch and Release" Justice was filed.
- d) Municipality of Shuniah supporting the City of Kitchener regarding Bill C-6-2020, An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (Conversion Therapy) was filed.

Correspondence was read as follows:

- a) The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) – Update from the Board Newsletter.
- b) Wayne Hanchard CAO/Clerk Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge copy of email to the Superior North Emergency Medical Services (SNEMS) regarding the municipality's concerns with regard to the allocation of SNEMS levy and the formula using Weighted Assessment to calculate this levy.
- c) Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU) – Notice of 2022 Public Health levy. The 2022 mandatory program budget will increase by 3% for the Municipal levy. Mayor Vezina noted that inflation is the reasoning behind the increase.
- d) Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) – Transition Plan. Under the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) there are three new regulations under the Conservation Authorities Act. The regulations outline several deliverables that are mandated to be completed by conservation authorities. Mayor Vezina noted that at a recent Board meeting, the CAO had noted that she is confident that they will be able to meet the deadlines between 2022 to 2024.
- e) Ministry of Infrastructure regarding the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund Formula-Based Component Agreement - 2022 Allocation. The Township of O'Connor's 2022 formula allocation will be the minimum \$100,000. This minimum amount will be for the next five years.
- f) Thunder Bay & Area Food Strategy – 2021 Update. This letter provided updates of their activities over the past year and details of exciting projects they are working on for 2022 and beyond. It also included a thank you for 2021 annual seed funding and a request for 2022 funding. A donation will be discussed further in the new year.
- g) Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA)
  - i) Resolution supporting the request for the provincial government to work with the federal government on a new national childcare program bilateral agreement.
  - ii) Hydro One investing in a more reliable and resilient electricity system in Northwest Ontario
  - iii) News Release regarding the Building Ontario with Investments in Critical Infrastructure for Small, Rural and Northern Communities. This is referring to the OCIF funding previously discussed.
  - iv) Ministry of Transportation – Winter Maintenance & Safe Winter Driving key message and questions and answers in this regard.
- h) Office of the Prime Minister acknowledging receipt of Council endorsed resolution in regard to homelessness.
- i) Northwestern Ontario Recreational Trails Association – Len Day, President – Thank you letter for Council and staff's consideration and support of their endeavor to establish a multi-use non-motorized recreation trail to connect Kakabeka Falls to Shabaqua.

Under Old Business, Council discussed

- a) Report from the Clerk-Treasurer regarding brushing along Hydro One right-of-ways. At the last meeting Council asked the Clerk-Treasurer to inquire into whether or not the Township could be reimbursed for the work that was completed by the Township

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on the Hydro One right-of-way during the Township's recent brushing project. The Clerk-Treasurer spoke with Hydro One and as the work was already completed, without consultation, there would be no reimbursement. It was also noted that Hydro One's brushing program within municipalities has not been active for several years however, she was informed that the program is coming back next year. The Leadhand, Mr. Johnson, has been made aware of this for future planning. Mayor Vezina also noted that he has spoken with the CEO of Hydro One and we may see some changes coming through on their brushing program.

- b) Update regarding the Township of O'Connor's Zoning By-law review. As the Township of Conmee has also hired Fotenn to prepare their Official Plan and Zoning By-law, it was suggested at the last meeting that we coordinate the consultant's travel for both municipalities' review meetings. The Clerk-Treasurer reported that she has been in contact with the Clerk of the Township of Conmee, Shara Lavallee, in this regard. Ms. Lavallee noted that Fotenn has contacted her as well, and she has sent them their 2022 council meeting schedule noting that the Conmee Council will be in a lame duck situation from August to October 2022, so they will be trying to get it complete before this time. No meetings were planned as of yet, however it is believed that further discussions in this regard will be held in January or February 2022. If no response is received to coordinate the timing with the Township of Conmee by February, O'Connor will move forward with our review. Due to the timing between Council's last review of the Township's Zoning By-law, it was agreed to bring the draft back to a Council meeting for review once again in January.
- c) Policy advice regarding the possibility of free cemetery plots for Council and staff of O'Connor was read. A legal opinion was requested in this regard and it was recommended that such a policy not be implemented. A number of legal issues could arise, some of which may be highly complex and some of which may be currently unknown as the law as it relates to cemeteries continues to evolve. Council agreed to not pursue this matter any further and no such policy will be implemented.
- d) The Clerk-Treasurer requested from Council further information with regard to recognition of Mr. Dennhardt's retirement and whether or not a social event would be held in his honour. Council discussed the current COVID-19 situation and agreed that this would not be an appropriate time and further discussion will be held at a later date.

Under Further Old Business, Mayor Vezina reported that he attended the last Waasigan project Round Table meeting and nothing is currently going on in this regard. No final decision has been made on the exact route and it is not clear as of yet if they will be going through the Northeast corner of the Township of O'Connor.

Under New Business, Council discussed

- a) Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) – 2021 Financial Indicator – Review and Municipal Financial Profile. The Ministry reviews each municipality's financial health through key indicators in relation to established provincial thresholds. For 2020, the Township has one indicator that was just slightly into the moderate level of risk, asset consumption ratio. All other indicators were low risk. The Ministry also requested confirmation that the Township is on target to meet the revised deadline of July 1, 2022 to have Phase 2 of O.Reg 588/17 completed. The Deputy Clerk-Treasurer has confirmed that the Township is on track to meet this deadline.

Under Further New Business Councillor Crane noted that he, as the Township's representative on the Veterinary Committee, was invited to a Cows for Milk webinar. Unfortunately, he was unable to attend.

The Clerk-Treasurer informed Council that the commercial/industrial property on Loghrin Road has recently sold.

The new COVID-19 variant, Omicron, was discussed and it was agreed that Council meetings will be held virtually until the risk of spread is reduced.

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

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- a) Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) regarding the 2022 Municipal Levy. The MPAC Board has approved the 2022 operating budget with a municipal levy increase of 0% for the second year in a row. The Township of O'Connor's 2022 levy amount will be \$12,333.65 or a 0.75% decrease over 2021.

It was

- 6. Moved by Jerry Loan  
Seconded by A. Crane

**THAT THE COUNCIL MEETING ADJOURN TO THE COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD VIRTUALLY ON MONDAY, JANUARY 10, 2021 AT 7:00 P.M.**

**TIME BEING: 8:22 P.M.**

Carried

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Mayor

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Clerk-Treasurer