

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – FEBRUARY 22, 2021

Minutes of the Council meeting held virtually from the O'Connor Municipal Office on February 22, 2021 at 7 p.m.

Present: Mayor Vezina
Councillors: Crane, Loan, Racicot
Clerk-Treasurer Buob (in municipal office)
Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Racicot (in municipal office)

Visitors: Fire Chief Henry Mattas
Erin Laforest, Administrative Assistant
Stephen Wiebe

Absent: Councillor Handy

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

1. Moved by A. Crane
Seconded by Jerry Loan

THAT THE AGENDA FOR THE MEETING BE APPROVED.

Carried

Disclosure of pecuniary interest and general nature thereof: none.

2. Moved by A. Crane
Seconded by Jerry Loan

THAT THE MINUTES FROM THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2021 BE ACCEPTED AS PRINTED.

Carried

Mayor Vezina recognized the visitors joining the meeting virtually.

Fire Chief Mattas was welcomed to the meeting. The Fire Department Report from January 21, 2021 to February 18, 2021 was read. There were no calls in this time period. The Monthly stats for the area for the month of January were reviewed.

Fire Chief Mattas informed Council that he called a meeting on Saturday, February 20, 2021 in the O'Connor Community Centre for the new members who have shown an interest in joining the Fire Department. Mo Douglas, Monica Budiselic and Fire Chief Mattas attended with the new members, providing them with information with regard to what is expected of them as volunteers of the department, as well as providing them with Township information. The meeting was very positive, and they will be doing training once again this Tuesday. Fire Chief Mattas has sent out a text to confirm who will be attending to ensure that the maximum number is not exceeded, due to the COVID-19 status being in Red Control. The training will include firing up all of the equipment to ensure that everything is running properly as some of the equipment has been sitting still for some time now. Council did not have any questions for the Fire Chief.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) Agreement, Appendix A and Appendix C showing the fees for service and the rates for 2021 were reviewed. The Agreement between the Township of O'Connor and the MNRF outlines the responsibility of the shared fire protection in different areas of the Township. Fire Chief Mattas noted that he has confirmed with Roger Lemieux of the MNRF that the Agreement is in effect until 2025.

Fire Chief Mattas informed Council that he is currently the Zone Co-ordinator for the Thunder Bay District Mutual Aid Plan Zone 1 and the Zone has decided that they would like to have an Alternate Coordinator. Deputy Fire Chief Budiselic has put her name forward for the position. One of the requirements of the appointment is to receive approval from the Municipality in which the volunteer is associated with. Council did not

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have any issues with this. Approval for the appointment will be discussed further on the agenda.

As previously mentioned, new volunteer members have stepped forward to be on the O'Connor Fire Department and Fire Chief Mattas would like to ask Council for their approval. It was

3. Moved by Jerry Loan
Seconded by A. Crane

THAT THE COUNCIL APPROVE THE FOLLOWING PERSONS AS MEMBERS OF THE O'CONNOR VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT AND/OR FIRST RESPONSE TEAM:

1. **BRITTANY DUMOULIN**
2. **KIEF KHANLARIAN**
3. **LAURA LOAN**
4. **JASON NAPPER**
5. **BRENDAN REA**
6. **SCOTT SIMPSON**

Carried

Fire Smart Canada approved the Township of O'Connor's application for hosting a Wildfire Community Preparedness Day in 2020, however, due to COVID-19, the event had to be cancelled and the funding was not provided. Fire Smart Canada have now reached out offering the same funding of \$500 for a 2021 event, without an application being submitted. At this time, Council would not be comfortable committing to an in-person event, however it was suggested that if it was possible, we could plan to host a virtual event, or promoting in another format such as providing informational handouts. If the COVID-19 situation allows, we could readdress the matter at a later date and decide if we would hold an event in person. It was agreed to accept the funding for 2021. Fire Chief Mattas will work with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry staff to see what can be done.

Fire Chief Mattas was thanked for his input in tonight's meeting.

The Voucher summary for February 22, 2021 was reviewed and it was

4. Moved by Jerry Loan
Seconded by A. Crane

THAT THE ADMINISTRATION AND ROADS VOUCHER #2021-04 DATED FEBRUARY 22, 2021 TOTTALLING \$21,424.38 BE APPROVED AND PAID.

Carried

The Statement of Revenue and Expenditures to December 31, 2020 will be unavailable until the completion of the 2020 audit.

The 2020 deficit and the amount of monies that were transferred into Reserves at the previous meeting were discussed. During the audit it was noted that an incorrect number was used to determine the accounts payable for Superior North EMS. As a result, the estimated deficit is higher than anticipated. Council was asked if they would like to reconsider any of the transfers to reserves and it was agreed to leave the transfers as completed at the last meeting.

By-law Number 2021-07 to appoint Deputy Fire Chief, Monica Budiselic, as an alternate Zone Co-ordinator, as per earlier discussion with Fire Chief Mattas was discussed and it was

5. Moved by Jerry Loan
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

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THAT BY-LAW NUMBER 2021-07 BEING A BY-LAW TO AUTHORIZE THE PARTICIPATION OF THE DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF AS AN ALTERNATE ZONE CO-ORDINATOR IN THE MUTUAL FIRE AID SYSTEM BE PASSED AND ENTERED IN THE BY-LAW BOOK.

Carried

A Report was read from the Deputy Clerk-Treasurer with regard to the purchase of an Audio/Visual system for the O'Connor Community Centre. Quotes were received at the previous meeting with administration requesting additional time to compare the quotes as they were not identical systems, as well to ensure that the system would perform to our needs. The Report broke down the quotes, with additional information provided at the meeting. It was

6. Moved by Jerry Loan
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

THAT THE QUOTE FROM EVOLUTION AV FOR THE PURCHASE OF AUDIO VISUAL EQUIPMENT FOR THE O'CONNOR COMMUNITY CENTRE AT A COST OF \$7,488.00 + HST BE ACCEPTED.

Carried

Resolutions for endorsement were read as follows:

- a) Thunder Bay District Municipal League requesting support for their concerns with the lack of consultation in regard to Superior North EMS's proposed changes to service and it was

7. Moved by A. Crane
Seconded by Jerry Loan

THAT COUNCIL OF THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR SUPPORTS THE LETTER BEING SENT TO THE SUPERIOR NORTH EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (SNEMS) FROM THE THUNDER BAY DISTRICT MUNICIPAL LEAGUE (TBDML) WITH REGARD TO THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO SNEMS SERVICING OF THE COMMUNITIES IN THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY AND RESPECTFULLY REQUESTS A PAUSE ON ANY DECISIONS OR CHANGES UNTIL A FULL CONSULTATION PROCESS HAS BEEN CONDUCTED WITH ALL COMMUNITIES.

Carried

- b) City of St. Catharines regarding Universal Paid Sick Days in Ontario. It was

8. Moved by A. Crane
Seconded by Jerry Loan

THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE CITY OF ST. CATHARINES CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO TO PERMANENTLY LEGISLATE UNIVERSAL PAID SICK LEAVE FOR ALL WORKERS IN ONTARIO DURING THE PANDEMIC AND BEYOND, REGARDLESS OF WORKPLACE SIZE, TYPE OF WORK OR IMMIGRATION STATUS BE ENDORSED.

Carried

- c) Township of Guelph/Eramosa requesting a review of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act R.S.O. 1990 was filed.
d) Ontario Waste Management Association requesting support for the City of St. Catharines resolution with regard to the Approval Requirements for Landfills was filed.
e) Town of Orangeville requesting the Government of Ontario phase-out all gas-fired electricity generation was filed.

Correspondence was read as follows:

- a) Thunder Bay District Municipal League (TBDML) – Draft Minutes of February 13, 2021 meeting.
b) Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing regarding Termination of the Declared

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Emergency and Amendments to Orders under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act and Reopening Ontario Act.

- c) Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) – i) Policy Update February 11, 2021 – Social Assistance Vision Paper Released and March Break Delayed.
ii) Policy Update February 17, 2021 – Access of Person with Disabilities to Sports/Recreational Facilities during COVID-19 and Greenbelt Consultation.
iii) Policy Update February 19, 2021 – Pre-Budget Submission, AMO-CUPE Economic Recovery Letter, Emergency Orders Extended, and Update on COVID-19 Regional Framework.
- d) AMCTO The Municipal Experts - an Open Letter to Ontario Municipal Councils regarding AMCTO's continued offer of their services to meet the needs of our community.
- e) Northern Policy Institute - Time to Reorganize Northern Ontario's Unincorporated Areas. A new report about the challenges of unincorporated areas and possible solutions for local governance has been written by Anthony Noga.
- f) Health Canada's response to Council's endorsed resolution regarding the personal production of cannabis for medical purposes.

Under Old Business, Council discussed

- a) Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) – i) 2021 Conference & AGM Registration April 28 to 30. It was

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

**THAT THE FOLLOWING PERSONS ATTEND THE NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION VIRTUAL CONFERENCE TO BE HELD ON APRIL 28 TO 30, 2021.
REGISTRATION: \$125.00 PLUS HST**

**MAYOR VEZINA
COUNCILLOR: RACICOT, CRANE, LOAN, HANDY
CLERK-TREASURER BUOB
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT LAFOREST**

Carried

- ii) First Call for Nominations for Offices of President & Executive Vice President. At this time no one would like to put their name forward.
- b) A deputation with the Ministry of Transportation staff to discuss the upcoming construction plans for Highway 595. Council would like a deputation at an upcoming Council meeting, in-person, if possible. The Clerk-Treasurer will follow up with this.
- c) Municipal Modernization Program Intake 2 – Memo from the Clerk-Treasurer and Program Guidelines. There are two streams to this funding, with restrictions, including having spent the Intake 1 funding, which the Township of O'Connor has not. The Review Stream is for a municipality to hire a third party to do a review of efficiencies and lower costs in the long term and the Implementation Stream will provide provincial cost-sharing for projects to increase municipal efficiency and effectiveness. The Township of Conmee has asked the surrounding municipalities if they would like to submit a joint application under the Review Stream for a review of potential savings of shared services for the Fire Departments. It was agreed to not apply for this round of funding and to let the Township of Conmee know that we would not be interested in a joint application at this time.
- d) Hydro One New Community Fund. The Clerk-Treasurer reported that an application for funding has been submitted to this fund for a new automatic start-up generator for the Township office and Community Centre. If approved, the Township will receive \$25,000 for this project from the Hydro One funding, the O'Connor Community Club will donate \$1,000 towards the project if the funding is successful. The balance of the costs of the project would have to be included in the Township's budget. The project can be further discussed if the application is approved.

Under New Business, Council discussed

- a) Thunder Bay District Municipal League (TBDML) – i) regarding attendance at the upcoming Annual General Meeting to be held virtually March 13, 2021. It was

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10. Moved by Jerry Loan
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

THAT THE FOLLOWING PERSON/S ATTEND THE THUNDER BAY DISTRICT MUNICIPAL LEAGUE VIRTUAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING TO BE HELD ON MARCH 13, 2021.

REGISTRATION: NO CHARGE

**MAYOR VEZINA
COUNCILLOR: CRANE, HANDY, LOAN, RACICOT
CLERK-TREASURER BUOB
DEPUTY CLERK-TREASURER RACICOT
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT LAFOREST**
Carried

- ii) Request for support for Private Members Bill – Respecting Identity Documents, 2021. An attachment with additional information on this request was not received in time for the meeting. The Clerk-Treasurer will follow up and bring it back to another meeting.
- b) Grant Match - Municipal Funding Update – Canada Healthy Communities Initiative Program. There are two intakes to this program, with the first intake applications due on March 9, 2021 and the second intake being due on June 25, 2021. Possible application ideas were discussed and due to the time restraints for the first intake, it was agreed to apply for a new accessible ramp for the O'Connor Community Centre and items to consider for the second intake could be for the outdoor rink and recreation area.
- c) Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines – News Release – Ontario Takes Steps to increase Economic Development and Job Creation in the North. Four new programs will target existing and emerging markets, support more projects in small rural communities, address the skilled labour shortage and make it easier for more people and businesses to apply.

Under Further New Business, Council discussed the possibility of having all hydro meters for the Township as one to save deliver costs. This will be looked into further.

The age of the Township's Fire truck was discussed. There is an understanding that the front-line vehicle must be of a certain age. Council would like to confirm if this is true and if so, who is requiring it to be. It was suggested that the Township look into whether or not a five-year extension could be permitted for the age of a fire vehicle if it is still in good condition.

Mayor Dave Hamilton, Township of Schreiber passed away in a car accident on his way home from a Thunder Bay District Municipal League (TBDML) meeting on February 13, 2021. Council would like to send their condolences to the family.

For information purposes no building permits were approved since the last meeting.

11. Moved by Jerry Loan
Seconded by A. Crane

THAT THE COUNCIL MEETING ADJOURN TO THE COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD VIRTUALLY ON MARCH 8, 2021 AT 7:00 P.M.

TIME BEING: 8:43 P.M.

Carried

Mayor

Clerk-Treasurer