

## TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – FEBRUARY 8, 2021

Minutes of the meeting held virtually on Monday, February 8, 2021 at 7 p.m.

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

Visitors: Kelly Johnson, Leadhand (in the Council Chambers)  
Paul LeBoeuf, Janice LeBoeuf,  
Erin Laforest joined at 7:10 p.m.  
Henry Mattas joined at 7:30 p.m.

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

1. Moved by Jerry Loan  
Seconded by A. Crane

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

Carried

Disclosure of pecuniary interest and general nature thereof: Councillor Racicot declared and interest in item 16 c) as his spouse is an employee of the Township. Councillor Handy declared an interest in item 16 d) as she may have an interest in a possible future business opportunity.

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

**THAT THE MINUTES FROM THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 2021 BE ACCEPTED AS PRINTED.**

Carried

Mr. Johnson, Leadhand, was welcomed to the meeting. He provided Council with an update on the Road Department and roadwork in general. Staff continue to do winter road maintenance as required, including plowing, sanding and pushing back snow drifts. They are also getting the steamer ready in case there are any issues with frozen culverts. Mr. Johnson informed Council that there continues to be a mechanical issue with the Truck #9. It is currently back in the shop for the third time.

The North of Superior Public Works Association membership renewal was briefly discussed. The organization has reduced their membership fee this year to 1995 rates as members have had added expenses due to COVID-19.

The Hydro One New Community Fund application update was discussed. Council had suggested that an automatic transfer switch for all buildings be applied for, for our current generator located in the municipal garage. Mr. Johnson has spoken with an electrician and it was recommended that we leave the current generator as manual and that a new stand-alone generator be purchased and installed for the Municipal office and Community Centre. This could be setup for automatic transfer when the power goes out and would run off of current propane tank rather than diesel. This would alleviate running a cable the full distance to these buildings from across the highway and would provide a better, consistent, power source for running electronic equipment. Council discussed whether or not a new generator should be installed for just the office or for both buildings, as the community centre would require more power to run and a larger generator would be required. An estimated cost has been requested for a generator for both buildings for the application. The Clerk-Treasurer will follow up and ask for a quote for the office only, as well. The application deadline is February 19, 2021.

Mr. Johnson was thanked for attending and left the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

The Administration and Roads Voucher #2021-03 was reviewed and it was

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3. Moved by Jerry Loan  
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

**THAT THE ADMINISTRATION AND ROADS VOUCHER #2021-03 DATED FEBRUARY 8, 2021 TOTTALLING \$48,314.77 BE APPROVED AND PAID.**

Carried

The Draft Statement of Revenue and Expenditure to December 31, 2020 were reviewed. An expense report outlining the COVID 19 expenses to December 31, 2020 were reviewed. It was noted that the balance of unspent 2020 COVID 19 funding will still have to be deferred. The current reserve balances were reviewed and a report from the Clerk-Treasurer providing additional information with regard to the surplus balances of the accounts was read. Council discussed the estimated surplus balance as of December 31, 2020, prior to any auditor Journal Entries and it was

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

**FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 2020 THE FOLLOWING AMOUNTS BE TRANSFERRED INTO THE FOLLOWING RESERVES:**

**ROAD EQUIPMENT - \$5,164.90**  
**FIRE DEPARTMENT - \$2,900.00**  
**WORKING FUND - \$10,000.00**  
**WORKING CAPITAL - \$16,936.00**

Carried

Quotes for the electronic and audio-visual equipment were reviewed. A request for quote was sent out to four different local computer stores and only one quote was received by the deadline. It was noted that the Chromebooks will have to be controlled by Administration and a policy would have to be drafted for their use. They may only be used for Township purposes and not as a personal device. It was agreed to purchase ten Chromebooks, five for Council, for meetings and five for the Fire Department for training, with the option of buying five more for the Fire Department, if required at a later date. The quote also included a computer for the Deputy Clerk-Treasurer, which will also run the tax program and the accounting program, and a laptop for the Administrative Assistant to work from home. It was

5. Moved by W. Handy  
Seconded by Jerry Loan

**THAT THE QUOTE FROM SOFTSELL COMPUTERS FOR THE PURCHASE OF A COMPUTER WITH PROGRAMMING, A LAPTOP, TEN CHROMEBOOKS AT A COST OF \$5,387.90 + HST BE ACCEPTED.**

Carried

A quote for a smartboard for the Council Chambers was also requested. Again, only one company responded to the quote. It was

6. Moved by W. Handy  
Seconded by Jerry Loan

**THAT THE QUOTE FROM EVOLUTION AV FOR THE PURCHASE OF A LOFT 65" INTERACTIVE DISPLAY AND ACCESSORIES FOR \$5,626.98 PLUS HST BE ACCEPTED.**

Carried

The Deputy Clerk-Treasurer met with two different companies with regard to a conferencing system for the O'Connor Community Centre and requested quotes. Both companies have provided quotes but Administration would like to request additional time to review and compare the quotes as presented, as they are not identical systems. Council agreed to allow this time and a summary of quotes will be brought back to the next meeting for approval.

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All purchases will be submitted under the COVID-19 funding.

Resolutions for endorsement were read as follows:

- a) Township of Augusta requesting that the decision to close the Ontario Fire College be reversed. The Clerk-Treasurer reported that the Township's Fire Department has never used the College and she reported that the Fire Chief felt that it was used more by full-time career Fire Fighters. There may also be a Regional school in Thunder Bay as a result of the closure which might benefit our members. This resolution was filed.
  - b) Rainy River District Municipal Association regarding the Tax Rate for Railway Rights-of-Way - Per Tonne-Mile concept and municipal taxation for railroad right of ways was discussed. As the Township is not affected by any railways the resolution was filed.
  - c) Township of Asphodel-Norwood regarding the deadline of July 1, 2021 imposed for the completion of a Community Safety & Well-Being Plan. Councillor Handy noted that during the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) Conference this plan was discussed and the Solicitor General was not willing to extend the deadline. It was suggested that if the Lakehead Rural Municipal Coalition (LRMC) members needed assistance that they work with the City of Thunder Bay. It was agreed that we should continue to push for an extension of the deadline and it was
7. Moved by W. Handy  
Seconded by A. Crane

**THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE TOWNSHIP OF ASPHODEL-NORWOOD CALLING UPON THE SOLICITOR GENERAL TO REVIEW THE IMPOSED DEADLINE FOR MUNICIPALITIES TO COMPLETE AND ADOPT A COMMUNITY SAFETY & WELL-BEING PLAN IN CONSULTATION WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO ADDRESS THE UNIQUE CHALLENGES FACING INDIVIDUAL REGIONS BE ENDORSED.**

Carried

Correspondence was read as follows:

- a) The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board – Update from the Board January 22, 2021.
- b) Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) – i) Policy Update January 26, 2021 – 2021 OCIP Funding, 2nd Intake of Municipal Modernization Program, and Provincial Emergency Extension.  
ii) Policy Update – February 4, 2021 – Expanded Library Broadband and AMO Response to Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission.  
iii) Policy Update – February 8, 2021 – Gradual Return to COVID-19 Response Framework, Conservation Authorities Act Update.

Mayor Vezina, as member of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA), informed Council of the Board's concerns with the revised Conservation Authorities Act. One concern being the authority of the Minister to override a Conservation Authority's decision.

- c) Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) – 2020 Municipal Partnership Report.
- d) Peter Julian, MP New Westminster-Burnaby – Thank you for resolution supporting Bill C-213.
- e) Hydro One Networks Inc. relief available for residential customers and small businesses. Council would like this information included in the next issue of the Cornerstone as well as on the Township's website.
- f) Premier Doug Ford's Speech at the Rural Ontario Municipal Association Conference.
- g) Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks regarding amendments made to the Conservation Authorities Act.

Under Old Business, Council discussed

- a) An update on the Lakehead Rural Municipal Coalition (LRMC)'s Broadband Funding

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Application submission was read. The Federal Universal Broadband Fund (UBF) application was submitted on February 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and the Provincial Improving Connectivity for Ontario (ICON) was previously submitted. It is being recommended that the Heads of Council reach out to the local MP's and MPP's for support for this project. Council agreed that Mayor Vezina send letters on the Township's letterhead to the local political representatives asking for their support in promoting this project.

Under further Old Business a draft letter with regard to the vaccination rollout was discussed. Due to a miss communication the letter has not been drafted. Councillor Handy agreed to prepare the letter and submit it for Council approval.

Under New Business, Council discussed

- a) Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing regarding the new Municipal Modernization Program. The deadline for Application is March 15, 2021. Administration will look further into this funding to see what types of projects would be eligible.
- b) Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines regarding government soliciting feedback on Ontario's long-term energy planning framework through the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO), with comment period closing on April 27, 2021. Mayor Vezina reported that as a member of the Common Voice Energy Taskforce they will be putting in comments on this document.

Councillor Racicot left the meeting.

- c) AMCTO – The Municipal Experts - Virtual Cemetery Workshop – April 19, 2021 and Zone 9 Spring Meeting – April 21, 2021. It was

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

**THAT THE FOLLOWING PERSON/S ATTEND THE AMCTO ZONE 9 SPRING MEETING TO BE HELD VIRTUALLY ON APRIL 21, 2021.**

**CLERK-TREASURER BUOB  
DEPUTY CLERK-TREASURER RACICOT  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT LAFOREST**

**REGISTRATION: N/C**

Carried

9. Moved by A. Crane  
Seconded by Jerry Loan

**THAT THE FOLLOWING PERSON/S ATTEND THE AMCTO – BAO CEMETERY WORKSHOP TO BE HELD VIRTUALLY ON APRIL 19, 2021.**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT ERIN LAFOREST**

**REGISTRATION: \$120.00 + HST**

Carried

Councillor Racicot returned to the meeting.

Councillor Handy left the meeting.

- d) A report from the Clerk-Treasurer with regard to a potential use of a property within the Township was discussed. An inquiry was made at the Township office with regard to a rural zoned piece of property that is for sale. The potential purchaser has inquired as to whether or not a Psychotherapy clinic or an educational workshop would be allowed on this property. As neither our current Official Plan or Zoning By-law refer to either of these uses, Council was asked for their thoughts on these potential uses, as a new Zoning By-law is currently in draft form and could possibly be updated to include, if they are not already. This still has to be confirmed. Council did not oppose the ideas however it would have to be included in the Zoning By-law.

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Council agreed to have the Clerk-Treasurer reach out to Fotenn, the consultant who has been working on the Township of O'Connor's Official Plan and Zoning By-law to confirm that these uses could be included. It was also suggested that we reach out to Oliver Paipoonge to see what is included in their plan and by-law as they do have medical clinics within their community.

Councillor Handy returned to the meeting.

e) Thunder Bay District Veterinary Services Committee regarding the Annual Meeting to be held on February 25, 2021. It was

- 10. Moved by Jerry Loan  
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

**THAT THE FOLLOWING PERSONS ATTEND THE THUNDER BAY DISTRICT VETERINARY SERVICES COMMITTEE ANNUAL MEETING TO BE HELD VIRTUALLY ON FEBRUARY 25, 2021.**

**REGISTRATION FEE – N/C**

**COUNCILLOR WENDY HANDY  
COUNCILLOR ALEX CRANE**

Carried

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

- 11. Moved by Jerry Loan  
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

**THAT THE COUNCIL MEETING ADJOURN TO THE COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD VIRTUALLY ON FEBRUARY 22, 2021 AT 7:00 P.M.**

**TIME BEING: 9:13 P.M.**

Carried

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Mayor

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Clerk-Treasurer