

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – JANUARY 11, 2021

Minutes of the Council meeting held virtually from the O'Connor Municipal Office on January 11, 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, Stephen Wiebe

Mayor Vezina called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

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

THAT THE AGENDA FOR THE MEETING BE APPROVED.

Carried

Disclosure of pecuniary interest and general nature thereof: Councillor Handy declared an interest in item 11 a) as she is a small business owner.

2. Moved by B.J. Loan
 Seconded by A. Crane

THAT THE MINUTES FROM THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2020 BE ACCEPTED AS PRINTED.

Carried

Mayor Vezina noted that as the meeting is being held virtually the visitors who have not asked to be on the agenda will not be permitted to address Council.

Mr. Johnson, Leadhand, was welcomed to the meeting. Roadwork in general was discussed. Mr. Johnson noted that the employees are working with the winter weather as needed. They have been scraping the icy patches in the shaded area of the roads, and they have been winging back the banks where drifting is occurring. Truck #9 was brought into the shop to be scoped for an electronic issue. The furnace at the garage and the community centre are scheduled for a cleaning this week.

The Health and Safety Report for December 18, 2020 was read. Council did not have any questions or concerns with the report.

Correspondence from Mr. Stephen Wiebe with regard to his concerns with a road that was recently pushed in at Main Street, between the boundaries of the Township of O'Connor and the Township of Gillies by a property owner, as well as the Clerk-Treasurer's comments to these concerns, including maps of the area, were reviewed and discussed by Council. Mr. Wiebe's correspondence expressed his concerns and questioned whether or not the property owner had any right to do so or if it was legally done. The road that has been pushed through does not follow a straight line between the properties due to the terrain. A question was asked, whether or not municipal monies have ever been spent to maintain this old road/trail in the past, to this piece of property. Mr. Wiebe is questioning whether or not the municipality owns the old road allowance or if the property owners do. The road that has been bulldozed is on three different private properties and crown land. The individual who recently bulldozed this road into his own property did not contact any of the private property owners affected or either Township to inform anyone of his intention. Staff have confirmed that a family did live on this property sixty or seventy years ago. A trail is shown on several old historic maps, as well as Township maps, but there is no evidence of who maintained it. There was question as to whether or not this is a Township issue or if it should remain between the property owners. It was agreed that the answer to that would be determined if we can find out if Township monies were ever spent in the past. Council agreed to have Township staff look through historical records and do a title search on all properties to try to determine if the Township has ownership of the road or not. The Township's history book does show a trail in the approximate area that has been

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bulldozed. Council also asked staff to contact the property owner to see what his intentions are for bulldozing this road. This information will be brought back to Council for further discussion.

A notice from Marcus Powlowski, M.P., informing the Township that the Canada Summer Jobs application period is now open was discussed. The application deadline is January 29, 2021 and the program has increased the number of jobs available this year by 50%. This program covers 50% of the provincial minimum wage. It was agreed that Council will submit an application for two students for the Road Department. It was

3. Moved by W. Handy
Seconded by B.J. Loan

THAT THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR ASK FOR TWO STUDENTS UNDER THE CANADA SUMMER JOBS 2021 PROGRAM, FOR A PERIOD OF EIGHT WEEKS. START DATE FOR THE PROGRAM WOULD BE JULY 5, 2021 RUNNING UNTIL AUGUST 27, 2021.

Carried

Mr. Johnson was thanked for attending and left the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

The Voucher for January 11, 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 #2021-01 DATED JANUARY 11, 2021 TOTTALLING \$68,404.15 BE APPROVED AND PAID.

Carried

The Statement of Revenue and Expenditures to December 31, 2020 were unavailable.

By-laws and Policies were discussed as follows:

- a) By-law Number 2021-01 - Being a by-law to impose late payment charges for non-payment of taxes or any installment by the due date. It was

5. Moved by Bishop Racicot
Seconded by W. Handy

THAT BY-LAW NUMBER 2021-01 BEING A BY-LAW TO IMPOSE LATE PAYMENT CHARGES FOR NON-PAYMENT OF TAXES OR ANY INSTALLMENT BY THE DUE DATE BE PASSED AND ENTERED IN THE BY-LAW BOOK.

Carried

- b) By-law Number 2021-02 – Being a by-law to provide for an interim levying amount. It was

6. Moved by B.J. Loan
Seconded by A. Crane

THAT BY-LAW NUMBER 2021-02 BEING A BY-LAW TO PROVIDE FOR AN INTERIM LEVYING AMOUNT BE PASSED AND ENTERED IN THE BY-LAW BOOK.

Carried

- c) By-law Number 2021-03 – A by-law to authorize the borrowing of monies. It was

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

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THAT BY-LAW NUMBER 2021-03 BEING A BY-LAW TO AUTHORIZE THE BORROWING OF MONIES BE PASSED AND ENTERED IN THE BY-LAW BOOK.

Carried

- d) By-law Number 2021-04 – Being a by-law to establish an Emergency Management Program and to repeal By-Law Number 2017-23. The Clerk-Treasurer noted that the reason for these changes was due to requirements of the Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management's office and the references to appointed officials alternates. It was

8. Moved by W. Handy
Seconded by B.J. Loan

THAT BY-LAW NUMBER 2021-04 BEING A BY-LAW TO ESTABLISH AN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM FOR THE PROTECTION OF PUBLIC SAFETY, HEALTH, THE ENVIRONMENT, THE CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROPERTY, AND TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC STABILITY AND A DISASTER-RESILIENT COMMUNITY AND TO REPEAL BY-LAW NUMBER 2017-03 BE PASSED AND ENTERED IN THE BY-LAW BOOK.

Carried

- e) By-law Number 2021-05 – Being a by-law to amend By-law Number 2020-24 – the By-law to govern the proceedings of Council and Committees of the Township. The Clerk-Treasurer noted the reason for this amendment was to add item 4.2 which refers to in the absence of the Head of Council, which was missed in the new By-law passed at the last meeting. It was

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

THAT BY-LAW NUMBER 2021-05 BEING A BY-LAW TO AMEND THE PROCEDURAL BY-LAW TO GOVERN THE PROCEEDINGS OF COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES OF THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR BE PASSED AND ENTERED IN THE BY-LAW BOOK.

Carried

- f) By-law Number 2012-25 establishing miscellaneous fees and charges – Policy 4.9 was discussed. It was recommended by staff that the equipment rates be increased by \$5.00 per hour. Council agreed and an amending By-law will be brought back to Council at the next meeting for approval.

- g) The Administrative Benefits Policy was reviewed. It was noted that as per the Union Negotiations and the benefit package for full-time employees being the same plan, the Long-Term Disability benefit maximum earnings per month will increase from \$2,500.00 to \$5,000.00. No other changes were requested. Council agreed and an amending policy will be brought back to Council at the next meeting for approval.

Resolutions for endorsement were read as follows:

Councillor Handy turned off her camera and microphone during this discussion.

- a) Township of Nairn and Hyman regarding the closure of non-essential businesses during the pandemic. It was

10. Moved by Bishop Racicot
Seconded by B.J. Loan

THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE TOWNSHIP OF NAIRN AND HYMAN CALLING ON THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT TO STOP THE MANDATORY CLOSURES OF SMALL BUSINESSSES DURING THE PANDEMIC BE ENDORSED.

Defeated

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Councillor Handy returned to the meeting.

b) Municipality of Charlton and Dack regarding the Municipal Insurance cost increases

11. Moved by W. Handy
Seconded by B.J. Loan

THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE MUNICIPALITY OF CHARLTON AND DACK CALLING ON THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO TO IMMEDIATELY REVIEW THE RECOMMENDATION OUTLINED BY THE ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPALITIES OF ONTARIO (AMO) WITH REGARD TO MUNICIPAL INSURANCE INCREASES, AND TO INVESTIGATE THE UNETHICAL PRACTICE OR PREFERRED VENDORS WHO ARE PAID SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNTS OVER INDUSTRY STANDARDS BE ENDORSED.

Carried

Correspondence were read as follows:

- a) Thunder Bay District Health Unit Media Release January 7, 2021 – Shutdown Extended in Northern Ontario.
- b) Treasurer's Itemized Statement – Council 2020 Remuneration.
- c) Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) regarding the New Executive Director, Andrea Strawson, and 2021 NOMA Conference Update. The Conference will be held virtually from April 28 to 30. Registration will open in February. Council would like to send a thank you letter to Ms. Kristen Oliver the outgoing, and welcome letter to new, Executive Director.
- d) The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) regarding the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) briefing package.
- e) Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) – i) Policy Update – January 7, 2021 – New Lock Down Measures and New CSWB Plan Deadline.
- f) Solicitor General regarding the Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) plan – extended deadline for municipalities to prepare and adopt is now July 1, 2021.
- g) Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines regarding the Provincial government revoking Ontario Regulation 355/17, effective January 1, 2021. This is in regard to the new Long-Term Energy Plan every three years.
- h) Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs response to Council's endorsed resolution with regard to the Tile Loan Program.

Under Old Business, Council discussed

- a) Rural Ontario Municipal Association – i) Conference update and confirmation of attendance. At a previous meeting Councillor Handy was authorized to attend the conference and she is still available and would like to attend. Councillor Crane is also interested in participating and as there is no travel expenses, it was agreed to take advantage of this and have two members participate. It was

12. Moved by Bishop Racicot
Seconded by W. Handy

THAT THE FOLLOWING PERSON/S ATTEND THE RURAL ONTARIO MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION VIRTUAL CONFERENCE TO BE HELD ON JANUARY 25 – 26, 2021.

REGISTRATION: \$450.00 PLUS HST

COUNCILLOR ALEX CRANE

Carried

- ii) ROMA Conference delegation request. The Township of O'Connor has received confirmation from the Ministry of Transportation that they have accepted our request to meet virtually with the Minister during the ROMA Conference. Council discussed who would be available to meet with the Minister and it was

13. Moved by W. Handy
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

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THAT THE FOLLOWING PERSON/S ATTEND THE DELEGATION MEETING WITH THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION AT THE RURAL ONTARIO MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION VIRTUAL CONFERENCE TO BE HELD ON JANUARY 26, 2021 AT 5:45 P.M.

**MAYOR VEZINA
COUNCILLOR CRANE, HANDY
CLERK-TREASURER BUOB**

Carried

- b) Erika Kromm, Clerk-Treasurer for the Municipality of Neebing, update regarding the Lakehead Rural Municipal Coalition (LRMC) Improved Broadband funding application. They are currently looking for letters of support from anchor institutions such as schools, libraries, medical facilities and large business. The Clerk-Treasurer noted that she has requested letters from NorWest Community Health and Firesteel Contractors. No other businesses were suggested by Council, but they would like the Clerk-Treasurer to inquire as to whether or not the Township itself should submit one. This will be looked into.

Under Further old business, the Clerk-Treasurer provided an update on the status of the outdoor rink. Currently there is still no ice and weather has been warm.

Under New Business, Council discussed

- a) Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing – 2020 Financial Indicators for the Township of O'Connor Financial Indicator Review, as well as the Municipal Financial Profiles. This information is calculated using 2019 Financial Information Return data. The Township had no indicators that exceeded the moderate level of risk and therefore the Ministry will not be following up.
- b) Ontario Trillium Foundation – Community Building Fund. The program supports funding for municipalities for sport and recreation to make investments in infrastructure rehabilitation and renovations in order to operate and meet local community needs. There is a possibility that renovation to the community rink would qualify for funding. A new roof and water source could fall under the Capital Grant funding. Council agreed to have staff move forward with an application.
- c) Employee and Volunteer Fire Department recognitions for 2020 was discussed. As the annual Christmas party will not be held this year, and there are members of the Volunteer Fire Department and staff, who are due to be recognized for their years of Service, Council was asked how they would like to proceed. Mayor Vezina noted that he would be willing to attend a Fire Department meeting and come into the office to make the presentation, if necessary, but will wait and see what happens with the current lockdown and gathering restrictions.

Under Further New Business Council discussed the current vaccination rollout. Councillor Crane has reached out to MPP, Judith Monteith-Farrell and has been told that the vaccines will not be available until spring. As the Thunder Bay District Health Unit representative, Mayor Vezina confirmed that the Thunder Bay District is getting their fair share of doses. Council would like a letter sent to the Thunder District Health Unit requesting information with regard to a time line for the vaccination of the general population.

Councillor Loan reported that the first meeting of the Lakehead Police Service Board for 2021 will be held on January 13, 2021. At this meeting the Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected. Councillor Loan asked Council if they were willing to allow him to remain in his position on the Board and once again run for the Vice-Chair position. Council had no issues with Councillor Loan remaining in this position.

No additional issues of letters were received after the agenda was mailed that have not already been discussed.

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

The next meeting will be held on Monday, January 25, 2021 at 7 p.m. It was

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14. Moved by W. Handy
Seconded by B.J. Loan

THAT THE VIRTUAL COUNCIL MEETING ADJOURN TO THE COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON JANUARY 25, 2021 AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE O'CONNOR COMMUNITY CENTRE IF THE SITUATION DUE TO COVID-19 IS SAFE TO DO SO.

TIME BEING: 9:06 P.M.

Carried

Mayor

Clerk-Treasurer