

## TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – JANUARY 25, 2021

Minutes of the Council meeting held virtually from the Township of O'Connor Municipal Office on Monday, January 25, 2021 at 7 p.m.

Present: Mayor Vezina  
Councillors: Crane, Handy, Loan, Racicot  
Clerk-Treasurer Buob – (in the Municipal Office)  
Deputy Clerk-Treasurer – (in the Council Chambers)

Visitors: Henry Mattas, Fire Chief  
Erin Laforest, Administrative Assistant  
Stephen Wiebe  
Monica Budiselic, Deputy Fire Chief joined the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

Mayor Vezina called the meeting to order at 7:11 p.m.

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

**THAT THE MINUTES FROM THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, JANUARY 11, 2021 BE ACCEPTED AS PRINTED.**

Carried

The visitors were recognized as being in attendance, however were informed that as the meeting is being held virtually, and they did not ask to be on the agenda, they will not be permitted to address Council.

Fire Chief Mattas was welcomed to the meeting. The Fire Department report was read. There were three First Response calls noted on the report and one CO alarm call after the report went out to Council. No training has been taking place due to the Provincial Emergency and the Stay at Home Order. The total calls for 2020 were presented and were very comparable to the previous year, with a total of 22 calls in 2020 and 20 in 2019, with the majority being for First Response.

Fire Chief Mattas noted that we do have several new members interested in joining the team but so far they have not had the opportunity to be introduced to the Fire Department or do any training. Mo Douglas would like to meet with the new members to provide them with information with regard to being a volunteer on the team, to let them know what is expected of them as a Fire Department Member and what they can expect from the Township. It was suggested that perhaps this training could be done virtually, if the lockdown continues.

Fire Chief Mattas noted to Council that the Fire Marshal's office has provided information with regard to wearing masks in Fire Halls. Fire Chief Mattas informed Council that if the hall door is locked and no one from the public can enter, that mask wearing is not required if physical distancing is achieved. Council are concerned with this and do want the Fire Chief to have all members wear masks while in the Fire Hall, unless they are alone.

It was suggested by Council that a box of masks be put into each emergency vehicle for easy access, if required for anyone, volunteer or the general public, who might not have one while out on a call. The Fire Marshal's office has been supplying masks to the Fire Department and they are following up regularly in regard to the inventory.

An email with regard to Workers' Compensation Insurance Board (WSIB) coverage for volunteer firefighters was read. A concern was brought up at a recent Zone meeting,

## TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – JANUARY 25, 2021

that Fire Chief Mattas attended, with regard to the coverage that a member would have if injured while volunteering for a Fire Department. The email clarified that all volunteer firefighters are covered for any injuries received while being a volunteer firefighter. The municipality selects the volunteer firefighters' earnings for both premium and benefits, thus the claim amount is chosen by the municipality. The worker's actual earnings from their regular employment, if any, are not used. Council would like Fire Chief Mattas to inquire with the members to confirm if our current coverage is sufficient for what they would lose if they could not attend their regular employment due to an injury while volunteering. Fire Chief Mattas will bring back this information to Council at a future meeting.

2021 Fire Permits were discussed. The Clerk-Treasurer provided Council with information on a web-based fire permit program. The property owner can go online to setup an account and apply for a permit. Once the permit is issued the program has an automated call-in system where the resident would call. The system would indicate the risk level status and allows residents to register their intent to burn. Each call is logged in the system and will show who is burning at any one time. There is a cost for the service, however there would be time saved by staff and no cost for purchasing permit books. During the COVID-19 pandemic this would also lesson the number of people having to come into the office. Depending on the credits purchased, the most a permit would cost is \$1.00 and each call or outbound alert is ten cents each. If Council is willing to change the By-law to extend a permit length from fifteen days to the full season, the property owner would only need to get one permit per season. In 2020, 163 permits were issued. Council was in favour of the program but would like a couple of questions answered with regard to the timing of receiving a permit and when a call can be logged. If the answers are favourable, Council would like administration to move forward with the program. Fire Chief Mattas is also in favour of the program. Further information will be brought back to Council in this regard. It was agreed that there will, continue to be, no charge to the residents.

Fire Chief Mattas informed Council that the Fire Chief of the Township of Nipigon recently passed away.

Fire Chief Mattas was thanked for the report.

Deputy Fire Chief Budiselic left the meeting.

The Administration and Roads Voucher for January 25, 2021 was reviewed. No questions were asked and it was

3. Moved by W. Handy  
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

**THAT THE ADMINISTRATION AND ROADS VOUCHER #2021-02 DATED JANUARY 25, 2021 TOTALLING \$41,031.06 BE APPROVED AND PAID.**

Carried

The Statement of Revenue and Expenditures to date were unavailable.

By-laws and Policies were discussed as follows:

- a) By-law Number 2021-06 – Being a By-law to amend By-law Number 2012-25 establish miscellaneous fees and charges. Council previously discussed a Road Department rate increase of \$5.00 per hour for equipment and snowplowing. The Clerk-Treasurer confirmed that the last increase for these rates was in 2017 and it was

4. Moved by W. Handy  
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

**THAT BY-LAW NUMBER 2021-06 BEING A BY-LAW TO AMEND BY-LAW NUMBER 2012-25 TO ESTABLISH MISCELLANEOUS FEES AND CHARGES FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR BE PASSED AND ENTERED IN THE BY-LAW BOOK.**

Carried

## TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – JANUARY 25, 2021

b) Policy for Administrative Benefits, to amend the Long-Term Disability maximum monthly earnings, previously discussed at the January 11, 2021 meeting. It was

5. Moved by Jerry Loan  
Seconded by A. Crane

**THAT THE POLICY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE BENEFITS BE AMENDED TO INCREASE THE LONG-TERM DISABILITY FOR EMPLOYEE'S MONTHLY EARNINGS FROM A MAXIMUM OF TWO THOUSAND AND FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS TO A MAXIMUM OF FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS AND TO READ AS FOLLOWS:**

**Long Term Disability:**

The Township of O'Connor shall pay one hundred percent (100%) of the premium for a long-term disability plan which shall provide the following benefits:

- Sixty-six and two-thirds percent (66.7%) of the employee's monthly earnings to a maximum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00) per month.
- Coverage to age 65.
- Coverage for first two (2) years in own occupation (inability to do the substantial duties of his/her job), thereafter definition changes to total disability (inability to do any gainful work due to education, training, experience).
- Rehabilitation provision: will pay during rehabilitation.
- No reduction of income due to cost-of-living pension indexing of government payments.
- Waiver of premium to age 65 when applicable.

Carried

Resolutions for endorsement were read as follows:

a) Municipality of West Grey regarding the Provincial Budget Bill 229, Support and Recover from COVID-19 Act. It was

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

**THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE MUNICIPALITY OF WEST GREY REQUESTING THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO REPEAL SCHEDULE 8 OF BILL 229, REMOVING THE ABILITY TO ISSUE ORDERS IN CIRCUMSTANCES WHEN THERE IS IMMINENT DANGER TO SPECIES AT RISK BE ENDORSED.**

Carried

b) Peter Julian, MP – New Westminster Burnaby requesting support for his Private Member's Bill C-123, An Act to Enact the Canada Pharmacare Act. It was

7. Moved by Jerry Loan  
Seconded by A. Crane

**WHEREAS MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT ARE SEEKING MUNICIPAL SUPPORT FOR BILL C-213, WHICH SEEKS TO ESTABLISH A UNIVERSAL, PUBLICLY ADMINISTERED PHARMACARE PROGRAM BASED ON THE SAME PRINCIPLES AS CANADA'S UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE PROGRAM;**

**WHEREAS IT IS APPROPRIATE TO SUPPORT THE REQUEST COUNCIL HEREBY ADOPT TO SUPPORT BILL C-213, AN ACT TO ENACT THE CANADA PHARMACARE ACT.**

Carried

c) Statistics Canada regarding the 2021 Census of Population, taking place in May

## TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – JANUARY 25, 2021

2021. While Council do support the 2021 Census, they did not feel that endorsing a resolution was necessary. Information will be included in the Cornerstone and on the Township's website when it becomes available.

Correspondence was read as follows:

- a) Lakehead Rural Municipal Coalition (LRMC) – November 17, 2020 Minutes of meeting.
- b) Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) – i) 2021 Levy Request. The Township of O'Connor's Levy will increase by \$200.00 over 2020.  
ii) Provincial Legislation Respecting Remuneration and Expenses for Council Members and Council Appointees – 2020.
- c) Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU) – Provincial Legislation Respecting Remuneration and Expense for Council Members and Council Appointees – 2020.
- d) District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) – 2021 Cost Apportionment. The 2021 Levy will increase by \$927.00 over 2020.
- e) Luc Romaniuk, Gillons Insurance Brokers Ltd. regarding Occupier's Liability Act – A brief analysis of the requirement of Bill 118 (Part Two).
- f) Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing regarding the Declaration of Provincial Emergency on January 14, 2021 under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act.
- g) Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks regarding the Ontario Moves Forward with Conservation Authorities Working Group. There are no representatives in the group from Northwestern Ontario.
- h) Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) – i) Policy Update – January 12, 2021 – New COVID-19 Provincial Emergency Declared, Updated COVID Modelling, and CA Working Group.  
ii) Policy Update – January 14, 2021 – New COVID-19 Ontario Regulations, Ontario Gas Tax for Transit Allocations, Ontario Heritage Act Amendments Update, and Firefighter Training Changes.  
iii) Policy Update - January 21, 2021 – Community Safety and Policing Grants, Broadband Investments in Northern Ontario.

Councillor Handy informed Council that during the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) conference that she is attending this week, they were speaking with regard to the use of hydro poles restrictions for the installation of Broadband with Hydro One. The Province is hoping that they will be able to work with Hydro One on this issue.

- i) Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry - Forest Industry Division regarding Bioheat Webinar Series. No one will attend.
- j) Northern Policy Institute – Come North – Population Growth, Let's Do It Together.

Under Old Business, Council discussed

- a) A report from the Clerk-Treasurer regarding the history of the maintenance and resurfacing of Highway 595 in preparation for the deputation scheduled with Minister Mulroney, Ministry of Transportation, January 26, 2021 was discussed. The last resurfacing was in 2008, following a large flood. Highway 595 received some patching and a new chipped surface. Brushing, ditching and the installation of two new large culverts have been done since 2008. The Highway is in horrific condition and Council want to know if there are any plans to reconstruct Highway 595, and not just spray over the current surface.
- b) A report from the Deputy Clerk-Treasurer regarding the Safe Restart Funding, including cost estimates, was read. Equipment to assist with virtual meetings, a laptop for the Administrative Assistant to work from home, as well Chromebooks for a limited number of Fire Department members to do virtual training, was included. Hand sanitizer stands were also included. These items and the COVID-19 expenses incurred to date, are still below the total funding provided. Quotes from a minimum of three suppliers, for the audio-visual equipment and computers, will be requested and brought back to Council for approval.

Under New Business, Council discussed

- a) Tbaytel Business regarding the Township's phone system and a new Service Agreement with Tbaytel. The Township has received notice that are current phone system will no longer be supported by Tbaytel and will have to be replaced. A

## TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – JANUARY 25, 2021

three-year business service agreement was reviewed for a new system and it was

8. Moved by Bishop Racicot  
Seconded by W. Handy

**THAT THE BUSINESS SERVICE AGREEMENT WITH TBAYTEL BUSINESS TO FURNISH THE SERVICE, EQUIPMENT AND/OR FACILITIES SPECIFIED ON BUSINESS SERVICE AGREEMENT FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR BE SIGNED BY THE CLERK-TREASURER.**

Carried

- b) Oliver Paipoonge Library regarding the 2021 contract for service. Council agreed once again to continue providing the services of Oliver Paipoonge Library for our residents and it was

9. Moved by Jerry Loan  
Seconded by W. Handy

**THAT THE LIBRARY CONTRACT FOR THE YEAR 2021 WITH THE MUNICIPALITY OF OLIVER PAIPOONGE LIBRARY BOARD FOR LIBRARY SERVICES BE SIGNED.**

Carried

- c) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing regarding their recently announced #StayHomeON campaign. The Province is asking the municipalities to assist them in this campaign through their social media accounts. As the Township does not have their own accounts information will only be provided on the Township website and in the Cornerstone newsletter.
- d) Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) & Municipal Employer Pension Centre Ontario (MEPCO) regarding their memberships. Regarding the Value of AMO Membership and MEPCO Support for 2021. The Township of O'Connor is currently a member.
- e) WWP – Media Relations Training and Crisis Communications. It was agreed that no one will attend either of these training opportunities at this time.

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

All visitors left the meeting and a new virtual meeting was opened.

10. Moved by A. Crane  
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE NEXT PORTION OF THE MEETING BE CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC IN ORDER TO DISCUSS LITIGATION OR POTENTIAL LITIGATION, INCLUDING MATTERS BEFORE ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNALS, AFFECTING THE MUNICIPALITY OR LOCAL BOARD; PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION 239(2)(E) OF THE MUNICIPAL ACT, 2001.**

**TIME BEING 9:06 P.M.**

Carried

Information with regard to a potential legal road issue was discussed.

11. Moved by Jerry Loan  
Seconded by W. Handy

**TIME BEING: 9:34 P.M.**

**THAT WE NOW MOVE TO OPEN MEETING.**

Carried

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – JANUARY 25, 2021

Council agreed that any further discussion with regard to this matter will require additional information from the Township of Gillies and it was

- 12. Moved by W. Handy  
Seconded by A. Crane

**THAT THE INFORMATION IN THE CLOSED MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 25, 2021 BE SHARED AS NEEDED WITH THE TOWNSHIP OF GILLIES TO DISCUSS THE MATTER THEREIN.**

Carried

- 13. Moved by Jerry Loan  
Seconded by W. Handy

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

**TIME BEING: 9:44 P.M.**

Carried

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

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Clerk-Treasurer