

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – JULY 10, 2023

Minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday, July 10, 2023 at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers

Present: Mayor Vezina
Councillors: Crane, Racicot, Sobolta, Torkkeli
Clerk-Treasurer Buob
Deputy Clerk-Treasurer

Visitors: Kelly Johnson, Road Superintendent
Brendan Rea

Mayor Vezina called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

1. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

THAT THE AGENDA FOR THE MEETING BE APPROVED.

Carried

It was agreed to move Item #12, Tenders and Quotes before Item #10 By-laws and Policies to discuss with Mr. Johnson.

Disclosure of pecuniary interest and general nature thereof: none

2. Moved by Bishop Racicot
Seconded by A. Crane

THAT THE MINUTES FROM THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, JUNE 26, 2023 AND THE BUDGET MEETING HELD ON JUNE 27, 2023 BE ACCEPTED AS PRINTED.

Carried

The visitors were asked if they wished to address Council and they replied no.

Mr. Johnson, Road Superintendent, was welcomed to the table. The official Employee Agreement with Mr. Johnson was signed. A Road Department update and roadwork in general was discussed. Mr. Johnson informed Council that they have been grading roads and have applied one load of calcium so far. They may get a second load at the end of the week. The Summer Student has started, and he has one road employee working with him for most projects. Several guiderails and cables have been tightened throughout the Township. Mr. Johnson will start working on the eroding banks along the Whitefish River issue, if approved later tonight on the budget. He will investigate his options of repair and the rock availability. There is a limited time for in-water work which he may have to work around depending on the decisions made. There are two areas of concern on Diana Road and two areas on Harstone Road, as well as by the bridge on the Harstone Road. Mr. Johnson will have some surplus tin for sale. They have donated some to the Fire Department for their training facility. He has received one low bid for Truck #7. It was agreed to wait for more offers.

The options for Loghrin Road resurfacing were discussed. Council have previously discussed the chip and sealing or asphalt options for the road, with concerns of how long it would last with the number of trucks turning on and off this road, being of concern. It was agreed that a gravel lift would be required with both options, or it may be the better option overall. It was agreed to move forward with a gravel lift with calcium applied for this year and see how it turns out, regarding dust and maintenance required throughout the year. The project will be paid for through the Northern Ontario Resource Development Support Fund (NORDS) funding program.

The Speed/Traffic Counter sign has been installed on Loghrin Road. The data collected will show the speed of the traffic as well as a count going in both directions. It was agreed to leave the sign up in this location for another week. It will then be moved to different roads throughout the Township for data collection.

The Administration and Roads Voucher to July 10, 2023, was reviewed and it was

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3. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

THAT THE ADMINISTRATION AND ROADS VOUCHER #2023-13 DATED JULY 10, 2023 TOTTALLING \$92,619.47 BE APPROVED AND PAID.

Carried

The Statement of Revenue and Expenditures to June 30, 2023 were unavailable.

The second draft of the Township of O'Connor's 2023 budget was presented to Council. The Clerk-Treasurer made note of the changes that were made since the budget meeting held on June 27, 2023. Council discussed additional options regarding Council honourarium expenses and agreed to not accept payment for their attendance when they host the Public Information Session in regard to the budget increases. The December Council meeting dates were also discussed. As the meetings are currently held on the first and third Monday of the month in December and there is only one week between the November meeting and the first December meeting, it was agreed for this year, to hold only one December meeting on the second Monday of the month. The Procedure By-law will be reviewed in the new year to determine whether or not this will be changed on a regular basis, based on the results of the meeting change this year. The current tax levy and tax rates increases were discussed. As presented the levy increase is at 14.79%, with a tax rate increase of 12.582%.

The Clerk-Treasurer also provided Council with the surrounding municipalities 2023 tax increase for information purposes.

The Tenders for the demolition and rebuilding of the accessibility ramp, stairway and back entry door were opened at 8:09 p.m. Two bids were received, and both were significantly over budget and were not accepted at this time. The bidders will be contacted to see what the cost of just replacing the door with an accessible door and hardware would cost. Administration will also look into the funding to see if the project must be completed in 2023, whether our own employees can complete part of the project and whether or not only a portion of the project can be completed, for the Township to still be eligible to receive the funding. More information will be brought back to the August Council meeting.

The By-laws and Policies were reviewed as follows:

- a) Road Department Policies. The title of Leadhand will be amended to read Road Superintendent/Leadhand in Policy 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 1.7, 1.8, 3.6 and 4.3. The snowplowing routes in Policy 1.1 will be updated. The wording in 1.3 regarding the application of calcium will be re-worded. Policy 1.4 regarding Brushing will remove items 2) and 3). The Use of Township Equipment Policy was reviewed. It was agreed to keep the hourly rates as they are for the balance of this year and review them in January 2024. These amended documents will be brought back to Council at the next meeting for final approval.

Mr. Johnson left the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

- b) By-law Number 2023-29 – Being a by-law to establish the tax ratios for the year 2023 was read and it was

4. Moved by A. Crane
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

THAT BY-LAW NUMBER 2023-29 BEING A BY-LAW TO ESTABLISH THE TAX RATIOS FOR THE YEAR 2023 BE PASSED AND ENTERED INTO THE BY-LAW BOOK.

Carried

- c) By-law Number 2023-30 - Being a by-law to adopt the estimates of all sums required during the year 2023 for the general purposes of the municipality, and to strike the levy for the year 2023 and to provide for the adoption of tax rates and to

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further provide for penalty and interest in default of payment thereof for 2023. The number of installments and the due dates were discussed. Due to the increase in the 2023 taxes, it was agreed to have three installments, rather than two, to allow the residents to make smaller payments. The due dates of the final taxes will be August 31st, September 29th and October 31, 2023. It was

5. Moved by Carly Torkkeli
Seconded by J. Sobolta

THAT BY-LAW NUMBER 2023-30 BEING A BY-LAW TO ADOPT THE ESTIMATES OF ALL SUMS REQUIRED DURING THE YEAR 2023 FOR THE GENERAL PURPOSES OF THE MUNICIPALITY AND TO STRIKE THE LEVY FOR THE YEAR 2023 AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE ADOPTION OF TAX RATES AND TO FURTHER PROVIDE THE PENALTY AND INTEREST IN DEFAULT OF PAYMENT THEREOF FOR 2023 BE PASSED AND ENTERED INTO THE BY-LAW BOOK.

Carried

- d) Draft By-law for Regulating the Running at Large and Controlling of Dogs within the Township and to repeal By-law Number 2006-04 was reviewed. Minor changes will be made to the document and brought back to Council for final approval.
- e) A draft Policy for Dogs Running at Large, replacing the current policy, was reviewed. Administration will confirm if any changes made tonight in the Dogs Running at Large By-law will affect the Policy, prior to approval. This Policy will be brought back to Council for final approval at the next meeting.
- f) Amendments to the Policy for an Annual Stipend paid to Volunteer Fire Department Members. A clause regarding attendance at training courses was added and it was

6. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

THAT POLICY NUMBER 5.3 THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR'S POLICY FOR AN ANNUAL STIPEND PAID TO VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT MEMBERS AS AMENDED BE APPROVED AND ENTERED INTO THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR'S POLICY BOOK.

Carried

- g) A draft Policy for Volunteer Firefighter Training was read. Council did not have any changes at this time, however, would like to have both the Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief to review the document to ensure that it is accurate regarding their current training.

Resolutions for endorsement were read as follows:

- a) Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury regarding the right-to-repair movement was filed.

Correspondence was read as follows:

- a) Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) – NOMA Board Meeting Summary Report for June 20, 2023.
- b) Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) 2022 Audited Financial Statements.
- c) Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry regarding draft technical bulletin on the Environmental Registry of Ontario to support municipalities and conservation authorities with flood hazard mapping activities.
- d) Tbaytel Fibre – notice regarding Tbaytel notice Fibre coming to your neighbourhood received in the mail at the Township office. Not all members of Council received the letter so Council is not sure if all residents received the letter or if it was only a selected area.
- e) Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs regarding Food Safety and Environmental Policy Branch, Policy Division – Implementing Provincial Policy and Guidance on Permitted Uses in Prime Agricultural Areas.

The balance of the correspondence was passed around table

Under Old business, Council discussed

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Report to Council regarding the Senior Active Living Centres program application for funding. At the last meeting Council was willing to partner in an application to the program and offered the use of the Community Centre for events but did not want to be responsible for the programming. Administrative Assistant Laforest has been in communication with Ms. Pierce from Norwest Community Health Centre, and she has provided program suggestions including Tai Chi, Jamming Sessions and Karaoke Cafes, Stitch & Whittle Away, Tea and Talk, Spice it Up session based on healthy food choices and Pickle ball, Saucer Toss or Corn Hole League. Ms. Pierce is willing to fully operate the programs, however, cannot submit the application on behalf of the Townships. If Council is willing, the application could be submitted through the Township of O'Connor and the programs be shared with the Township of Conmee and the Municipality of Neening as well, to provide alternate locations to accommodate seniors from all areas. It was

7. Moved by Bishop Racicot
Seconded by A. Crane

THAT THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR SUBMIT A PROPOSAL TO THE MINISTRY FOR SENIORS AND ACCESSIBILITY TO LAUNCH A NEW SENIORS ACTIVE LIVING CENTRES (SALC) PROGRAM EXPANSION IN 2023-2024.

APPLICATION TO BE SUBMITTED BY JULY 20, 2023.

Carried

- b) As per Council's request, Nicole Lehto, Enbridge Gas, has confirmed their availability to meet with Council on August 14th at 6 p.m. This meeting will be an information session and closed to the public. It was

8. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

THAT THE FOLLOWING DATE BE SET FOR A CLOSED MEETING WITH ENBRIDGE GAS.

MONDAY, AUGUST 14, 2023 AT 6:00 P.M.

THE MEETING WILL BE HELD IN THE O'CONNOR COUNCIL CHAMBERS.

Carried

Under New Business, Council discussed

- a) Setting a date for a Public Meeting for an Information Session regarding the 2023 Budget and tax increase. It was

9. Moved by A. Crane
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

THAT THE FOLLOWING DATE BE SET FOR A PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS THE 2023 BUDGET FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 16, 2023 AT 7 P.M.

THE MEETING WILL BE HELD IN THE O'CONNOR COMMUNITY CENTRE.

Carried

Notice of the meeting will be included, in the final tax bills, the August issue of the Cornerstone, on the Township's website and a reminder will be sent out on the Township's text messaging system.

- b) Lakehead Rural Municipal Coalition (LRMC) regarding Canada Post rural mailing addresses. The LRMC would like to know if the member municipalities are interested in pursuing changes to the mailing addresses in our communities. Council discussed

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the concerns noted in the correspondence and agreed to have the LRMC look further into the issue and setup a meeting with Canada Post to see what is involved in making these changes.

- c) Hymers Agricultural Society requesting permission to sell lottery tickets in the Township. Council had no concerns, and it was

10. Moved by Carly Torkkeli
Seconded by J. Sobolta

THAT THE HYMERS AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY BE ALLOWED TO SELL 50-50 RAFFLE TICKETS IN THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR FOR THEIR UPCOMING FUNDRAISER, LOTTERY LICENCE #M720835.

Carried

Under Further New Business, Councillor Sobolta asked Council if they had any concerns that they would like him to address at the Lakehead Police Service Board meeting coming up this week. At this time there were no concerns.

Councillor Crane also inquired into whether the air conditioning in the Community Centre was working properly, as it was very warm in the Community Centre during the Strawberry Festival. It was confirmed that the system is working as it is supposed to. It was not turned on early enough and the doors were left open allowing the warm air in.

Mayor Vezina provided Council with what he would like to present at the Budget Information Session. He will create a power point presentation explaining the budget process, the funding opportunities and provide as much information as he can to reassure the residents that Council has done everything they can to keep the increase as low as possible for 2023. It was agreed to serve beverages but no snacks during the session.

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

- a) Marcus Powlowski, MP – New Horizons for Seniors Program. Administration will look into whether or not this program could also be used to piggyback on the application to be submitted to the Senior Active Living Centres program.
b) The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board – (TBDSSAB) regarding the 2023 Association of Municipalities of Ontario Conference Briefings.

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

It was

11. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

THAT THE COUNCIL MEETING ADJOURN TO THE SPECIAL MEETING TO BE HELD ON MONDAY, AUGUST 14, 2023 AT 6:00 P.M. IN THE O'CONNOR COUNCIL CHAMBERS.

TIME BEING: 10:03 P.M.

Carried

Mayor

Clerk-Treasurer