

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – MARCH 13, 2023

Minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday, March 13, 2023 at 7 p.m. in the O'Connor Council Chambers and virtual.

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

Visitors: Brendan Rea,
Jeremy Innanen, Innanen Outdoors, Land and Wildlife Management

Absent: Kelly Johnson, Leadhand

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

1. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

THAT THE AGENDA FOR THE MEETING BE APPROVED.

Carried

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, FEBRUARY 27, 2023 BE ACCEPTED AS PRINTED.

Carried

Mr. Rea was asked if he wished to address Council and he replied no.

Mr. Jeremy Innanen was welcomed to the table. Introductions were made and he proceeded to make his presentation to Council. Mr. Innanen is speaking on behalf of Andy Graham, property owner, in regard to the property located at 93 Smart Road. Mr. Innanen explained the future plans for this property including land-based education and eco-tourism. They hope to provide education to high school age students, and people with autism, offering a new school of teaching, with possible expansion at a later date to younger age children. The facility will provide educational opportunities regarding identifying animal prints, tree identification, hands on gardening, apple orchards, canning and preserving, yoga, meditation therapy, farm animals including chickens, geese, horses and sleigh rides, sled dogs, etc. There would also be opportunity for adults as well. They have been in contact with the local school boards, including the Lakehead Board of Education and would bring out classes for field trips. They are currently looking to build an "A frame" building, currently being engineered, for corporate events and team building, with the capacity of approximately 100 people, with a residential dwelling on the top floor of this building. They will be including an industrial kitchen in the building, meeting all Thunder District Health Unit requirements. They are also looking into bringing in a licensed vendor. They will also be obtaining building permits for the construction of a barn.

Council asked Mr. Innanen questions regarding the activities on the property. Only the owners would be staying over night on the property. The sessions will be day-based activities, no firearms would be used, possibly archery, and no religious opportunity. It would be a wellness group; teachings open to rural school boards and more nature/outdoors based. This is a private based company, not a chain, with its home base in Kenora, Ontario. Dana Innanen will be the coordinator of the property. They do have \$5,000,000 in insurance coverage. If students are on site, a registered nurse will be present. The property is 140 acres, with trails throughout the property, which are currently being used by the dog sleds. The name of the facility will be the Jolly Ranch and more information will be available online. They are currently working on the development stages of the property and want to ensure that they are complying with any Township regulations.

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – MARCH 13, 2023

Council would like to look further into the zoning requirements for this type of facility. Most of the operations would fall under the permitted uses in the Rural Residential zone, however some of the activities may require a different zoning, which could require a Zoning Amendment. As there is a process and timing of notices and appeals with an application, this could possibly take a couple months for approval. Mr. Innanen asked if it would be possible to build the "A frame" building under the residential zoning and apply for the different zoning at a later date. It was noted that the Building Code would require different code requirements for a public building that would have to be considered during construction. Mr. Innanen will pass along Council's concerns regarding the Zoning to Mr. Graham. Mr. Innanen was thanked for attending and left the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

Mr. Johnson, Leadhand, was unable to attend at the last minute, so no Road Department update was provided. The Health and Safety Report for January 18, 2023 was read, with no questions.

The Administration and Roads Voucher for March 13, 2023 was reviewed and it was

3. Moved by A. Crane
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

THAT THE ADMINISTRATION AND ROADS VOUCHER #2023-05 DATED MARCH 13, 2023 TOTTALLING \$58,031.78 BE APPROVED AND PAID.

Carried

The Statement of Revenue and Expenditures will be unavailable until the 2022 audit is complete.

Resolutions for endorsement were read as follows:

- a) Municipality of Chatham-Kent regarding reducing Municipal insurance costs and it was

4. Moved by A. Crane
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE MUNICIPALITY OF CHATHAM-KENT REGARDING REDUCING MUNICIPAL INSURANCE COSTS, TO DETERMINE WHAT TOOLS MAY BE AVAILABLE TO REDUCE INSURANCE COSTS, INCLUDING COOPERATIVE PURCHASING OF INSURANCE, CREATION OF A MUNICIPAL RECIPROCAL INSURANCE PROVIDER, OR LEGISLATIVE CHANGES TO ADDRESS INSURANCE COSTS TO MUNICIPALITIES BE ENDORSED.

Carried

- b) Municipality of Chatham-Kent regarding Support for Bill 5 – Stopping Harassment and Abuse by Local Leaders Act and it was

5. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE MUNICIPALITY OF CHATHAM-KENT EXPRESSING ITS SUPPORT FOR BILL 5 – STOPPING HARASSMENT AND ABUSE BY LOCAL LEADERS ACT WHICH WOULD REQUIRE THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MUNICIPAL COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF LOCAL BOARDS TO INCLUDE A REQUIREMENT TO COMPLY WITH WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT POLICIES AND PERMIT MUNICIPALITIES AND LOCAL BOARDS TO DIRECT THE INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER TO APPLY TO THE COURT TO VACATE A MEMBER'S SEAT IF THE COMMISSIONER'S INQUIRY DETERMINES THAT THE MEMBER HAS CONTRAVENED THIS REQUIREMENT BE ENDORSED.

Carried

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – MARCH 13, 2023

- c) Town of Carleton Place regarding Lanark County Interval House and Community Support and it was
6. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by A. Crane

THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE TOWN OF CARLETON PLACE RECOGNIZING THE ISSUES OF VIOLENCE IN RURAL COMMUNITIES AS SERIOUS TO THE HEALTH AND WELLNESS OF LOCAL FAMILIES; AND THAT THE TOWN OF CARLETON PLACE RECOGNIZES THE RURAL RENFREW COUNTY INQUEST AS IMPORTANT TO ALL RURAL COMMUNITIES; AND THAT BASED ON THE STATISTICS, DECLARED IPV (INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE)/VAW (VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN) AS EPIDEMIC AS PER RECOMMENDATION #1 OF THE RENFREW COUNTY JURY RECOMMENDATIONS BE ENDORSED.

Carried

Correspondence was read as follows:

- a) The Lakehead Conservation Authority (LRCA) – regarding the 2023 LRCA levy request. The 2023 Levy has increased over 2022 by \$165.00.
- b) The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board – Update from the Board March 8, 2023.
- c) Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks – i) regarding the Amendments to the Municipal Class Environment Assessment.
ii) Letter dated March 10, 2023 – providing the latest efforts to modernize the environmental assessment program in Ontario – seeking comments by May 9, 2023.
- The balance of the correspondence was passed around the table.

Under Old Business, Council discussed

- a) NorthWestern Ontario Recreational Trails Association (NWORTA) – draft letter to residents regarding trail for Council's comments and approval was read. Council would like a minor change made to the letter to include the Township of O'Connor's contact information in case the resident would like further detail or information. The letter will be finalized and sent out to all residents located on the roadways that the trail is proposing to use.
- b) Removal of Volunteer Firefighter from roster. Fire Chief Mattas has contacted this member and he has agreed that as he has moved out of the Township he would not be available to continue with the team at this time. It was

7. Moved by Bishop Racicot
Seconded by J. Sobolta

THAT COUNCIL APPROVE THE REMOVAL OF THE FOLLOWING NAME FROM THE ACTIVE ROSTER OF THE O'CONNOR VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT AND/OR FIRST RESPONSE TEAM:

1. BRENDAN BYERS

Carried

- c) Tbaytel Broadband Project Media Release – held on Friday March 3rd. Tbaytel will attend the March 27, 2023 Council meeting to provide more detail to Council on the Lakehead Rural Municipal Coalition (LRMC) project, including the map showing the areas to be connected in the first stage of the project.
- d) The Clerk-Treasurer provided a brief update on the Infrastructure Ontario (IO) loan process. She has been in continuous communication with the Manager, Loan Underwriting Finance & Lending at Infrastructure Ontario. He is trying to help the Township get the highest amount possible through IO. The Clerk-Treasurer was asked to confirm if the OCIF funding could be used for this loan as it can be used for debt repayment. Upon confirmation with OCIF, the Township cannot use OCIF funding for rolling stock or municipal garages or offices, so that option is not available to us. Once the final amount of the loan option is determined Council will have 120 days from the final day of construction to transfer the construction loan into a debenture. The Clerk-Treasurer also reported that she has inquired with the bank to see if the current bank loan for the snowplow truck can be paid out earlier and

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – MARCH 13, 2023

transferred to IO for a loan with a set interest rate to avoid the volatile variable interest rate and is still waiting for a reply.

Under Further Old Business, Councillor Sobolta informed Council that he has been speaking with a contact at MP Marcus Powlowski's office. They are currently looking into whether or not there may be funding for a feasibility study for a local retirement home.

Under New Business, Council discussed

a) BDO Canada LLP - letter regarding one-time fee for the adoption of CAS 315 Revised. There will be a one-time additional fee of \$2,500 in 2023 for the Township Audit due to the new auditing standard that covers identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement which has resulted in significant changes to our audit planning.

b) Approval of retirement gifts for four employees was discussed and it was

8. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

THAT THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR COUNCIL RECOGNIZE DENNIS EHN – DISPOSAL SITE CARETAKER, RICHARD PITTON – EQUIPMENT OPERATOR #2, IAN ROBSON – BY-LAW ENFORCEMENT AND POA OFFICER, AND KEN YANISHEWSKI – CHIEF BUILDING OFFICIAL, IN THEIR RETIREMENT AS EMPLOYEES OF THE TOWNSHIP OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS IN THESE POSITIONS. COUNCIL WOULD LIKE TO PURCHASE A CARD AND GIFT CARD FOR EACH OF THEM.

Carried

Under Further New Business, it was suggested that the Township look into the possibility of logging the 80 acres of Township owned property on Connolly Road. The Clerk-Treasurer will look further into how to go about tendering this out and bring it back to Council. Council will take a look at the property in the spring to see how much and what types of trees are on the property.

Issues brought forward or letters received after the agenda was sent out were discussed as follows:

- a) Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) – regarding the 2023 Annual Repayment Limit. The Clerk-Treasurer noted that she has also sent a copy of this document to Infrastructure Ontario and was told that this limit does not include expenses.
- b) City of Thunder Bay Court Services re: Provincial Offences Act – 2023 Budget. This amount is estimated to be \$439 less than in 2022.
- c) Thunder Bay Veterinary Services Annual Meeting Agenda and Statement of Account were reviewed. It was noted that the Annual General meeting date has been changed and is now conflicting with the Essentials of Municipal Fire Protection session to be held in Conmee on March 16th. As there are alternate virtual session dates for this training, Councillor Torkkeli, one of the Township of O'Connor Representatives on the Board has now registered to take the course online. Councillor Sobolta would also like to attend the meeting as the second Representative and will look into a virtual option of the training. The Clerk-Treasurer will notify the organization of the change in attendance.
- d) Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) – regarding the NOMA Strategic Plan Intern 2023-2024. NOMA will be hiring a Strategic Plan Intern for a 1 year term starting June 5, 2023. A full job description was reviewed, submissions will be accepted until April 28, 2023.

For information purposes, a Building Permit was approved for a garage at 595 Highway 595.

Brendan Rea left the meeting at 8:34 p.m. and it was

9. Moved by Bishop Racicot
Seconded by A. Crane

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – MARCH 13, 2023

BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE NEXT PORTION OF THE MEETING BE CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC IN ORDER TO DISCUSS LABOUR RELATIONS OR EMPLOYEE NEGOTIATIONS; PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION 239(2)(D) OF THE MUNICIPAL ACT, 2001.

TIME BEING: 8:35 P.M.

Carried

The Chief Building Official position and the Casual Disposal Site Caretaker position were discussed.

10. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

TIME BEING: 8:48 P.M.

THAT WE NOW MOVE TO OPEN MEETING.

Carried

The Clerk-Treasurer was instructed to inform the Municipality of Neebing and the Township of Conmee that Council is willing to hire Martin Tempelman for the position of Chief Building Official, under the mentorship of Gordon Cuthbertson while he is taking the required courses, and has given permission to negotiate the payment breakdown between the two, using the current pay structure of the CBO. Upon final approval and acceptance of the position a By-law will be brought back to Council for the appointment.

An application was also received for the position of Casual Disposal Site Caretaker. Council discussed the position in closed and it was agreed that the applicant be hired as casual relief for Ms. Tyance, and it was

11. Moved by A. Crane
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

THAT GLORIA HENDERSON BE HIRED AS THE CASUAL RELIEF FOR THE DISPOSAL SITE CARETAKER POSITION. RATE OF PAY WILL BE THE ENTRY WAGE AS SET FOR 2023.

Carried

Both Ms. Tyance and Ms. Henderson will be notified of the hiring and training will be scheduled. It was

12. Moved by Carly Torkkeli
Seconded by J. Sobolta

THAT THE COUNCIL MEETING ADJOURN TO THE COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON MONDAY, MARCH 27, 2023 AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS AND VIRTUAL.

TIME BEING: 8:50 P.M.

Carried

Mayor

Clerk-Treasurer