

## TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – MARCH 22, 2021

Minutes of the Council meeting held virtually on March 22, 2021 at 7 p.m. from the Township office.

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

Visitors: Henry Mattas, Fire Chief  
Kelly Johnson, Leadhand (in the Council Chambers)  
Erin Laforest, Administrative Assistant  
Bruce Caldwell, Manager of Highway Operations NW, MTO  
Cathy Seeley, Head of Operation Services, MTO  
Lance Wakewich, BlueFox Communications  
Stephen Wiebe

Absent: Councillor Handy

Mayor Vezina called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

1. Moved by A. Crane  
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 Bishop Racicot

**THAT THE MINUTES FROM THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, MARCH 8, 2021 BE ACCEPTED AS PRINTED.**

Carried

The visitors joining virtually were recognized by Council as being in attendance.

Mayor Vezina welcomed Mr. Caldwell and Ms. Seeley from the Ministry of Transportation to the meeting and introductions were made. The upcoming construction scheduled for Highway 595, from Highway 590 to Highway 608 was discussed, including the scope of the work that is planned for the next two years. Ms. Seeley will oversee the project. Council was informed that the project has had to be deferred five times due to major structure replacement and detours in the area. The project will consist of ditching, which was started last year, and will continue this year, eighteen culverts will be replaced and a drainage problem for a resident in the village of Hymers will be resolved. They will be pulverizing the existing surface, 50mm of granular "A" will be added and a resurfacing oil treatment will be applied twice with a third coat of the oil treatment being applied in the following year. Council expressed their concerns with the current condition of Highway 595 in the Township of O'Connor.

Council also expressed a concern with regard to the maintenance of the highway corridors including the brush between the fence line and the ditch line and ditching. Council requested a response back from the Ministry staff on their policies for this work.

Mr. Caldwell and Ms. Seeley were thanked for attending and they and Mr. Johnson left the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Mr. Lance Wakewich from BlueFox Communications was welcomed to the meeting. Mr. Wakewich introduced himself and explained that he is the owner and operators of BlueFox Communications, an innovative wireless internet service provider (WISP). Mr. Wakewich explained how this system works and the internet speeds that can be reached with his service. He utilizes the newest leading-edge equipment to wirelessly connect clients to his service, initially via a centrally located base or operations or

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primary transmission site. There is a high-powered wireless connection or Fibre access utilized at a central location. Sector or point to point antennas are mounted to a central tower location, to distribute broadband wirelessly to clients. Clients utilize specific hardware to connect to the main tower for internet access, and connect their own router or equipment to use the internet on their home devices. They can use sector antennas, mesh networking or MicroPOPs to share the signal. He has had offers from O'Connor residents to use their property for potential tower/relay sites. He supports local and sources local contractors and will purchase his equipment from within Canada. There is currently nothing within a 300km radius like this and he feels it is a good opportunity to pursue in our area. The CRTC has defined a goal of 50Mbps download and 10Mbps upload for all Canadians, and he aims to provide at least 2x that by the last quarter of 2021. He can offer different size packages ranging from \$45 to \$75 monthly. The Township of O'Connor fire hall tower was suggested as a possible piece of equipment to help relay a signal to residents in O'Connor.

Council asked additional questions to clarify how this system would work following his presentation and asked how it compares to his competitors.

Mr. Wakewich asked Council if they would be willing to provide a non-binding letter of intent or endorsement that he could utilize to strengthen financial requests, and government grant applications. Council agreed that a non-binding letter of support would be provided to help him strengthen financial funding requests.

Mr. Wakewich thanked Council for hearing his deputation and he appreciates the interest. Council thanked Mr. Wakewich for his presentation and informed him of the Township's newsletter which goes out to all residents in O'Connor if he wished to advertise.

Fire Chief Mattas was welcomed to the meeting. The Fire Department report from February 18 to March 18, 2021 was read. There have been no calls in this time.

All training has been put on hold again due to the COVID-19 restrictions. With Fire Season approaching Fire Chief Mattas has asked the Captains to ensure that all grass fire equipment is ready in case there are any calls.

Fire Chief Mattas confirmed that the tower located between the garage and the firehall is currently not being used and could possibly be available for use by BlueFox Communications if Council agree.

The WSIB coverage amount for the Volunteer Fire Fighters was briefly discussed. Fire Chief Mattas has not met with the members so has not been able to confirm the amount of coverage needed for the members at this time. Council asked him to pursue this as we need to ensure that all members are covered for an adequate amount. The Mutual Aid Association is still trying to confirm how much the volunteer members will be entitled to, if injured, on a Township call. The Clerk-Treasurer did provide a section from the WSIB website that does describe the average earnings in case of injury. The current selected amount requested by the deemed employer is used to calculate the volunteer's net average in case of injury. Their actual earnings in regular employment are not considered in the calculation.

The Ministry of Solicitor General letter announcing a grant to municipal fire service members was read. An application was submitted by the deadline of March 19, 2021. It was

3. Moved by A. Crane  
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

**THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR SUPPORT THE APPLICATION TO THE OFFICE OF THE FIRE MARSHAL FOR THE FIRE SAFETY GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$4,700.00. THIS GRANT WILL BE USED TO SUPPORT ONGOING TRAINING NEEDS TO ASSIST THE O'CONNOR FIRE DEPARTMENT.**

Carried

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The Fire Marshal's Communique, dated March 4, 2021, with regard to the Ontario Fire College Training Modernization was read. The College is already closed. The locations of the proposed locations of the Regional Training Centre were discussed. Council would like to ensure that one will be located in Thunder Bay. Fire Chief Mattas noted that the Zone is looking into this. It was noted that the Municipality of Oliver Paipooonge is also requesting that they be a designated site.

Ministry of the Solicitor General letter regarding COVID-19 Relief Funding for Municipalities Program. The Clerk-Treasurer confirmed that the funding referred to in the letter is the additional funding that was announced previously to municipalities from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Fire Chief Mattas was thanked for attending.

The summary of the Administration and Roads Voucher to March 22, 2021 was reviewed and it was

4. Moved by Jerry Loan  
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

**THAT THE ADMINISTRATION AND ROADS VOUCHER #2021-06 DATED MARCH 22, 2021 TOTTALLING \$40,476.42 BE APPROVED AND PAID.**

Carried

The Statement of Revenue and Expenditures were unavailable.

By-law Number 2021-08 being a by-law to regulate open-air burning of materials and to govern the issuance of fire permits in the Township of O'Connor was reviewed. A new online method to apply for a fire permit is being initiated and administration is recommending that the By-law be updated to reflect this. It was

5. Moved by Jerry Loan  
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

**THAT BY-LAW NUMBER 2021-08 BEING A BY-LAW TO REGULATE OPEN-AIR BURNING OF MATERIALS AND TO GOVERN THE ISSUANCE OF FIRE PERMITS IN THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR BE PASSED AND ENTERED IN THE BY-LAW BOOK.**

Carried

Resolutions for endorsement were read as follows:

- a) Municipality of Shuniah endorsing the Municipality of West Grey's resolution with regard to Municipal Insurance Rates and endorsing AMO's recommendations to investigate municipal insurance issues. Council have previously endorsed AMO's recommendation at their January 11, 2021 meeting so this item was filed.
- b) Township of Conmee – copy of the letter submitted to the City of Thunder Bay and the resolution supporting the strategic placement of ambulance bases throughout the district. It was

6. Moved by Jerry Loan  
Seconded by A. Crane

**THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE TOWNSHIP OF CONMEE SUPPORTING THE PLACEMENT OF AMBULANCE BASES THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT TO BETTER RESPOND TO CALLS FOR SERVICE BASED ON GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION AND ADDING REGARD TO LIVES AND RESPONSE TIME BE ENDORSED.**

Carried

- c) Township of South Glengarry regarding the COVID-19 vaccines and it was

7. Moved by A. Crane  
Seconded by Jerry Loan

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**THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH GLENGARRY URGING THE PREMIER DOUG FORD AND THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO TO PROCURE APPROVED COVID-19 VACCINES TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO THE RESIDENTS OF THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO, INCREASE THE PROVINCE'S VACCINATION RATE TO KEEP PACE WITH THE DOSES THAT HAVE BEEN RECEIVED AND ACCELERATE THE LAUNCH OF ITS COVID-19 VACCINE BOOKING SYSTEM BE ENDORSED.**

Carried

Correspondence were read as follows:

- a) MPs Peter Julian, Don Davies & Jenny Kwan – reply to Council's endorsed resolution supporting Bill C-213, the Canada Pharmacare Act.
- b) Municipality of Tweed – copy of letter to Premier Ford regarding Advocacy for Reform of Joint and Several Liability.
- c) Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing regarding Capacity Limit Changes for Some Events in Grey-Lockdown, Phase 1 COVID Vaccination Plan for Frontline Emergency Personnel & new COVID border testing orders.
- d) Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) – i) Policy Update – March 10, 2021 – regarding More Social Services Relief Funding to Protect the Homeless during COVID-19 and Ontario Vaccine Rollout Update.  
ii) Policy Update – March 12, 2021 – regarding New Support for Local Fire Services and Updated COVID-19 Vaccine Tools and Resources.  
iii) Policy Update – March 18, 2021 – regarding Long-Term Care Modernization and Expansion, Asset Management Plan Timelines Extended, and Age-Friendly Community Planning.
- e) Assessment Review Boards – Tribunals Ontario – regarding Appeals Resolution Strategy – 2021 Taxation Year.

Under Old Business, Council discussed

- a) Blue Fox Communications, Lance Wakewich deputation earlier in the meeting. No further discussion was had.
- b) Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) – Second Call for Nominations for Offices of President & Executive Vice-President. No names will be put forward.
- c) AMO Policy Update March 8, 2021 regarding Municipal Councillor Code of Conduct Consultations. This item was brought back from the last meeting for further discussion if Council wished to discuss it further. No further discussion was had.
- d) A discussion with regard to possible budget meeting dates was held and whether or not Council would move forward if they had to be held virtually. Council agreed that dates for the Road Department and Fire Department presentation of their budget would be set at this meeting. Whether or not they will be held virtually or in person will be determined closer to the date. The Administration and full budget discussion date will be set at a later date. It was

8. Moved by Bishop Racicot  
Seconded by A. Crane

**THAT THE FOLLOWING DATE BE SET FOR THE BUDGET MEETINGS:  
ROAD DEPARTMENT & FIRE DEPARTMENT APRIL 19<sup>TH</sup>, 2021 AT 7 P.M.**

**THE MEETING WILL BE HELD IN THE O'CONNOR COMMUNITY CENTRE  
AND/OR VIRTUALLY DEPENDING ON THE COVID-19 CONDITIONS.**

Carried

Under New Business, Council discussed

- a) Solicitor General – Update on the new Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) detachment boards under the Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019 (CSPA). In response to feedback, an OPP detachment board framework has been developed that will provide municipalities and First Nation communities, receiving OPP services, the flexibility to create a board that reflects the community and its local needs. Councillor Loan, as the Township's representative on the Board, provided Council with a brief update on what the Lakehead Police Services Board is proposing.
- b) Kasper Wabinski – Kasper Transportation – i) seeking support for Coast-to-Coast Bus Coalition.

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- ii) CCBC – A Coast to Coast Bus Coalition proposal.
- iii) Copy of letter of support from Michael Gravelle, MPP Thunder Bay-Superior North. While the route would not go through the Township of O'Connor, Council would be willing to support his proposal and a letter will be forwarded.
- c) Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) – regarding an invitation to join AMO's webinar on Long-Term Care & Seniors Advocacy. No one from Council will participate. Administration will attend if time permits.
- d) Under Further New Business, Council noted that there is a garbage compactor truck currently located at the Ritchie Bros. Auction site on Highway 11/17. Council agreed to have Mr. Johnson follow up to see if it might be coming up for sale for our disposal site.

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

As the next meeting is still three weeks away, the decision as to whether the next meeting will be held virtually or in the O'Connor Community Centre will be determined closer to the date and will depend on the current COVID-19 situation.

- 9. Moved by Jerry Loan  
Seconded by A. Crane

**THAT THE COUNCIL MEETING ADJOURN TO THE COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON APRIL 12, 2021 AT 7:00 P.M.**

**TIME BEING: 9:30 P.M.**

Carried

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Mayor

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Clerk-Treasurer