

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – MARCH 23, 2020

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, March 23, 2020 at 7 p.m. in the O'Connor Community Centre. Due to the Provincial Emergency for the COVID-19 Pandemic declared, the Council meeting was moved into the O'Connor Community Centre to allow for social distancing.

Present: Mayor Vezina
Councillors: Crane, Loan, Racicot
Clerk-Treasurer Buob

Visitors: Fire Chief Henry Mattas
Deputy Clerk-Treasurer and Community Emergency Management
Coordinator (CEMC) – Linda Racicot

On the Telephone: Councillor Handy
Administrative Assistant Erin Laforest
Kelly Johnson, Leadhand called in at 8:05 p.m.

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

Disclosure of pecuniary interest and general nature thereof: none

1. Moved by Jerry Loan
Seconded by A. Crane

**THAT THE MINUTES FROM THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY,
MARCH 9, 2020 BE ACCEPTED AS PRINTED.**

Carried

Mrs. Racicot was asked if she wished to address Council on any personal matters and she replied no.

Fire Chief Mattas was welcomed to the table.

The Fire Department report to March 23, 2020 was read. The First Response Team has responded to three calls since the last report. Fire Chief Mattas noted the four members attended the Superior Propane plant tour on Highway 11/17 on February 25, 2020 and seven members attended the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry SP103 training, classroom session. The field portion of the course will follow at a later date.

Fire Chief Mattas informed Council that he has cancelled all fire meetings and training, as of last week and until further notice, due to COVID-19.

The O'Connor Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary meeting minutes held on February 11, 2020 were read. The minutes noted that the AED's have arrived and that the key is still coming. Clarification was provided with regard to what this key is for. The key is to be inserted into the AED if it is needed to be used on an infant. The key has since arrived and is now with the AED. Concern for the Auxiliary's current fundraiser raffle was discussed. Due to the COVID-19, the members are not able to go out and sell tickets to the public. The Clerk-Treasurer confirmed that the Ontario Alcohol and Gaming Commission has sent out information that states that if necessary, raffle draw dates may be extended due to the COVID-19. The Auxiliary can look into whether or not they will need to extend the draw date of June 20, 2020, as we get closer to the date.

Ms. Racicot was welcomed to the table and the current COVID-19 Pandemic was discussed. Council was provided with a draft Appendix for the Township of O'Connor's Emergency Plan entitled "Pandemic Influenza Plan". As this document was just provided tonight at the meeting Council was asked to bring it home and it will be discussed further at the next meeting. It was noted that a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) should also be developed once the Pandemic Influenza Plan is approved.

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Council agreed that the health and safety of our employees is of outmost importance. As the Township services are considered essential, and as we do have a small staff, the employees will continue to work with social distancing. The steps that each department has been taking to date were discussed. The Road employees generally work independently, however while in the shop the employees are social distancing. Their equipment is being sanitized at the end of the day, by themselves, in case they become ill and cannot come in the next day the equipment should be safe. The janitor is also doing extra sanitizing within the building.

The municipal office is currently closed to the public, however staff is still in the office to assist our residents or the general public by phone or email requests. Administration staff will work from home when possible or required, so that only two employees are in the office at a time. Extra cleaning and sanitizing is taking place by staff, as well as the janitor. The Community Centre is closed for all social events, as well as the Norwest Community Health Clinics.

The Fire Department and First Response Team are still attending any calls that they receive, however Central Ambulance Communication Centre (CACC) will not be calling the First Response team out if the patient is experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms. Only an ambulance will be paged. All meetings and training are cancelled until further notice.

As the Fire Permit season will begin on April 1st the issuing of permits was discussed. Other municipalities do allow for fire permits to be applied for online from the municipality's website. Council discussed whether or not the length of the permits should be extended or not. Fire Chief Mattas will contact the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to discuss this further. Administration will look further into what is involved to make these permits available online.

Property tax payments were also discussed. Currently the interim tax bills second installment is due on April 30, 2020. Other municipalities are deferring payment or interest for upcoming bills. As the Province has put a hold on mortgage payments, Council would like to wait and hear more about what the Province might do in this regard. Interest will still be applied to all outstanding accounts as of April 1, 2020 and Council will discuss at the next meeting whether or not they will defer future interest for non-payment. Budget meetings and the issuance of the final tax bills may also be delayed.

Mr. Johnson called into the meeting to enquire as to what the Township will do with regard to pay if an employee or a family member of an employee becomes ill or they have to self-isolate or self-quarantine for two weeks. Would the employee have to use their sick days or their holidays. Council agreed that no employee would have to use their holidays or sick time in this situation. Council discussed the Employment Insurance (EI) options and the new program that is being setup by the Provincial government for this crisis. There is no wait time, however, there has been concern with the high demand and the time to get a payment could be several weeks. Council suggested that if EI was applied for, the wage could be topped up to the employees regular wage as long as the EI would not deduct this payment as earnings. As more information rolls out with regard to the program Council will make a decision. At this time employees were guaranteed that they will be compensated one way or another. Mr. Johnson will follow up with administration tomorrow on any other issue that may arise from the meeting.

Mr. Johnson left the call at 8:20 p.m.

The continuation of regular Council meetings was discussed. Tonight's meeting was moved into the O'Connor Community Centre to allow for social distancing and it seems to be working. The option of teleconferencing the meeting was discussed. A by-law to allow for this will be discussed further in the meeting. As a Council meeting is supposed to be open to the public, if teleconferencing is used members of the public will also have to be able to call in. As the Township does not have anything setup to allow for this,

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options will have to be researched. The upcoming budget meetings were discussed, and it was noted that they may be rescheduled as staff will have other issues to deal with at this time. As well, due to the financial restraints on our residents as a result of this pandemic, tax bill due dates may be later than usual this year.

The Health and Safety of all is paramount, and as things progress day to day decisions could change. At this time Council will attempt to continue to hold their regular meetings in person in the O'Connor Community Centre, however, if the situation does not allow for this, teleconferencing will be attempted, or meetings could be cancelled all together.

A discussion with regard to a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) was briefly discussed. It was suggested that with regard to Section 3.3 - Communications in the Pandemic Influenza Plan, that in the plan there should be a breakdown, by department and priority, in case there is only one employee able to work. A draft will be prepared for Council's review.

Fire Chief Mattas was thanked for attending and he left the meeting at 8:56 p.m.

The Administration and Roads Voucher was reviewed, and it was

2. Moved by Bishop Racicot
Seconded by A. Crane

THAT THE ADMINISTRATION AND ROADS VOUCHER #2020-06 DATED MARCH 23, 2020 TALLING \$46,662.95 BE APPROVED AND PAID.

Carried

Resolutions for endorsement were read as follows:

- a) Peterborough County with regard to PAR 2020 03 Violence against Paramedics and Healthcare Workers. It was

3. Moved by Jerry Loan
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM PETERBOROUGH COUNTY FULLY SUPPORTING BILL C-211 AND URGING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO PASS BILL C-211, IN REGARD TO VIOLENCE AGAINST PARAMEDICS AND HEALTHCARE WORKERS BE ENDORSED.

Carried

- b) Municipality of Callander with regard to electronic meetings during COVID-19 Pandemic was filed as the Provincial Government has amended the Municipal Act to allow for this already.

Correspondence were read as follows:

- a) Office of the Premier regarding the Ontario Supporting Workers, Municipalities and Retailers in Response to COVID-19.
- b) Ministry of Health regarding Managing Health Illness and Return to Work COVID-19.
- c) Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) – i) Policy Update — Queen's Park Update – Much Activity and New Legislation of Municipal Interest.
ii) Policy Update - AMO COVID-19 Update: Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act Invoked.
iii) Policy Update – Queen's Park Update: New Provincial Legislation to Allow Virtual Municipal Council Meetings.
iv) Policy Update – AMO Providing New Resources for Municipal Councils regarding COVID-19.
v) COVID-19: AMO Update March 23, 2020.
vi) Policy Update – AMO COVID-19 Update – Province Announces \$200 Million of Social Services Funding.
- d) Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing regarding the Protecting Tenants and Strengthening Community Housing Act

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- e) The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) – Update from the Board – February 28, 2020
- f) Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks regarding Provincial Day of Action on Litter.
- g) Hydro One Networks Inc. regarding Waasigan Transmission Line – Update. Hydro One will be cancelling all upcoming in-person community information sessions.
- h) Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) – Inspection of Approved 2020-2021 Annual Work Schedule.

The balance of the correspondence was passed around the table.

Under Old Business, Council discussed

- a) Fire Smart Canada – email with regard to 2020 Award winners. The Township of O'Connor was successful in their funding request for \$500 to host a Wildfire Community Preparedness Day. Unfortunately, at this time, the Township will not be planning an event until the COVID-19 is cleared. The Deputy Clerk-Treasurer will look into whether or not this funding could also be used for Fire Smart merchandise that could be handed out to our residents instead of hosting an event.
- b) The casual Disposal Site Caretaker position was discussed. There were a couple of people who had enquired about the position however no applications were received as of today. It was suggested that perhaps due to the minimal number of hours people may not be interested. The Clerk-Treasurer will speak with Mr. Ehn further in this regard and may follow up with those who enquired. In the meantime, if there is a situation that Mr. Ehn cannot make it to work due to illness the road employees could be asked to step in until someone is found.

Under further old business, Council asked about the electronic sign and why it is not running. The Clerk-Treasurer noted that they are waiting for training. There was an issue with the originally scheduled date, which has been resolved and staff had not had time recently to follow up. It should be setup in the near future.

Under New Business, Council discussed

- a) Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing – i) Information Sheet to support municipalities regarding new meeting provisions outline in Bill 187 – Municipal Emergency Act, 2020.
 - ii) Additional information regarding legislation changes with regard to electronic meetings during an emergency.
 - iii) Copy of Bill 187 – An Act to Amend the Municipal Act, 2001 and the City of Toronto Act, 2006.
- b) The Township of O'Connor By-law #2002-22, the current by-law to govern the proceedings of Council and Committees and a draft by-law to amend the current by-law to allow for electronic participation by members, as per new legislation passed on March 19, 2020 were reviewed. Council agreed that this amending By-law should be passed tonight to ensure that, if required, future meetings can be held electronically during this Provincial emergency. It was

- 4. Moved by A. Crane
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

THAT BY-LAW NUMBER 2020-11 BEING A BY-LAW TO AMEND BY-LAW NUMBER 2002-22, THE PROCEDURAL BY-LAW BE PASSED AND ENTERED IN THE BY-LAW BOOK.

Carried

- c) Ministry of the Solicitor General – i) regarding set fines for Offences under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act – March 19, 2020. People can now be fined between \$750.00 and \$1,000.00 for failing to comply with orders made during a declared emergency.
Copies of the Order in Council 518/2020, 519/2020 and 520/2020 were read.

Under further new business Council suggested that staff ensure that the fuel tanks are all filled while the prices are down.

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For information purposes two building permits have been approved. One for renovations to a home on Connolly Road and one for a new home on Winslow Road.

Council discussed the upcoming meeting, scheduled for April 14, 2020. It was agreed to continue with the regularly scheduled meeting, and to hold them in person if possible. If necessary, however, they will attempt to do them remotely. It was suggested that if possible the agenda be kept lighter if the meeting is being held electronically.

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

THAT THE COUNCIL MEETING ADJOURN TO THE COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON TUESDAY, APRIL 14, 2020 AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE O'CONNOR COMMUNITY CENTRE.

TIME BEING: 9:31 P.M.

Carried

Mayor

Clerk-Treasurer