

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – MARCH 27, 2023

Minutes of the Council meeting held on March 27, 2023 at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers and virtual.

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

Visitors: Fire Chief, Henry Mattas
Brendan Rea
Bruce Caldwell, Heather Boyer, Lori Zimak - Ministry of Transportation

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

1. Moved by Bishop Racicot
Seconded by A. Crane

THAT THE AGENDA FOR THE MEETING BE APPROVED.

Carried

Disclosure of pecuniary interest and general nature thereof: none

2. Moved by A. Crane
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

THAT THE MINUTES FROM THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, MARCH 13, 2023 BE ACCEPTED AS PRINTED.

Carried

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

The Ministry of Transportation staff, Mr. Caldwell, Ms. Boyer, and Ms. Zimak were invited to the table and introductions were held. Mayor Vezina provided the Ministry staff with the concerns that have been brought to Council's attention regarding the winter maintenance of the local highways in the Township of O'Connor, including Highway 590 and 595. This winter with the weather conditions fluctuating, the icing, melting, and refreezing caused rutting and snowpack conditions, which were very dangerous. Several vehicles did hit the ditch this season on Highway 595, because of the condition. Council would like to see a higher winter maintenance standard level on these highways and the classification level was discussed. It was confirmed that the standard of winter maintenance was being met for this class of Highway and to move the standard to a higher level would not be possible at this time. Council noted that as the Township of O'Connor roadways were in better condition and a lot of traffic did move off the highway and travelled the Township roads instead.

The remedial work with the contractors, including better ice blading and treatment were discussed and addressed throughout the winter by the Ministry. If Council, staff or the residents come across a trouble area that is not being addressed it was noted that the 1-800 phone number on the maintenance signs is there to call. Someone is always monitoring that number 24/7. If there is no answer someone will be checking messages regularly. The Ministry is willing to regroup and address these concerns and issues with the contractor to ensure that they are addressed. During the workday all three representatives would be available to take Council or staff calls and they will work with the maintenance crew to address the issues. It was also noted that the 511 website does show where the plows are currently located at all times. The circuit route for this area is ten (10) hours.

The issue with water buildup at the Cedar Creek crossing on Highway 595 was discussed. Council pointed out that the guardrail standard should be changed as the posts are so close together the snow cannot get through and builds up around them, also restricting the water from running off and leaving more snow to melt in that area.

The tree and brush maintenance along the road allowance was discussed. As the brush grows closer to the road surface the animals tend to dart out of this brush without any

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – MARCH 27, 2023

warning for drivers. Council was informed that they may not do the whole road when brushing but will look for trouble areas. They are currently looking at where brushing may be required for this year. It was noted that there was brushing completed along Highway 595 in Hymers last year. Leaning trees over the highways was also noted as a concern and again Ministry staff invited Council or staff to make them aware of any concerns they may have.

Council asked if there was any upcoming Ministry of Transportation work scheduled in the area in the coming year. It was noted that the construction on Highway 595 is complete, however, there may be some culvert work in the area. There is an interactive map on the Ministry website which is a good reference for the projects that are coming up.

Ms. Boyer will share contact information for Council and staff, including the Maintenance Coordinator's information and they would be happy to keep the lines of communication open with the Township. Council thanked them for attending and they left the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Fire Chief Mattas was welcomed to the table. The Fire Department report for February 24 to March 23, 2023 was read. There were no calls in this time period. Council asked about the SCBA equipment. Fire Chief Mattas noted that three tanks were tested last year and there are six more to do, and they will be done this fall. There are no plans to replace the bottles at this time as long as they continue to pass the test.

The Volunteer Fire Department in the past has asked about hosting a Facebook page to promote their team and events and try to encourage recruitment. One of the members is now interested in managing the page. Council agreed that as long as the proper training is provided, and the Social Media policy is adhered to, they did not have any concerns. Administrative Assistant Laforest will oversee the page and provide the training.

It was agreed to move item #10, By-laws and Policies, ahead on the agenda to discuss with Fire Chief Mattas.

a) By-law Number 2023-11 – Being a By-law authorizing the execution of an agreement with Ornge was reviewed and it was

3. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

THAT BY-LAW NUMBER 2023-11 BEING A BY-LAW AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF AN AGREEMENT WITH ORNGE AS IT SETS OUT THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE USE, OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE HELIPAD BE PASSED AND ENTERED INTO THE BY-LAW BOOK.

Carried

The following Policies for the Fire Department were discussed.

- b) Draft Policy 5.1 – Policy for the Volunteer Fire Department
- c) Draft Policy 5.3 – Policy for the Stipend Paid to Volunteer Fire Department Members
- d) Draft Policy 5.4 – Policy to Establish a Training and Mileage Allowance for Volunteer Fire Department Members.

No changes will be made to Policy 5.1 or 5.3 as presented and only minor changes will be made to 5.4. to include additional clarification. An expense form for eligible expense claims will be developed and included with the Policy. All Policies will be brought back for approval at the next meeting.

Once the Policies have been approved, a meeting will be set up between the Fire Department, Council and staff to go over the By-law and Policies with the Volunteer Fire Department members.

Fire Chief Mattas was thanked for attending and left the meeting at 8:23 p.m.

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – MARCH 27, 2023

The Administration and Roads Voucher was reviewed, and it was

4. Moved by Carly Torkkeli
Seconded by J. Sobolta

THAT THE ADMINISTRATION AND ROADS VOUCHER #2023-06 DATED MARCH 27, 2023 TOTTALLING \$49,814.65 BE APPROVED AND PAID.

Carried

Resolutions for endorsement were read as follows:

- a) Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) regarding A Call to the Provincial Government to Address Homelessness in Ontario. Council has also, at a previous meeting, passed a resolution in this regard so this resolution was filed.
b) Municipality of North Perth regarding School Bus Stop Arm Cameras. This resolution was filed.
c) Municipality of Calvin requesting the Provincial Government through the Minister of Education extend the moratorium on most pupil accommodation Reviews. It was

5. Moved by A. Crane
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE MUNICIPALITY OF CALVIN REQUESTING THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION TO EXTEND THE MORATORIUM ON MOST PUPIL ACCOMMODATION REVIEWS IN ORDER TO ALLOW MUNICIPALITIES, TOWNSHIPS, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND SUBDIVISIONS THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROSPER, DEVELOP AND GROW WITHOUT BEING HINDERED BY SCHOOL CLOSURES DUE TO LOW ENROLMENTS THAT COULD QUICKLY CHANGE BE ENDORSED.

Carried

- d) Town of Essex – i) regarding Tax Classification of Short-Term Rental Units was filed.
ii) regarding the reinstatement of Legislation Permitting a Municipality to Retain Surplus Proceeds from Tax Sales. It was

6. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE TOWN ON ESSEX REGARDING THE REINSTATEMENT OF LEGISLATION PERMITTING A MUNICIPALITY TO RETAIN SURPLUS PROCEEDS FROM TAX SALES BE ENDORSED.

Carried

- e) Township of Lucan Biddulph regarding Future Accuracy of Permanent Register of Electors was filed.
f) Corporation of the County of Huron regarding a Call to Action: Review of the Cannabis Act was filed.
g) Township of Warwick regarding CN Railway Contribution Requirements under the Drainage Act and Impacts on Municipal Drain Infrastructure in Ontario. It was

7. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE TOWNSHIP OF WARWICK REGARDING THE CN RAILWAY'S CONTRIBUTION REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE DRAINAGE ACT AND IMPACTS ON MUNICIPAL DRAIN INFRASTRUCTURE IN ONTARIO BE ENDORSED.

Carried

Correspondence was read as follows:

- a) Lakehead Rural Municipal Coalition (LRMC) – Minutes of the January 17, 2023 meeting.
b) Ministry of Infrastructure regarding Accelerated High Speed Internet Program

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – MARCH 27, 2023

(AHSIP) – Update. The letter stated that during the announcement held on August 4, 2022 our municipality was identified as being included in one or more of the project areas as a part of the reverse auction process. As the Ministry works with the successful service providers to finalize the project agreements, addresses within our municipality were removed from the AHSIP program. Council will confirm with Tbaytel at the April 11, 2023 meeting if the addresses removed from this program are the addressed included in the LRMC Broadband application or other addresses within the Township of O'Connor.

- c) Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) – i) Housing and Homelessness Update.
- d) Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry – i) regarding March 16, 2023 update to the proposal to make amendments to Ontario Regulation 161/17 under the Public Lands Act regarding the use of floating accommodations.
ii) Inspection of 2023 – 2024 Annual Work Schedules.
- e) Tbaytel – regarding the Local 10-Digit Dialing starting April 1, 2023.

The balance of the Correspondence was passed around the table. In this correspondence it was noted that the Harstone Road bridge in Oliver Paipoonge will be closed to all traffic beginning Wednesday, March 29, 2023 until April 6, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. for guardrail repairs.

Under Old Business, Council discussed

- a) Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) letter regarding the Township of O'Connor's application to the Municipal Disaster Recovery Assistance (MDRA) Program for the Spring 2022 flooding approval. The Clerk-Treasurer noted that the amount of funding approved as eligible costs is less than she was anticipating and she has reached out to the Ministry for an explanation of the difference. Mayor Vezina would like to be made aware of the response and would like a copy of the response forwarded to MPP Holland.
- b) Lakehead Police Services Board (LPSB) i) Appointment of Community Representative. The Board Secretary, Ms. Kromm, has received two applications for the position. Each municipality will have to agree to appoint the representative and Ms. Kromm is asking Council if they would like to be a part of an interview panel to help choose the representative. It was

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

THAT THE FOLLOWING PERSON/S PARTICIPATE IN THE INTERVIEW PROCESS FOR THE LAKEHEAD POLICE SERVICES BOARD COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE. DATE OF INTERVIEWS TO BE DETERMINED.
COUNCILLOR SOBOLTA Carried

ii) Paul Greenwood, CAO, Municipality of Shuniah, provided an update on the status of the Proposal for the new OPP Detachment Board for Thunder Bay Detachment. There may now be interest from the Gull Bay First Nation to participate in the Detachment Board. The Ministry of the Solicitor General are currently looking into this. They are looking at the fall of 2023 to the winter of 2024 for implementation.

Under New Business, Council discussed

- a) NorthWestern Ontario Recreational Trail – i) Update from Clerk-Treasurer Buob regarding the letter sent from the Township to all property owners along the proposed route within the Township. The letter was sent to 43 property owners. To date, three have reached out to the Township office for more information or to make a comment. One letter was received, signed by four residents addressing their concerns. Council would like each of those who have commented to be made aware of the Open House Information Session that will be held here in O'Connor, as well as the ones to be held in the surrounding Municipalities of Conmee and Oliver-Paipoonge.
ii) Open House Information Session in O'Connor will be held on April 18, 2023 from 7:30 – 9:30 p.m. Council do plan on attending.
- b) Approval of Mayor Vezina's nomination to sit as the Thunder Bay District Municipal League's Board Member on the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association, representative committee. Mayor Vezina expressed his interest in this position and

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – MARCH 27, 2023

requested Council's support. It was

9. Moved by Carly Torkkeli
Seconded by J. Sobolta

THAT COUNCIL ENDORSES MAYOR JIM VEZINA'S NOMINATION TO SIT AS A THUNDER BAY DISTRICT MUNICIPAL LEAGUE'S (TBDML) BOARD MEMBER ON THE NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION (NOMA) REPRESENTATIVE COMMITTEE.

Carried

- c) Council discussed the date for BDO Audit presentation. As Tbaytel are scheduled to do a deputation/presentation on April 11th, which could be longer, and the Audit presentation is also a longer deputation, it was agreed to have the Auditors attend the April 24 meeting. The Clerk-Treasurer will forward this the BDO.

Under Further New Business, Councillor Racicot noted that MPP Holland's office informed him that there is NOHFC money available for municipalities and asked Administration to look into what funding options may be available for the Township.

Issues brought forward or letters received after agenda was mailed:

- a) The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board regarding Homelessness Crisis.
b) Attorney General regarding an Update on modernization initiatives in Ontario's Provincial Offences Act (POA) courts.
c) Budget meeting dates were discussed. It was

10. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

**THAT THE FOLLOWING DATES BE SET FOR BUDGET MEETINGS:
ROADS DEPARTMENT MAY 8, 2023 AT 6 P.M.
FIRE DEPARTMENT APRIL 24, 2023 AT 6 P.M.
THE MEETINGS WILL BE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS AND VIRTUALLY.**

Carried

- d) Update on the Infrastructure Ontario (IO) loan application. The Clerk-Treasurer confirmed that the current bank loan for the snowplow truck can be paid out at any time. IO will continue working with the legal department. Changes to the loan may allow for a possible increase in the eligible loan amount for the municipal garage and if Council is willing to extend the amortization to fifteen years for the garage they may be able to do the full amount requested. Council agreed to move forward with the application as suggested by IO.
e) Connolly Road lot forest harvesting update. The Clerk-Treasurer informed Council that she has reached out to the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) in regard to the process they use for Request for Proposal for harvesting wood off of their properties. LRCA also provided information on the forest resource layer which provides the wood inventory for the adjacent lots, which have been harvested. Council agreed to move forward with the preparation of a Request for Proposal.

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 COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON TUESDAY, APRIL 11, 2023 AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS AND VIRTUAL.
TIME BEING: 9:43 P.M.**

Carried