

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – APRIL 22, 2024

Minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday, April 22, 2024, at 7 p.m. in the O'Connor Council Chambers.

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

Visitors: Road Superintendent, Kelly Johnson

Mayor Vezina called the meeting to order at 7:12 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 A. Crane
Seconded by Brendan Rea

THAT THE MINUTES FROM THE FIRE DEPARTMENT BUDGET MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, APRIL 8, 2024 AND THE MINUTES FROM THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, APRIL 8, 2024 BE ACCEPTED AS PRINTED.

Carried

Mr. Johnson was asked if he wished to address Council on any personal matters and he replied, no.

Ms. Foster, Dog Control Officer, scheduled for 7 p.m. did not attend, so Mr. Johnson, Road Superintendent was welcomed to the table. A Road Department update and roadwork in general was discussed. The employees have started to grade some of the roads. The frost boils are not too bad this year. He had the spruce trees by the Annex building cut down by a contractor today. The employees will be going to the Disposal Site to close off the old hole in the near future.

The Health and Safety Reports for the January and February meetings were read. No concerns were discussed.

The upcoming Township Inspection was discussed. Mr. Johnson has rented a van for the day. Lunch options were discussed. The Clerk-Treasurer noted that she would like to ensure that the buildings are looked at to discuss upcoming projects and funding opportunities. It was agreed to look at the buildings first, prior to starting the road tour.

The Equipment Operator #1 interview questions were deferred to Closed meeting for further discussion.

The Disposal Site Compactor truck fire which occurred on April 20th was discussed. The cab of the truck burnt on Saturday during operations. The fire was contained to the cab and did not spread to the garbage or tires. The Fire Department was called in and were able to put it out quickly, but the truck is no longer operable. The Insurance Company has been notified and will be sending out an adjuster to investigate and inform the Township of our options regarding the insurance coverage. The Road Employee will have to find a way to remove the garbage currently in the compactor. The company that currently picks up the Township's scrap metal will be asked if they would be able to take it away and how much the Township might get for it, to see if it is worth removing from the site. In the meantime, employees will continue to try to find a replacement truck. Options of where one might be found were discussed.

Council agreed to move the Closed session of the meeting up on the agenda to discuss with Road Superintendent Johnson.

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It was

- 3. Moved by Brendan Rea
Seconded by A. Crane

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: 7:29 P.M.

Carried

The Equipment Operator #1 applications were reviewed. The interview questions for the position were discussed and the Road Superintendent wage was reviewed during the Closed meeting.

- 4. Moved by Brendan Rea
Seconded by A. Crane

TIME BEING: 8:33 P.M.

THAT WE NOW MOVE TO OPEN MEETING.

Carried

Following Council's discussions and the number of applications received for the Equipment Operator #1 position, it was agreed to interview six (6) applicants over two different nights. As Councillor Torkkeli would have a conflict with additional dates, it was

- 5. Moved by A. Crane
Seconded by Brendan Rea

THAT COUNCILLOR TORKKELI BE REPLACED ON THE INTERVIEW COMMITTEE BY COUNCILLOR REA AND THAT A SECOND INTERVIEW MEETING BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 1, 2024.

Carried

As a result of discussions regarding the Road Superintendents wage review, it was

- 6. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

THAT THE ROAD SUPERINTENDENT WAGE BE INCREASED BY 2% EFFECTIVE MAY 1, 2024.

Carried

Road Superintendent Johnson left the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

The Administration and Roads Voucher to April 22, 2024, was reviewed and it was

- 7. Moved by Carly Torkkeli
Seconded by J. Sobolta

THAT THE ADMINISTRATION AND ROADS VOUCHER #2024-08 DATED APRIL 22, 2024 TOTTALLING \$35,784.87 BE APPROVED AND PAID.

Carried

The Statement of Revenue and Expenditures are currently unavailable.

By-laws and Policies were reviewed as follows:

- a) By-law #2024-14 - Being a by-law to appoint the Township of O'Connor Council Representative to the Lakehead District OPP Detachment Board. It was

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8. Moved by Brendan Rea
Seconded by A. Crane

THAT BY-LAW NUMBER 2024-14 BEING A BY-LAW TO APPOINT THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE TO THE LAKEHEAD DISTRICT OPP DETACHMENT BOARD BE PASSED AND ENTERED IN THE BY-LAW BOOK.

Carried

Councillor Sobolta expressed his concern for the new name of the Police Board included in the By-law. He was of the understanding at the last Board meeting, that "OPP" would not be included in the name of the Board. He will address this at the next Board meeting.

- b) A Report to Council from the Clerk-Treasurer regarding a Disposal Site unplanned, or emergency closures due to inclement weather or an attendant unable to attend the site, was read. At the last meeting Council requested that Administration draft a policy on how this, and other Health and Safety matters, could be dealt with. The Clerk-Treasurer suggested that the closure information could be incorporated into the current Disposal Site Policy under the Hours of Operation and sample wording was provided.

The current Disposal Site Policy was reviewed, and it was agreed that a section could be added following the Hours of Operation. The changes will also include how the Township will notify the residents of the last-minute closure. Residents will be encouraged to sign up for the Text Messaging system currently provided to notify the residents of emergencies or social activities within the Township. An amendment to the Policy will be prepared for the next meeting for approval. Council reviewed the rest of the Policy and did not have any other concerns or additional changes. Administration is also working on a policy for working alone, including at the Disposal Site, which will be brought to Council at a future meeting for consideration.

Resolutions for endorsement were read as follows:

- a) Town of Goderich regarding the recommended phase-out of free well water testing in the 2023 Auditor General's Report. It was

9. Moved by Brendan Rea
Seconded by A. Crane

THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE TOWN OF GODERICH REQUESTING THAT THE PROVINCE NOT PROCEED WITH THE RECOMMENDED PHASE-OUT OF FREE PRIVATE WELL TESTING IN ONTARIO BE ENDORSED.

Carried

- b) City of Peterborough regarding Jurisdiction of Ontario's Ombudsman was filed.
c) Municipality of St. Charles supporting the Municipality of Calvin's resolution regarding the provincial and national firefighting strategy. It was

10. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE MUNICIPALITY OF ST. CHARLES SUPPORTING THE MUNICIPALITY OF CALVIN REGARDING PROVINCIAL AND NATIONAL FIRE FIGHTING STRATEGY BE ENDORSED.

Carried

- d) Katie Woodcroft - The Women of Ontario Say No regarding Legislative Amendments to Improve Municipal Codes of Conduct and Enforcement was filed.
e) Municipality of West Perth regarding the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry's proposal "Regulating detailing new Minister's Permit and Review powers under the Conservation Authorities Act" and it was

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11. Moved by A. Crane
Seconded by Brendan Rea

THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE MUNICIPALITY OF WEST PERTH RECOMMENDING TO THE PROVINCE THAT ANY PROPOSED CHANGES CONTEMPLATED BY THE PROVINCE REGARDING THE NEW MINISTER'S PERMIT AND REVIEW POWERS UNDER THE CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES ACT BE PUT ON HOLD UNTIL SUCH TIME THAT THE PLANNING STATEMENT IS FINALIZED BY THE PROVINCE AND COMMUNICATED TO THE MUNICIPALITIES BE ENDORSED.

Carried

Correspondence was read as follows:

- a) Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) regarding the News Release – Ontario and Toronto Planning for the City's Growing Electricity Needs.
 - b) Superior North EMS – 2024 Levy Information.
 - c) Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU) regarding the Board of Health not proceeding with a merger in Northwestern Ontario.
 - d) The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) – Update from the Board – April 17, 2024. The Board is currently in the process of hiring a new CEO.
 - e) Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) regarding the Policy Update – Bill 185, Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024.
 - f) Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) regarding the Proposed Cutting Red Tap to Build More Homes Act, 2024 – Housing Initiatives.
 - g) Emergency Management Ontario (EMO) regarding the 2023 Emergency Management Program compliance. The Township of O'Connor was in compliance.
- The balance of the correspondence was passed around the table.

Under Old Business, Council discussed

- a) Fire Chief Mattas' retirement party. Mr. Mattas' availability on the date of May 25th, 2024 has been confirmed. Fire Chief Biloski is also available during the day. Council discussed the timing, guest list, beverages and cake for the event. A gift will also be purchased and presented. Mayor Vezina will be the Master of Ceremonies and an open mic will be available for those would like to speak and say a few words. The Clerk-Treasurer will send out invitations and organize the event.
- b) Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) regarding the acknowledgement of the Township of O'Connor's application requesting funding for Intern position for a Deputy Treasurer. Funding has not yet been approved. As discussed previously, Council will first try to find a qualified applicant through the hiring process. If they are not comfortable with the current municipal knowledge of the applicants, they will move forward with the Intern position and train a new person to the field.
- c) Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) looking for questions for the Ministers Forum at the upcoming Conference. They are wanting to ensure that it will be worth the Ministers efforts to attend. Council did not have any suggestions at this time. It was noted that some suggestions have been coming in from other municipalities and the Board will be meeting prior to the conference to ensure that each minister is asked at least one question.

Under Further Old Business, Councillor Crane expressed his concern for the speed of the current internet service. He has heard several complaints from residents, and he has been on virtual meetings where the signal has dropped several times. He would like Council to consider following up with Tbaytel regarding the timing of the installation of the Fibre and informing them of the poor service in the Township. It was agreed to have Administration send a letter expressing the concerns.

Councillor Rea asked about whether or not the Fire Department can allow Fire Department cadets/junior firefighter to join the team. They have one member who's son would like to join, however the Department is unsure of what Council's decision is on this. There would be restrictions as to what they would be allowed to do. Council would like Administration to look into this further and confirm with the insurance company if they would be covered by the Township if they are 16 or 17 years of age. Council also

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discussed the due diligence of having a minor on the Department. The Township would have to ensure that they are safe, including having criminal record checks for the existing members and a consent form signed by the parents of the minor. It was suggested that if we do move forward with allowing a cadet/junior firefighter to join, that perhaps after having been on for a certain period of time, they could perhaps be given a department t-shirt. Administration will look into on this further and bring back to Council before a final decision is made on whether or not they will be allowed to join.

Councillor Rea noted that Ms. Evans has not reached out to him yet regarding the Councillor training. The Clerk-Treasurer will follow up on this.

Under New Business, Council discussed

- a) NorthWestern Ontario Recreational Trails Assoc. (NWORTA) requesting a letter of support regarding the reroute of the Shabaqua Trail and extension to Kakabeka Falls. Council did not have any concerns regarding the new location of the trail and it was

- 12. Moved by Carly Torkkeli
Seconded by J. Sobolta

THAT THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR SUPPORTS IN PRINCIPLE THE NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO RECREATIONAL TRAILS ASSOCIATION (NWORTA) PROPOSED REROUTE OF (PHASE I) SHABAQUA TRAIL EXTENSION ON GARBUTT ROAD SOUTH FROM HIGHWAY 590 TO HOLOMAGO ROAD, HOLOMAGO ROAD EAST FROM GARBUTT ROAD AND THE UNNAMED ROAD CONNECTING HOLOMAGO ROAD SOUTH TO BROOME ROAD AND THE NEW TRAIL FROM BROOME ROAD EAST OF LUCKENS ROAD VIA CROWN LANDS.

Carried

A letter will be sent to Mr. Day, President of NWORTA, supporting their application to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) for a trail work permit on Crown lands.

It was noted that the detour road between Broome Road and Holomego road, included in this new trail has never been officially named. Council would like Administration to enquire as to what must be done to official name it "Tiedeman Road", as has been previously discussed.

- b) Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry letter regarding Ontario FireSmart Communities Transfer Payment Program, 2024-2026 was read. The funding is being provided for communities to develop a Community Wildland Fire Protection Plan and Forest Hazard Maps for Wildland Fire Hazards. The Township currently has a Plan, completed in 2019. The Clerk-Treasurer has provided a copy of the Plan to Fire Chief Biloski to review and consider if the Township should consider applying and preparing a new plan or if the current one is still applicable.
- c) St. Joseph's Care Group regarding the closing of the Behavioural Sciences Centre as the provider of Employee Assistance Program (EFAP) services, effective October 31, 2024. The Township of O'Connor currently use them for the service. Council and Administration will look into what other organizations offer this program.

Under Further New Business, the Clerk-Treasurer asked Mayor Vezina if he had received an invitation to the Ontario Power Generation (OPG) Dam Safety Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan Meeting to be held on May 28, 2024. He had not, so the invitation will be forwarded to him and he will confirm his availability. The Clerk-Treasurer will also send the invitation to Fire Chief Biloski and check on his availability, and bring this back to the next meeting for approval to attend.

The Clerk-Treasurer also informed Council that the Township was successful in receiving two summer students this year, one for the Road Department and one for the Office.

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The Deputy Treasurer position is currently posted on the Township's website and will be included in the May issue of the Cornerstone and included on Indeed. Applications are being requested to be in for review at the next Council meeting.

- 13. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

THAT THE COUNCIL MEETING ADJOURN TO TOWNSHIP INSPECTION TO BE HELD ON MONDAY, MAY 6, 2024 AT 8:30 A.M. STARTING IN THE O'CONNOR COUNCIL CHAMBERS.

TIME BEING: 9:49 P.M.

Carried

Mayor

Clerk-Treasurer