

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

Minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday, January 22, 2024 at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

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

Visitors: Acting Deputy Fire Chief Biloski arrived at 7:08 p.m.

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

Brendan Rea was welcomed as the Township of O'Connor's new Councillor, replacing the late Councillor Racicot. The Clerk-Treasurer confirmed that Mr. Rea did complete a Declaration of Oath earlier in the day and was provided with a Council package ahead of the meeting.

The Meeting Agenda was reviewed, and it was suggested that Item #16 d) from the Association of Ontario Road Supervisors (AORS) regarding passing a motion to support application through Skills Development Fund be deferred to the next meeting to discuss with Mr. Johnson, Road Superintendent. It was

1. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by Brendan Rea

THAT THE AGENDA FOR THE MEETING BE APPROVED AS AMENDED.
Carried

Disclosure of pecuniary interest and general nature thereof: none

The minutes of the Council meeting held on January 8, 2024 and the Notes from the Public Meeting also held on January 8, 2024 were reviewed. A minor change was made to the Notes and it was

2. Moved by A. Crane
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

THAT THE MINUTES FROM THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 2024 AND THE NOTES FROM THE OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT APPLICATION PUBLIC MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 2024 BE ACCEPTED AS PRINTED AND AMENDED.
Carried

Mr. Biloski was asked if he wished to address Council on any matters not already on the agenda, and he replied, no.

Acting Deputy Fire Chief Biloski was welcomed to the table. As Fire Chief Mattas was not present, he provided a Fire Department update. There have been a couple of First Response calls since the last meeting, but in general it has been quiet. He informed Council that he has started to implement more communication with the volunteer members. He has prepared a training calendar, along with the Nolalu Fire Department, so the members are aware of what training will be held each week. The last meeting had eight members present. This week's training will be SCBA and PPE with the Nolalu team. They will try to prepare the training using the curriculum from the FireFighter I course and will cover the 47 tasks over time. If done correctly, the members could then possibly challenge the exam to get their certification, as it is hard to commit nine full days of training through the Fire Training Program. As he personally works shiftwork and will not be available each week, he has spoken with Sara Shoemaker, Fire Chief of the Nolalu Department regarding coordination of the shared training. They have also noted that if someone cannot attend a Tuesday night training, he will be flexible to meet with them on a different night. He would also like to talk to Leanne Coderre, First Response Coordinator, in regard to doing something similar with the First Response Members. He noted that Shane Thorne has started his instructor training so he will be

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

able to help with upgrading the First Response members. Councillor Crane also noted that he would be available to do First Aid Training, if needed.

Fire Department issues were discussed. Acting Deputy Fire Chief Biloski noted that the Department is still in need of new members. He has been talking to some younger gentlemen and is hoping they will come out. The Team has also discussed the start time of the weekly meetings and have agreed to change the start time from 7:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and ending around 9:30 p.m. or 10:00 p.m. at the latest.

Regarding the Fire Chief position, Acting Deputy Fire Chief Biloski confirmed that he is willing to take on the Fire Chief position for the Township of O'Connor, upon Fire Chief Mattas' retirement. He has reached out to a couple of other Fire Chiefs in the area, and they are willing to help him transition with all the behind the scenes requirements. He will get together with Fire Chief Mattas to go over the local information. The Township's of Conmee and Gillies are also transitioning to new Fire Chiefs and Mayor Vezina noted that the Lakehead Rural Municipal Coalition (LRMC) is looking into shared education – mentorship for backup, if needed. Council suggested that he reach out to Andrew Bak, Fire Protector Advisor, from the Ontario Fire Marshall's Office to confirm what is required. Mr. Bak has been asked to attend an upcoming LRMC meeting and Council will ensure that Acting Deputy Fire Chief Biloski be invited to sit in on the discussions.

Acting Deputy Fire Chief Biloski informed Council that he will be out of the area from the end of February to the beginning of March for one week. He was thanked for attending and left the meeting at 7:24 p.m.

3. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

THAT THE ADMINISTRATION AND ROADS VOUCHER #2024-02 DATED JANUARY 22, 2024 TOTTALLING \$37,025.61 BE APPROVED AND PAID.

Carried

The Statement of Revenue and Expenditures to December 31, 2023 was unavailable.

Resolutions for endorsement were read as follows:

- a) Thunder Bay District Municipal League regarding Flashing Lights on Stop Signs at Highway Construction sites. Council discussed this issue, and it was noted that the Ministry of Transportation has recently changed the regulations regarding construction zones and therefore the resolution was filed.
- b) City of Mississauga regarding Notice of Motion Landlord and Tenants Board was filed.
- c) Municipality of Tweed regarding Licence Plate Renewal Fees was filed.
- d) Town of Mono regarding Road Safety Emergency and it was

4. Moved by A. Crane
Seconded by Brendan Rea

THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE TOWN OF MONO DECLARING A ROAD SAFETY EMERGENCY AND CALLING ON OTHER MUNICIPALITIES AND THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO TO RECOGNIZE A ROAD SAFETY EMERGENCY AND THE ACTION BE ENDORSED.

Carried

Correspondence was read as follows:

- a) Association of Ontario Municipalities (AMO) – i) regarding AMO Education – February Workshops. Council requested that Administration look further into the costs of the course, as well, confirm if they are available in person or virtual. It was also suggested that Ms. Evans, Mr. Matson and Mr. Bourret be contacted to see if they might be willing to provide another round of the training on Development Accountability and Transparency that they previously provided in February of 2023. ii) AMO Policy Update – Social and Economic Prosperity Review. It was

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

5. Moved by A. Crane
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

WHEREAS CURRENT PROVINCIAL-MUNICIPAL FISCAL ARRANGEMENTS ARE UNDERMINING ONTARIO'S ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE;

WHEREAS NEARLY A THIRD OF MUNICIPAL SPENDING IN ONTARIO IS FOR SERVICES IN AREAS OF PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND EXPENDITURES ARE OUTPACING PROVINCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS BY NEARLY \$4 BILLION A YEAR;

WHEREAS UNPRECEDENTED POPULATION AND HOUSING GROWTH WILL REQUIRE SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENTS IN MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE;

WHEREAS MUNICIPALITIES ARE BEING ASKED TO TAKE ON COMPLEX HEALTH AND SOCIAL CHALLENGES – LIKE HOMELESSNESS, SUPPORTING ASYLUM SEEKERS AND ADDRESSING THE MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION CRISES;

WHEREAS INFLATION, RISING INTEREST RATES, AND PROVINCIAL POLICY DECISIONS ARE SHARPLY CONSTRAINING MUNICIPAL FISCAL CAPACITY;

WHEREAS PROPERTY TAXPAYERS – INCLUDING PEOPLE ON FIXED INCOMES AND SMALL BUSINESSES – CAN'T AFFORD TO SUBSIDIZE INCOME RE-DISTRIBUTION PROGRAMS FOR THOSE MOST IN NEED;

WHEREAS THE PROVINCE CAN, AND SHOULD, INVEST MORE IN THE PROSPERITY OF COMMUNITIES;

WHEREAS MUNICIPALITIES AND THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT HAVE A STRONG HISTORY OF COLLABORATION;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO COMMIT TO UNDERTAKING WITH THE ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPALITIES OF ONTARIO A COMPREHENSIVE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY REVIEW TO PROMOTE THE STABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY OF MUNICIPAL FINANCES ACROSS ONTARIO.

Carried

- b) Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) regarding Rural and Remote Physician Services Coordination. This will be brought forward at the upcoming Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) Conference.
- c) Prime Minister – Executive Correspondence Officer, response to Council Resolution regarding Climate Action Incentive.
- d) ONE Investment regarding a steady approach to volatile markets. The balance of the correspondence was passed around the table.

Under Old Business, Council discussed

- a) the Official Plan Amendment Public Meeting, held on January 8, 2024, and next steps in the process. It was noted that there was a fair turnout at the meeting and no one at the meeting, other than the applicant's agent was in favour of the approval of the application. Council would like Administration to determine how many vacant lots are currently in the Township of O'Connor, to determine if there is a need. It was noted that there are already several lots out of this 160-acre lot. It was suggested that Ms. Kosny and Ms. Oulton from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing Planning Department be invited to attend the next Council meeting to discuss Council's options and legal responsibilities in this regard.

It was agreed to move item 19 – Closed Session ahead on the agenda and it was

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

- 6. Moved by Brendan Rea
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

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; AND TO DISCUSS LITIGATION OR POTENTIAL LITIGATION, INCLUDING MATTERS BEFORE ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNALS, AFFECTING THE MUNICIPALITY OR LOCAL BOARD; PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION 239(2)(E) OF THE MUNICIPAL ACT, 2001.

TIME BEING: 8:00 P.M.

Carried

The Casual Disposal Site Caretaker application for the position was discussed, as well as a potential litigation matter.

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

TIME BEING: 8:13 P.M.

THAT WE NOW MOVE TO OPEN MEETING.

Carried

It was

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

THE CARL EDMONDSON BE HIRED AS THE CASUAL RELIEF FOR THE DISPOSAL SITE CARETAKER POSITION. RATE OF PAY WILL BE THE ENTRY WAGE AS SET FOR 2024.

Carried

The Non-Union Wage increases, discussed at the January 8, 2024 Council meeting, were again discussed and it was

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

THAT THE SALARY AND WAGE SCHEDULED FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR NON-UNION STAFF COMPRISING OF THE DISPOSAL SITE CARETAKER, JANITOR, GROUNDSKEEPER, DOG CONTROL OFFICER, FENCEVIEWER, LIVESTOCK VALUATOR, WEED INSPECTOR, ADMINISTRATIVE CASUAL AND THE STARTUP/PROBATION RATE WILL RECEIVE AN INCREASE AS FOLLOWS: EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2024 INCREASED BY 2 PERCENT.

THAT THE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT RECEIVE AN INCREASE OF \$1.51 / HOUR EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2024.

Carried

c) A Township of O'Connor 2023 Christmas Party date was discussed. The Kakabeka Legion is available most weekends in February. It was

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

THAT THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR 2023 CHRISTMAS PARTY BE HELD ON SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2023 AT THE KAKABEKA LEGION.

Carried

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

Administration is still awaiting a cost for a similar dinner to last year. As in the past Council, staff and volunteer Fire Department members will be free. All spouses and guests will pay for their own plate.

Under Further Old Business, Council discussed the 2024 Conservation Dinner Auction Attendance. Councillor Torkkeli confirmed that she would like to attend. The Clerk-Treasurer will order the tickets.

Also under Further Old Business, Clerk-Treasurer Buob noted that an email came in at the end of the day from Tbaytel regarding Council's concerns to the ground wire, to the Township Office, from the Telephone Exchange Building, following the recent lightning strike. Mr. Topatigh has asked his staff to provide necessary documentation to alleviate the Township's concerns. He will provide them to us once he receives them.

Councillor Sobolta noted that following the recent Lakehead Police Services Board (LPSB) meeting it was confirmed that the new Board will be established in April and once again the Township of O'Connor will have a vote on the Board. They are still unsure as to how the First Nation participation on the Board will work. More information will follow.

Under New Business, Council discussed

- a) Township of O'Connor – Treasurer's itemized Statement of Expenses for Council for 2023.
- b) Report to Council - Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) regarding the People and Talent – Workforce Development Stream and succession planning for Office Administration. The program provided funding of 90% of the salary paid to an Intern, up to a maximum of \$35,000. Administration is proposing that the Township of O'Connor apply for two Interns. One for a Deputy Clerk and One for a Deputy Treasurer. The program could potentially fund the second year if the successful candidate is required to complete a minimum number of hours of professional experience greater than the 52 weeks of full-time employment. Council agreed to have the Administration look further into this opportunity.
- c) Hymers Agricultural Society regarding Hymers Fall Fair Prize Book Advertisement & Sponsorship. Administration noted that in the past the Township has donated History Books to them, however at this time they would prefer cash sponsorships. Council discussed the request for a donation and agreed to only place an advertisement in the 2024 Prize Book and it was

11. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

THAT A HALF PAGE ADVERTISEMENT IN THE HYMERS AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY PRIZE LIST BOOK BE PURCHASED AT A COST OF \$100.00.

Carried

Mayor Vezina noted that the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) and the Lakehead Conservation Foundation are requesting donations for their 2024 Dinner Auction and have asked for copies of the Township of O'Connor's History book for a local prize package that they are putting together. It was

12. Moved by A. Crane
Seconded by Brendan Rea

THAT THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR DONATE TWO HISTORY BOOKS FOR THE LRCA AND FOUNDATION'S AUCTION DINNER TO BE HELD ON FEBRUARY 9, 2024.

Carried

Under Further New Business the concrete surface of the outdoor rink was discussed. A question regarding possibly painting the concrete rink surface with white paint was discussed. It was suggested that perhaps the Administration could watch for funding or discuss this further at budget. It was noted that the cost would be expensive, as it would

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

require expensive epoxy white paint and there would also be additional expenses in regard to the preparation of the surface.

Issues brought forward or letters received after the agenda was mailed were read as follows:

- a) The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) – Update from the Board – January 11, 2024.
- b) Thunder Bay District Municipal League 2024 Conference & AGM to be held February 29 & March 1, 2024 in Nipigon attendance was discussed. It was

- 13. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by A. Crane

THAT THE FOLLOWING PERSON/S ATTEND THE THUNDER BAY DISTRICT MUNICIPAL LEAGUE 2024 CONFERENCE AND AGM TO BE HELD ON FEBRUARY 29 AND MARCH 1, 2024 IN NIPIGON.

**MAYOR VEZINA
COUNCILLOR CRANE, SOBOLTA, TORKKELI
CLERK-TREASURER BUOB**

REGISTRATION: \$200.00 + EVENTBRITE SURCHARGE - \$14.33

Carried

The Clerk-Treasurer will review the agenda prior to registering herself.

- c) Lakehead Rural Municipal Coalition – (LRMC) – i) Minutes of November 21, 2023 meeting.
- ii) Administrative Report regarding the LRMC Secretary cost allocation.
- d) Oliver Paipoonge Public Library regarding the 2024 Contract for Service. It was

- 14. Moved by Brendan Rea
Seconded by J. Sobolta

THAT THE LIBRARY CONTRACT FOR THE YEAR 2024 WITH THE MUNICIPALITY OF OLIVER PAIPOONGE LIBRARY BOARD FOR LIBRARY SERVICES BE SIGNED.

Carried

- e) Township of White River – letter regarding AV Terrace Bay mill shutdown and the impact it has on the region as a whole.

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

It was

- 15 Moved by Carly Torkkeli
Seconded by J. Sobolta

THAT THE COUNCIL MEETING ADJOURN TO THE COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2024 AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE O'CONNOR COUNCIL CHAMBERS.

TIME BEING: 8:59 P.M.

Carried

Mayor

Clerk-Treasurer