

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – JANUARY 8, 2024

Minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday, January 8, 2024 at 7 p.m. in the O'Connor Community Centre.

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

Visitors: Kelly Johnson, Road Superintendent
Linda Racicot, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer
Brendan Rea, Larry Bockus, Diana Bockus

Absent: Councillor Torkkeli

Mayor Vezina called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. An acknowledgment and a moment of silence was held for the loss of Councillor Bishop Racicot on December 30, 2023. It was then

1. Moved by A. Crane
Seconded by J. Sobolta

THAT THE AGENDA FOR THE MEETING BE APPROVED.

Carried

Disclosure of pecuniary interest and general nature thereof: none.

2. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by A. Crane

THAT THE MINUTES FROM THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2023 AND THE EMERGENCY TABLETOP EXERCISE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2023 BE ACCEPTED AS PRINTED.

Carried

Visitors were asked if they wished to address Council and they replied no.

Mr. Kelly Johnson, Road Superintendent, was welcomed to the table. Roadwork in general and a Road Department update was discussed. Mr. Johnson noted that with minimal snow or ice this season to date, it has been easy on the sand consumption. Staff have been able to take advantage of the lack of snow and have been doing culvert inspections for our Asset Management inventory. They have also been doing maintenance on the equipment and Mr. Johnson has been catching up on files and paperwork. The installation of the HVAC system for the Shop B will be completed next week.

Mr. Johnson also noted that with the colder weather finally approaching, the volunteers could be contacted to get the outdoor rink up and running for the season.

Mr. Johnson was thanked for attending and left the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

The Administration and Roads Voucher for January 8, 2024, was reviewed and it was

3. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by A. Crane

THAT THE ADMINISTRATION AND ROADS VOUCHER #2024-01 DATED JANUARY 8, 2024 TOTTALLING \$109,081.61 BE APPROVED AND PAID.

Carried

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

By-law and Policies were reviewed and it was

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

THAT BY-LAW NUMBER 2024-01 BEING A BY-LAW TO IMPOSE LATE PAYMENT CHARGES FOR THE NON-PAYMENT OF TAXES OR ANY INSTALLMENT BY THE DUE DATE BE PASSED AND ENTERED IN THE BY-LAW BOOK.

Carried

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

THAT BY-LAW NUMBER 2024-02 BEING A BY-LAW TO PROVIDE FOR AN INTERIM LEVYING AMOUNT BE PASSED AND ENTERED IN THE BY-LAW BOOK.

Carried

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

THAT BY-LAW NUMBER 2024-03 BEING A BY-LAW TO AUTHORIZE THE BORROWING OF MONIES BE PASSED AND ENTERED IN THE BY-LAW BOOK.

Carried

Resolutions for endorsement were read as follows:

- a) Township of Conmee regarding lobbying to amend the Municipal Act and the Municipal Elections Act, so that people with a criminal record be prohibited from becoming a candidate in municipal elections was filed.
- b) Municipality of Neebing regarding Climate Action Incentive Payment Rural Supplement and comments to this resolution from MP Marcus Powlowski were read and it was

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

THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE MUNICIPALITY OF NEEBING REQUESTING THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AMEND THE ELIGIBILITY FOR THE CLIMATE ACTION INCENTIVE PAYMENT SUPPLEMENT FOR SMALL AND RURAL COMMUNITIES SO THAT IT IS CENTERED AROUND THE POPULATION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MUNICIPALITY ITSELF RATHER THAN WHETHER IT FALLS WITHIN A CENSUS METROPOLITAN AREA BE ENDORSED.

Carried

- c) Township of Clearview regarding the Cemetery Transfer/Abandonment Administration and Management Support. It was

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

THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE TOWNSHIP OF CLEARVIEW REQUESTING THAT THE PROVINCE THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC AND BUSINESS SERVICE DELIVERY AND THE BEREAVEMENT AUTHORITY OF ONTARIO (BAO) CONSIDER THEIR RECOMMENDATION REGARDING CEMETERY TRANSFER/ABANDONMENT ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT SUPPORT BE ENDORSED.

Carried

- d) City of Greater Sudbury regarding Amendment to the Occupational Health and Safety Act to clarify the Definition of Employer and it was

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9. Moved by A. Crane
Seconded by J. Sobolta

THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE CITY OF GREATER SUDBURY REQUESTING THAT THE PROVINCE AMEND THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT TO CLARIFY THE DEFINITION OF “EMPLOYER” TO EXCLUDE OWNERS THAT HAVE CONTRACTED WITH A CONSTRUCTOR FOR A PROJECT BE ENDORSED.

Carried

- e) Town of Aurora regarding the Community Safety and Inciteful Speech was filed.
f) City of Stratford regarding CEBA Loan Businesses was filed.
g) Todd Doherty, MP regarding 988 suicide prevention hotline was filed, however Council does support the initiative and will display the 988 information poster as requested.

Correspondence was read as follows:

- a) David Rasi, Field Officer, Amethyst Sector – Emergency Management Ontario (EMO) reporting that the Township of O'Connor is compliant for 2023.
b) Thunder Bay District Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) – TBDSSAB 2024 Rural Ontario Municipal Association Conference Briefings.
c) AMCTO Zone 9 regarding the Zone 9 Membership rate increase. The Clerk-Treasurer noted that the rate increase was discussed at the Annual General Meeting and the consensus of the members, including herself, was to move forward with this option rather than increase the registration for attendance.
d) Municipal Property Assessment Corporation regarding the 2024 Municipal Levy. The increase in the levy will be 2.1% to address the impact of inflation on their operations. The Township's increase will be \$181.49.
e) Emergency Management Ontario (EMO) regarding wrapping another year of staying Safe, Practiced and Prepared.
f) Good Roads requesting Nominations for 2024-2025 Board of Directors. No names will be put forward at this time.
g) Ontario Power Generation (OPG) regarding the Kakabeka Falls Generating Station Redevelopment Project – Status Update.
h) Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) – AMO 2024 Conference Hotel opens. The Conference will run from August 18 -21, 2024 in Ottawa.
i) Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks regarding an Update on amendments to the MTO Class EA.
j) Thunder Bay District Health Unit regarding TBDHU's Northern Fruit and Vegetable Program Presents: Mindful Movement Matters.

The balance of the correspondence was passed around the table.

Under Old Business, Council discussed

- a) Tbaytel – reply from Dan Topatigh, President and CEO regarding the lightning strike that hit the Township Office on August 25, 2023. Tbaytel is not taking any responsibility for the incident and will not reimburse the Township for any of the damages. This matter will be included in the renegotiation of the lease when it comes due. Council would like to have the Clerk-Treasurer confirm with Tbaytel that the ground to the Township Office building has been inspected to ensure that it is safe and will provide the protection needed if this were to happen again, as this is a Health and Safety issue for our staff.
b) Thunder Bay District Municipal League – Nipigon February 29 and March 1, 2024 – five motel rooms have been booked for two nights in Nipigon with the option to cancel later, if not required.
c) Good Roads – Long Service Award details were discussed. The deadline for nominations is February 28th.

Under Further Old Business, Councillor Crane informed Council that the Resolution in regard to the RSV, in which Council passed at their November 27, 2023 Council meeting, went through Parliament with MPP Lise Vaugeois, Thunder Bay – Superior North. Councillor Crane also expressed his disappointment in MPP Kevin Holland, Thunder Bay - Atikokan as he has not heard back from him, as promised, in this regard

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following his attendance at the Council meeting on October 10, 2023. He also noted that the motion went through the Thunder Bay District Municipal League as well.

Mayor Vezina noted that he has reached out to a contractor who will come out and look to see if any of our buildings may possibly have asbestos, as a part of the Abatement requirement for the Auditor.

Under New Business, Council discussed

- a) The vacant seat on Council due to the passing of Councillor Racicot was discussed. A copy of Sections 259 (1), 262 (1), and 263 (1)(5) of the Municipal Act, 2001 regarding vacancies and the vacant seat were reviewed. Council may fill the vacancy by appointing a person who has consented to accept the office if appointed or hold a by-election. Council agreed that they would like to approach the runner up in the November 2022 Election, Brendan Rea. If he is still interested in the position he will be invited to attend the January 22, 2024 meeting and be sworn in. As Mr. Rea was in attendance, he did confirm verbally that he would be interested. The Clerk-Treasurer will still prepare the formal documents in this regard. It was

10. Moved by A. Crane
Seconded by J. Sobolta

THAT THE SEAT OF COUNCILLOR BISHOP RACICOT BE DECLARED VACANT DUE TO HIS PASSING.

Carried

11. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by A. Crane

THAT THE VACANT SEAT OF COUNCIL BE FILLED BY APPOINTMENT AS PER SECTION 263 (1) AND (5) OF THE MUNICIPAL ACT, 2001.

Carried

- b) Review of the Township of O'Connor's Administrative Fees. The current fees and the dates for their last increase were presented to Council. Council would like more information on the cost to prepare the Cornerstone to determine whether or not the fees for advertising are sufficient. Council would like the Road Superintendent to confirm if he feels the Equipment Rates are reasonable at this time. The Clerk-Treasurer noted that the Free Methodist Cemetery interment fees should be increased as they have not increased in several years. Council would like Mr. Johnson's recommendations on the costs to do the interment. The Building Permit Fees will also need to be reviewed. The Township of Conmee and the Municipality of Neening will be contacted to see what their current fees are and how their permit values are being calculated as they should be similar, as the Chief Building Official does all three Municipalities and his wage is based on this fee. This information will be brought back to another meeting for Council's consideration.
- c) Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs regarding The Rural Economic Development (RED) program. NOMA also sent an email regarding the RED program and noted the new Flood Identification and Mapping Program. The deadline for applications is January 24, 2024. The Clerk-Treasurer was asked to contact the LRCA to see if this program would be something that could be applied for regarding the Whitefish River flood concerns.
- d) Lakehead Region Conservation Authority and Lakehead Conservation Foundation regarding 2024 Conservation Dinner & Auction. It was

12. Moved by A. Crane
Seconded by J. Sobolta

THAT THE FOLLOWING PERSON/S ATTEND THE LAKEHEAD REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY AND LAKEHEAD CONSERVATION FOUNDATION 2024 CONSERVATION DINNER AND AUCTION TO BE HELD ON FEBRUARY 9, 2024.

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COUNCILLOR SOBOLTA OR COUNCILLOR TORKKELI**TICKETS: \$75.00 EACH**

Carried

e) IESO Community Engagement regarding Energy Webinars for Municipalities to be held on January 15 and 17, 2024. Council felt that it was important that someone from Council and staff attend. It was

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

**THAT THE FOLLOWING PERSON/S ATTEND THE INDEPENDENT
ELECTRICITY SYSTEM OPERATOR (IESO) ENERGY WEBINAR FOR
COMMUNITIES TO BE HELD ON JANUARY 15 AND JANUARY 17, 2024.**

**MAYOR VEZINA
DEPUTY CLERK-TREASURER RACICOT**

REGISTRATION: N/C

Carried

f) Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) regarding Capital grant. Applications are due on March 6, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. Projects need to directly benefit Ontarians through updates to buildings, enhancement of spaces, and the purchase of equipment. The project budget needs to be a minimum of \$10,000 and cannot exceed \$200,000. Council agreed to moved forward with an application for a playground for the community centre recreation area. It was noted that swings will not be a part of the application.

Under Further New Business, Councillor Sobolta noted that he will be attending a Lakehead Police Services Board meeting on January 10 and wanted to know if Council had any concerns to address. Council would like to see more visibility of the OPP within the Township and Councillor Crane would like to thank the OPP for being present on Loghrin Road in regard to the speeding concerns, however, he would still like to see them continue to monitor the road.

Councillor Sobolta also noted that he witnessed a truck leaving the Disposal Site on Saturday at an excessive speed coming from the back of the site. Council discussed the dangers of this. Council would like to have slow signs installed at the site, both at the entrance and leaving the back area of the site.

The visibility of the SW corner of Holomego and Garbutt Roads as a result of brush encroaching on the intersection was discussed. The Clerk-Treasurer will pass this concern on to Mr. Johnson.

Clerk-Treasurer Buob noted that Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Racicot will be returning to work on January 15, 2024 following her recent leave.

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

- a) Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) regarding the Council Remuneration and Expenses for the Township's Council Member, Mayor Vezina on the Local Board in 2023.
- b) Township of Gillies Fire Chief's email to Fire Chief Mattas informing him of his retirement from the Gillies Fire Department this month. Mayor Vezina noted that the Township of Conmee's Fire Chief also recently retired, and as Fire Chief Mattas is also looking at retirement, this matter will be discussed at the next Lakehead Rural Municipal Coalition (LRMC) meeting to be held January 16th.
- c) Good Roads regarding the 2024 membership increase.

For information purposes, no Building Permits were approved since the last meeting.

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As the next portion of the meeting will be in closed session, Brendan Rea, Larry Bockus and Diana Bockus left the meeting and it was

- 14. Moved by J. Sobolta
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: 8:16 P.M.

Carried

Non-Union Employee wages and the application for the position of Casual Disposal Site Caretaker position were discussed.

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

TIME BEING: 8:51 P.M.

THAT WE NOW MOVE TO OPEN MEETING.

Carried

The Clerk-Treasurer will prepare the documents for wage increase approvals for the next meeting.

As the deadline for applications for the Casual Disposal Site Caretaker position advertised was January 22, 2024, Council did not make a decision on the hiring of the position at this time.

Council would also like the Clerk-Treasurer to reach out to Acting Deputy Fire Chief Biloski and ask that he provide confirmation at the next meeting, as to whether or not he will be willing to commit to moving forward to become Fire Chief or whether Council should be considering looking to fill the position with someone else, even if only temporary until he is ready to move up into the position.

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

THAT THE COUNCIL MEETING ADJOURN TO COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON MONDAY, JANUARY 22, 2024 AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE O’CONNOR COUNCIL CHAMBERS.

TIME BEING: 8:53 P.M.

Carried

Mayor

Clerk-Treasurer