

## TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – MARCH 25, 2024

Minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday, March 25, 2024 at 7 p.m. in the O'Connor Council Chambers.

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

Visitors: Tim Silvaggio, Jennifer Silvaggio  
Stefan Huzan, Northern Planning – on the phone  
Fire Chief Greg Biloski

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

Mayor Vezina asked that item 15 a) be moved forward on the agenda to follow 6 a). Council agreed and it was

1. Moved by J, Sobolta  
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

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

Disclosure of pecuniary interest and general nature thereof: Councillor Torkkeli declared an interest in item 15a) Official Plan Amendment Application #2023-01 regarding Council's decision to the application, as her personal/residential lot is located in close proximity to the lot in question/discussion.

2. Moved by A. Crane  
Seconded by Brendan Rea

**THAT THE MINUTES FROM THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY,  
MARCH 11, 2024 BE ACCEPTED AS PRINTED.**  
Carried

Visitors were asked if they wished to address Council on any matters not already on the agenda and they replied, no.

Mr. Stefan Huzan, Northern Planning, was welcomed to the meeting, via telephone, to make a deputation regarding the Official Plan Amendment (OPA) application #2023-01 prior to Council's decision on the application. Mr. Huzan provided a written report, dated March 25, 2024, providing his opinion and recommendations respecting the OPA. He also provided Council, verbally, with their options of either approval, denial or defer, and recommended that Council approve the application. He noted that Provincial planning policies and rules over-ride a Municipal Official Plan. If the application is denied he noted that Mr. Silvaggio will appeal Council's decision to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT), which will result in additional hassle and costs to the Township. Mr. Huzan stated that Council could defer their decision and have the application sent back to Mr. Silvaggio. Mr. Silvaggio could then revise his application to reflect the maximum development and additional information for his future plans that he is seeking. Council would then have to re-circulate the revised OPA application and have a new Public Meeting and Council's consideration. Mr. Huzan explained how the Provincial planning rules encourage economic health of the community and in-filling. The approval of this application will not require any additional infrastructure improvements from the Township. The application meets the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario and the Provincial Policy Statement, despite the resident's objection at the public meeting. He also went on to state that if the application is denied it will result in more applications coming to the Township from Mr. Silvaggio, one to create two new lots instead of just one, and a second to create a rural mini-homes retirement village. If this application is approved, Mr. Silvaggio will still have to apply for a severance application which is subject to a more detailed review and criteria. He continued that this application does meet the Provincial rules. He stated that he has been to the OLT on other applications several times and it will result in a lot of work and expense to the Township, and should

## TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – MARCH 25, 2024

be avoided as much as possible. He asked that Council make their decision and provide direction to Mr. Silvaggio.

Council thanked Mr. Huzan for his deputation. No further questions were asked.

Item 15 a) was moved forward on the agenda, being the decision for the application.

Councillor Torkkeli left the room.

No further discussion was had in regard to the application. The motion was read and voted upon by Council. A recorded vote was requested by Mayor Vezina. The vote was held alphabetically. It was

3. Moved by Brendan Rea  
Seconded by A. Crane

**THAT COUNCIL APPROVE THE OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT APPLICATION #2023-01 FOR TIM AND JENNIFER SILVAGGIO, 51 CONNOLLY ROAD, KAKABEKA FALLS, ONTARIO, P0T 1W0, CONCESSION 3, N ½ LOT 7, TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR, AS REPRESENTED BY STEFAN HUZAN, NORTHERN PLANNING, TO ALLOW FOR AN ADDITIONAL LOT SEVERANCE 247 METRES BY 221 METRES ALONG HIGHWAY 595.**

Alex Crane – Yes

Brendan Rea - Yes

John Sobolta – Yes

Carly Torkkeli – Declared a conflict and did not vote

Jim Vezina - No

Carried

Councillor Torkkeli returned to the table.

Mr. and Mrs. Silvaggio thanked Council for their decision and left the meeting at 7:19 p.m. Mr. Huzan also disconnected the phone call and left the meeting at 7:19 p.m.

Fire Chief Biloski was welcomed to the table. The Fire Department Report was read. There has been one First Response call since the last report. Fire Department issues and training were discussed. Fire Chief Biloski noted that information and emails are still being transferred to himself from Fire Chief Mattas. He will be meeting with Andrew Bak, Fire Protection Advisor, from the Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management to discuss his new responsibilities. The current roster for the Department currently shows 17 members, including First Responders, however there are only four to six members showing up for training nights. He has been working with the Nolalu Fire Department to prepare a training schedule for joint training and they have been going back and forth between departments for training. Last week they were in O'Connor to do wildland fire theory and were hoping to do a practical exercise this week, but with the recent snow, it will be delayed.

Fire Chief Biloski noted that he has posted the position of Health and Safety Representative for the Department on the group app and is waiting to see if anyone might be interested in taking on the position. He will also be working on ideas for recruitment and training. Possibly posting more information on what they are training on each meeting and pictures of the members while training. The Regional Training Centre (RTC) has put out their list of upcoming training. One member will signed up for Pump Operations course and two members are looking into whether or not they can get the time off to take the Firefighter 1 course in the fall. Fire Chief Biloski and another member are interested in the Officer 1 course as well. There is also a one-day Fire Life Safety Course on public education which he will look into further.

The members have agreed to change the start time of the meeting to 7:00 p.m., which may vary depending on location. The Clerk-Treasurer asked Fire Chief Biloski if he could forward a schedule to the office so that it can be promoted on the Township's website and in the newsletter. Fire Chief Biloski also noted that he would like to have

## TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – MARCH 25, 2024

Council consider an Automatic Aid Agreement with the Nolalu Department due to the lack of volunteers and potential responders to a call. This will be looked into further.

The Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary will be holding a couple of fundraiser's this year, starting with a meat draw in June, the Strawberry Festival in June and hopefully a 2-bit Auction in October.

Fire Chief Biloski noted that they are getting all the equipment ready for the wildfire season and there is a problem with the side-by-side not starting. They are currently working on the issue. The Fire Trailer is loaded and a second set of equipment, from the fire training area, will be available to be brought to the scene, if needed.

The Lakehead Rural Municipal Coalition (LRMC) has sent out an email regarding shared services for Fire Departments. At the last meeting it was noted that perhaps there are some positions required within the Department that could be shared amongst the area municipalities. It has been confirmed that a Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) Internship Program group application could be applied for, for 52 weeks of work. One Municipality would have to be the lead and submit the application. A decision on what the position would be would have to be determined, as well the fund only covers 90% of the cost, with total funding of up to \$35,000. These extra costs, including the 10%, would be allocated amongst the members. How this would be split amongst the members would have to be determined. Council agreed that with the new regulation requirements, this would be beneficial to all the LRMC members. They would like to see the Fire Departments determine what work would be most beneficial to the members and appropriate for the funding. The salary to be paid would be based on what the members decision of the work they will be performing. It was suggested that Oliver Paipoonge be the applicant as they are the ones spearheading the concerns. Council suggested that the additional expenses be divided amongst the participating municipalities by population.

Council also spoke with Fire Chief Biloski regarding discussions held with the Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management at the LRMC meeting, held on March 19, 2024. Mayor Vezina, Clerk-Treasurer Buob and Fire Chief Biloski attended the virtual meeting. At this meeting it was clarified that if a Department is attending a Mutual Aid call they are only to perform to the level of their own Township's By-law, even if they are trained higher. Or if a trained Firefighter attends a call with higher certification, they can only perform to the limits of Township they are attending's By-law, unless a formal Agreement is in place to provide additional services.

Fire Chief Biloski informed Council that he is scheduled to work the evening of the Fire Department Budget meeting, scheduled for April 8<sup>th</sup>, and will not be able to attend.

During the discussion, Fire Chief Biloski and Councillor Rea received a Fire call page and left the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Council agreed to continue to hold the Fire Department budget meeting on April 8<sup>th</sup> and request that Fire Chief Biloski have as many notes as possible included in his budget. The Clerk-Treasurer can do the presentation and additional clarification can be made at a later date.

A retirement party for former Fire Chief Mattas was discussed. Council would like to host a party in the O'Connor Community Centre. The Clerk-Treasurer will confirm his availability and more discussion will follow.

The Administration and Roads Voucher to March 25, 2024 was reviewed and it was

4. Moved by J. Sobolta  
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

**THAT THE ADMINISTRATION AND ROADS VOUCHER #2024-06 DATED MARCH 25, 2024 TALLING \$25,100.77 BE APPROVED AND PAID.**

Carried

## TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – MARCH 25, 2024

The Statement of Revenue and Expenditure will be unavailable until after the 2023 Audit is completed.

By-laws and Policies were discussed as follows;

a) Safety Mission Statement for the Township of O'Connor. It was

5. Moved by A. Crane  
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

**THAT THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR SAFETY MISSION STATEMENT BE ENDORSED.**

Carried

b) By-law Number 2024-10 – To repeal By-law Number 2022-21 appointing the Acting Deputy Fire Chief. As the Acting Deputy Fire Chief Biloski has been promoted to Fire Chief this By-law will need to be rescinded.

6. Moved by Carly Torkkeli  
Seconded by J. Sobolta

**THAT BY-LAW NUMBER 2024-10 BEING A BY-LAW TO RESCIND BY-LAW NUMBER 2022-21 APPOINTING THE ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF FOR THE O'CONNOR VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT BE PASSED AND ENTERED IN THE BY-LAW BOOK.**

Carried

c) By-law Number 2024-11 – Being a By-law respecting construction, demolition and change of use permits and inspections, and set out the rates for permits, and to repeal By-law Number 2016-12 was reviewed. As per discussion at the public meeting held earlier this evening, it was

7. Moved by J. Sobolta  
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

**THAT BY-LAW NUMBER 2024-11 BEING A BY-LAW RESPECTING CONSTRUCTION, DEMOLITION AND CHANGE OF USE PERMITS AND INSPECTIONS, AND TO SET OUT THE RATES FOR PERMITS AND TO REPEAL BY-LAW NUMBER 2016-12 BE PASSED AND ENTERED IN THE BY-LAW BOOK.**

Carried

As per previous discussions and decision regarding the Official Plan Amendment Application #2023-01 it was

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

**THAT BY-LAW NUMBER 2024-12 BEING A BY-LAW UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF SUBSECTION 22 OF THE PLANNING ACT, R.S.O. 1990 C.P. 13, AS AMENDED, TO AMEND THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR'S OFFICIAL PLAN WITH RESPECT TO PROVISIONS INCLUDED IN AMENDMENT APPLICATION #2023-01 BE PASSED AND ENTERED IN THE BY-LAW BOOK.**

Carried

A Resolution for endorsement was read from the Township of Amaranth calling on the Province of Ontario to treat all municipalities fairly and provide equivalent representative operational budget funding amounts to all Ontario municipalities was filed.

Correspondence was read as follows:

- a) Lakehead Rural Municipal Coalition (LRMC) – Minutes of the January 16, 2024 meeting and Notes from the February 20, 2024 meeting with Fire and Emergency Services.

## TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – MARCH 25, 2024

- b) Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing regarding the Township of O'Connor's 2024 Annual Repayment Limit.
  - c) Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) – i) AMO Policy Update – Provincial Government Advocacy Ahead of 2024 Budget.  
ii) Managing Communications through Crisis – one-day course. No one will attend.
  - d) Emergency Management Ontario regarding the Solar Eclipse occurring on April 8, 2024.
  - e) Thunder Bay & Area Food Strategy regarding Food Strategy 2023 Highlights.
  - f) Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU) – Releases Food Insecurity Report.
  - g) Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) regarding the Inspection of 2024-2025 Annual Work Schedule for Black Spruce, Dog River-Matawin, Lakehead, Wabadowgang Noopming and English River Forests.
- The balance of the correspondence was passed around the table.

Under Old Business, Council discussed

- a) Official Plan Amendment Application #2023-01 – Council's decision on the Application was moved forward on the agenda and previously discussed.
- b) OPP Detachment Board Proposals for Thunder Bay OPP – Councillor Sobolta reported to Council that there will be a meeting held this week. The new Board name has still not been decided upon, however it will be discussed at the next meeting. The Board will not be in place until all the training is completed. They are currently looking at a three-hour online training course. The Clerk-Treasurer noted that a By-law will have to be passed to appoint Councillor Sobolta to the new Board, however, the name of the Board will have to be determined first.
- c) Municipal Consulting regarding Council's request for Councillor Training. Ms. Evans is willing to review the training materials previously provided to new Council last year, with Councillor Rea at a nominal fee and her availability is flexible. The Clerk-Treasurer will confirm with Councillor Rea when he might be available and make the required arrangements. The Clerk-Treasurer will not be registering Councillor Rea for the AMO Municipal Codes of Conduct Essential of Good Governance course previously approved.

Under New Business, Council discussed

- a) Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing – 2024 Northwestern Ontario CAO/Clerks Forum to be held virtually May 22 and 23, 2024 was discussed. It was

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

**THAT THE FOLLOWING PERSON/S ATTEND THE 2024 NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO CAO/CLERKS' FORUM TO BE HELD VIRTUALLY ON MAY 22 AND 23, 2024.**

**CLERK-TREASURER BUOB  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT LAFOREST**

**REGISTRATION: N/C**

Carried

- b) Township of Conmee invitation to participate in a Joint Annual Tabletop Exercise. The exercise being a train derailment. Council agreed not to participate in this exercise and continue to hold our own exercise.

Under Further New Business, Councillor Torkkeli and Councillor Sobolta reported on the Veterinary Committee meeting they attended. It was noted that the previously secretary, Ms. Maki, has retired from the Board and Councillor Torkkeli will be shadowing the current Chair, Mr. Aalbers, as he is also looking at stepping down from his position next year.

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

It was

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – MARCH 25, 2024

- 10. Moved by J. Sobolta  
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: 8:31 P.M.**

Carried

Employment matters were discussed.

- 11. Moved by A. Crane  
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

**TIME BEING: 8:54 P.M.**

**THAT WE NOW MOVE TO OPEN MEETING.**

Carried

It was

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

**THAT COUNCIL ACCEPT MR. EUGENE PAYETTE'S RESIGNATION AS EQUIPMENT OPERATOR #1 EFFECTIVE MARCH 22, 2024.**

Carried

Council agreed to post the position for Equipment Operator #1 and have the applications submitted into the office for review by April 22, 2024. Council will review them at the Council meeting that evening.

An interview Committee will be appointed at the next meeting.

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

**THAT THE COUNCIL MEETING ADJOURN TO THE BUDGET MEETING TO BE HELD ON MONDAY, APRIL 8, 2024 AT 6:00 P.M. IN THE O'CONNOR COUNCIL CHAMBERS.**

**TIME BEING: 8:55 P.M.**

Carried

---

Mayor

---

Clerk-Treasurer