

## TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – MAY 13, 2024

Minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday, May 13, 2024 at 7 p.m. in the O'Connor Council Chambers.

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

Visitors: Chad Tanner, Senior Community Advisor, OPG  
Thomas Klemens, Project Team, OPG  
Margaret Foster, Dog Control Officer  
Christine Halverson, Matt Henny, Diana Bockus  
Robbie Reed, Vicky Reed arrived at 7:35 p.m.  
Kelly Johnson, Road Superintendent arrived at 8:00 p.m.

Absent: Mayor Vezina

Acting Mayor Crane called the meeting to order at 7:00 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 Brendan Rea  
Seconded by J. Sobolta

**THAT THE MINUTES FROM THE ROAD DEPARTMENT BUDGET MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, APRIL 22, 2024, THE MINUTES FROM THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, APRIL 22, 2024, THE NOTES FROM THE INTERVIEW MEETINGS HELD APRIL 29 AND MAY 1, 2024 AND THE NOTES FROM THE TOWNSHIP INSPECTION HELD ON MAY 6, 2024 BE ACCEPTED AS PRINTED.**

Carried

Visitors were asked if they wished to address Council on anything other than what was already on the agenda. Christine Halverson asked if she could speak regarding a dog complaint. Council agreed to allow her to speak following the other already scheduled deputations.

Mr. Tanner and Mr. Klemens of Ontario Power Generation (OPG) were welcomed to the meeting to discuss the Redevelopment Project of the Kakabeka Generating Station. Introductions were held. Mr. Tanner started with an explanation of who OPG are, and what role they play in power generation. OPG generates the electricity, and the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) determines the demand and may call on OPG to create more. OPG provides 50% of the energy required in Ontario. They currently employ between 9,500 to 10,000 employees. They have a diverse fleet, including one (1) solar, two (2) thermal – one in Atikokan and one in Kingston, and sixty-six (66) hydroelectric with eleven of these in Northwestern Ontario. An average of twenty-five (25) percent of the energy comes from hydroelectric. It is anticipated that in twenty (20) years the demand for electricity will have doubled and they need to start to fill in the gap now. The existing fleet averages to be sixty (60) to eighty (80) years old and OPG is looking at all of them to ensure that they can get as much energy as they can. The Kakabeka Generation Station is reaching its one hundred (100) year mark and is flagged for redevelopment.

Mr. Klemens is a part of the Project Team and explained the plans. The Kakabeka Generating Station is currently the second oldest in Ontario and feeds 25,000 homes with the current four units. The redevelopment will be going down to two more efficient units. They will also be replacing the surge tank. There will be no change in the Water Management Plan and the water in and out will remain the same. All the current buildings will be gone except the Powerhouse which will have an addition added to it to house the two new units.

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Public engagement will take place. There will be Public Consultation Plan developed for the general public and all stakeholders who express interest. There will also be Indigenous engagement with the three local Indigenous groups, Fort William First Nations, Metis Nation and Red Sky Metis. Additional information on the project is available on their website at <https://kakabekags.com/>.

OPG will be salvaging some of the old equipment in the Powerhouse and will be donating to anyone interested. Some of the equipment will be donated to the Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge for their heritage park.

The project will bring local economic benefits for the Region as the project will cost between two to three hundred million dollars. They will be looking to hire local people and companies for the work and the project will start in March of 2025 and will take approximately two (2) years to complete.

During construction no water will be going through the station and more water will be going over the falls. The local Fire Departments currently access water from the aquaduct, however, will not be able to during this time. OPG will try to provide a solution for a water source for the Fire Departments prior to shutdown.

No further questions were asked and Mr. Tanner and Mr. Klemens were thanked for attending and left the meeting at 7:38 p.m.

Robbie and Vicky Reed were welcomed to the table. Introductions were held. The Reeds are here to make a complaint against the CBO and to express their concern for a delay in receiving a plumbing permit. Mr. Reed explained that they purchased a home in the Township of O'Connor at the end of October and they started having plumbing issues with their home at the end of December/beginning of January. They have hired a plumber who has reached out to the CBO to request permission to do emergency repairs and permission was provided. The CBO did attend the home for inspection. They submitted a plumbing permit application and to date no permit has been issued. More work is required to be done, as the problem continues to get worse. The CBO has not reached out to them or their plumber. They have also communicated with the Clerk-Treasurer in attempts to hear back from the CBO. They provided Council with detail and pictures of the issues arising in the home and their concerns. They expressed their financial constraints and the need for a plumbing permit to be able to go through their title insurance to make a claim.

Council asked if they had received a home inspection prior to purchase and they were informed that they did. The CBO has recently expressed to Council that a plumbing permit is not required for repair and noted that the homeowner has not reached out to him personally. The homeowners are stating that they require a permit and a work order to be issued or insurance won't cover their expenses.

Council suggested to the homeowners that the issues described could also be the septic system. They also noted that if the CBO does not feel that a permit is required, they cannot make him issue one. Council offered to look further into the matter and get back to them. They were thanked for attending and left the meeting at 8:04 p.m.

Margaret Foster, Dog Control Officer was welcomed to the table. Ms. Foster informed Council of an ongoing dog issue between neighbours. The Provincial Offenses Officer had been called regarding this issue. He attended the dog owner's home on two occasions, and they were not home. To date no further action has been taken and the dog has once again offended by attacking the neighbour's quad runner while they were out on the roadway. Ms. Foster informed Council that she has provided ways to assist the dog owner with training the dog and teaching it its own boundaries and preventing further incidents from happening but the dog continues to get out and leave the property. A second incident with another resident at a different location is also becoming an issue. A senior and other family members can no longer walk down the road as they are afraid of the dogs as they come out onto the road and growl at them when walking by. The owner has been notified and warned and has not taken any further action to prevent the dogs from going onto the road.

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Council confirmed that there is a By-law in place to address the issues. Fines can be issued and if the problem continues the dog can be taken away. Dogs running at large is not acceptable.

Ms. Foster was thanked for attending and expressing her concerns.

Diana Bockus and Matt Henny were welcomed to the table at 8:15 p.m. Ms. Bockus noted that she is the senior Ms. Foster was talking about who cannot walk down the road to her daughter's home because of these dogs. Mr. Henny noted that it seems to have improved but is still an issue. He had read the previous Township Dog Running At large By-law and understands that there is now a new one with more enforcement. Both Ms. Bockus and Mr. Henny would like a copy of the new Dog Running at Large By-law. Council asked Mr. Henny if he has talked to the dog owner about their concerns and he noted that he has in the past and the matter continues to be an issue after two years. The dog owner is accusing them of being the problem. They do not want to see anyone get bit and would like the dogs kept on the owners own property. The question of what the meaning of "menacing", which is included in the By-law, was asked. Council confirmed that the word menacing is the perceived act not only attack. Council confirmed that the new By-law was discussed in length to ensure enforcement would not be an issue and will do what we can to get the matter rectified. Mr. Henny complimented Ms. Foster on how she is handling the situation. Mr. Henny and Ms. Bockus left the meeting at 8:22 p.m.

Christine Halverson was welcomed to the table. Ms. Halverson provided Council with the background of the nine different incidents she has recorded of the past three years in regard to this dog issue described by Ms. Foster. She has installed a gate to protect herself and her property. In June of 2022 a warning letter was sent to the dog owner and no resolution has been completed. The previous By-law Enforcement Officer was dealing with the situation and she has recently been informed that no fines were ever issued. She also has video proof of the dog attacking a friend's dog on her property. The dog has also been on their property and destroyed her solar lights. Ms. Halverson noted that she has PTSD with dogs and the dog owner is aware of this. The second Provincial Offences Officer has been called in and has also attempted to speak with the dog owner on two occasions and the dog owner was not home on both attempts. Ms. Halverson has left messages with the Provincial Offences Officer to call her as per his request and he has not responded. No fines were ever issued after three years. She and her husband were the owners of the quad runners that were attacked by the dog in April of this year. She noted that she cannot go outside to enjoy her property as the dog continues to bark at them and she cannot trust that it won't come onto her property. She has all the documentation of the dog at large on her phone and would like to see this matter resolved.

Council thanked Ms. Halverson for bringing this to their attention and noted that is the first they have heard of the issue. They confirmed that this will be dealt with as the dog owners must comply with the laws of dog ownership and if not, they will be fined and if it continues the dog should be removed. Ms. Halverson also complimented Ms. Foster on how she does her job as Dog Control Officer. Ms. Halverson and Ms. Foster left the meeting at 8:38 p.m.

Mr. Johnson, Road Superintendent was welcomed to the table. Road Department update and roadwork in general was discussed. Roads are being graded and they have also been using the backhoe to fill some of the potholes. They have also recently completed a contract job for a resident. They have been fixing some of the potholes at the disposal site and have placed more gravel in front of the new hole. The old hole is almost full and will be capped off once it is full. Council suggested that signage be put up to direct people to the correct hole, as residents are currently placing the garbage in both holes. They have recently filled the scrap metal bin and will be getting it exchanged. They have installed some beaver screens on the ends of culverts. They cannot start on the road projects until after the budget is set. Half loads will come off the Township roads on Friday, May 17<sup>th</sup> and the Ministry of Transportation has already taken them off the Highways. There have been a few ratepayers looking for gravel once half loads are off.

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The Health and Safety Report for April 24, 2024 was reviewed. No questions were asked from Council.

The Township Inspection held on May 6, 2024, was briefly discussed. Councillor Sobolta is willing to donate to the Township some replacement boards for the bottom of the pillars, in front of the Township Office. The two residents with the Trudeau signs at the end of their driveway, that were observed on Connolly Road, will ask to move these signs off of the Road Allowance. It was noted that Council has received concern from parents regarding the one sign with vulgar language on it.

A letter was read from the Ministry of Northern Development in response to Council's question regarding Loghrin Road project and funding. They have confirmed that the NORDS fund does allow stacking of funding where it is permitted under the other applicable program. This will be discussed further during the next budget meeting. Mr. Johnson informed Council that he will be working on requesting quotes for Loghrin Road resurfacing this week.

Council agreed to move item #15d) in regard to the hiring of the Equipment Operator #1 forward on the agenda to discuss with Mr. Johnson. The Interview Committee and Mr. Johnson discussed with Council the interview process and applicant that they would like to recommend for the position. It was

3. Moved by Brendan Rea  
Seconded by J. Sobolta

**THAT DARREN SMITH BE HIRED AS AN EQUIPMENT OPERATOR #1 FOR THE ROAD DEPARTMENT.**

**DATE OF EMPLOYMENT TO START – MAY 27, 2024**

**PROBATION PERIOD WILL BE FOR A PERIOD OF SIXTY (60) CALENDAR DAYS FROM DATE OF HIRING. DURING THE PROBATION PERIOD THE EMPLOYEE SHALL BE ENTITLED TO ALL RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES OF THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR UNION AGREEMENT. AFTER COMPLETION OF THE PROBATIONARY PERIOD, SENIORITY SHALL BE EFFECTIVE FROM THE ORIGINAL DATE OF EMPLOYMENT.**

Carried

The Administration and Roads Voucher for May 13, 2024 was reviewed and it was

4. Moved by Carly Torkkeli  
Seconded by J. Sobolta

**THAT THE ADMINISTRATION AND ROADS VOUCHER #2024-09 DATED MAY 13, 2024 TOTTALLING \$63,007.45 BE APPROVED AND PAID.**

Carried

By-laws and Policies were discussed as follows:

- a) By-law Number 2024-15, being a By-law authorizing the execution of an Agreement in order to participate in the Canada Summer Jobs program and it was

5. Moved by Carly Torkkeli  
Moved by J. Sobolta

**THAT BY-LAW NUMBER 2024-15 BEING A BY-LAW AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN HIS MAJESTY THE KING IN RIGHT OF CANADA, AS REPRESENTED BY THE MINISTER OF EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT STYLED AS MINISTER OF WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY AND YOUTH AND THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR BE PASSED AND ENTERED IN THE BY-LAW BOOK.**

Carried

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b) The Disposal Site Policy was reviewed as amended as per Council's previous discussion and it was

6. Moved by J. Sobolta  
Seconded by Brendan Rea

**THAT THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR'S POLICY FOR THE DISPOSAL SITE BE AMENDED TO INCLUDE UNDER THE HEADING "HOURS OF OPERATION" THE FOLLOWING:**

**"SHOULD THE DISPOSAL SITE CARETAKER NOT BE ABLE TO OPEN FOR REGULAR HOURS, IN THE EVENT OF INCLEMENT WEATHER OR UNAVOIDABLE CIRCUMSTANCE, THEY SHALL NOTIFY THE CLERK-TREASURER. NOTICE OF CLOSURE TO THE RESIDENTS WILL BE POSTED ON THE TOWNSHIP WEBSITE BY THE CLERK-TREASURER, AS WELL AS DELIVERED VIA THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR'S EMERGENCY TEXT MESSAGING SYSTEM. RESIDENTS WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO SIGN UP FOR THE TEXT MESSAGING SERVICE FOR THIS PURPOSE."**

**ADDITIONAL DETAIL WAS ADDED TO CLARIFY AND PROVIDE MORE DESCRIPTION TO "SEGREGATED ITEMS", AND "BLUE BOX RECYLING". A NEW SECTION WAS ADDED FOR "WASTE ELECTRONICS & ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT."**

**ADDITIONAL GRAMMATICAL CHANGES WERE ALSO MADE TO THE POLICY.**

Carried

Mr. Johnson left the meeting at 9:04 p.m.

Resolutions for endorsement were read as follows:

- a) Loyalist Township regarding Housing Funding was filed
- b) Town of Orangeville regarding Ontario Heritage Act Amendment and the extension of deadlines was filed.
- c) Multi-Municipal Energy Working Group requesting support for the establishment of new Wind Turbine Projects was filed.

Correspondence was read as follows:

- a) Thunder Bay District Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB)
  - i) Update from the Board – May 8, 2024.
  - ii) 2023 Annual Report available online.
- b) Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) – Board Highlights.
- c) Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) – i) Call for Nominations: 2024-2026 AMO Board of Directors. No one will put their name forward.
- d) The balance of the correspondence was passed around the table.

Under Old Business, Council discussed:

- a) A letter from the Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge regarding working together to improve Fire and Emergency Services. Council agreed that they would like to work collaboratively with the surrounding municipalities on trying to solve some of the current issues affecting these services. It was noted that the letter implied working with the Lakehead Rural Municipal Coalition (LRMC) municipalities, however the issues go beyond these municipalities and it was suggested that it should be the Zone 1 municipalities, including the unincorporated Fire Departments included in these discussions.
- b) By-law Enforcement Officer Training and the cost sharing for the expense of the Ontario Bylaw Officer CORE registration fee and wage for time to complete was discussed. It was

7. Moved by Carly Torkkeli  
Seconded by J. Sobolta

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**THAT THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR APPROVE GREG CROFT, BY-LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER, TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ONTARIO BY-LAW OFFICER CORE TRAINING, AND SHARE IN THE COSTS OF REGISTRATION AND HIS TIME WITH THE SURROUNDING MUNICIPALITIES ALSO APPOINTING HIM TO THIS POSITION. THE TOWNSHIP OF CONMEE WILL MAKE THE PAYMENT FOR REGISTRATION AND PAY MR. CROFT FOR HIS TIME AND DISTRIBUTE INVOICES TO EACH MUNICIPALITY FOR THEIR SHARE OF THE COSTS.**

Carried

Item c) was previously discussed with the Road Superintendent earlier on the agenda.

- d) The Retirement Party for Fire Chief Mattas was discussed. The Clerk-Treasurer provided Council with what has been completed to date and confirmed final details for the event.

Under Further Old Business, Councillor Sobolta provided information regarding the Lakehead OPP Detachment Board. The Board is recruiting three (3) Provincial representatives, and three (3) community representatives, and advertising will be included in the local newsletters. Applications will be accepted until June 14, 2024 at 4:30 p.m. The next meeting will be held in Thunder Bay.

The Clerk-Treasurer noted that the Insurance Adjuster attended the Disposal Site today to look at the Garbage Compactor following the fire on April 20, 2024.

Under New Business, Council discussed:

- a) Ministry of the Solicitor General – Office of the Fire Marshal regarding the Fire Protection Grant. The application-based grant will allow Municipal Fire Departments to apply for funding for fire department infrastructure, personal protective equipment and specialized decontamination tools to clean and sanitize firefighter gear. Applicants must demonstrate need, return on investment, and benefit to public safety. Information packages with more information available soon.
- b) NorWest Community Health Centres – i) regarding an invitation to CAO Meeting for Rural Municipalities on Wednesday, May 22, 2024, at the Oliver Paipoonge Municipal Office. It was

8. Moved by J. Sobolta  
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

**THAT THE FOLLOWING PERSON/S ATTEND THE NORWEST COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRES CAO MEETING FOR RURAL MUNICIPALITIES TO BE HELD ON MAY 22, 2024 AT THE OLIVER PAIPOONGE MUNICIPAL OFFICE.**

**COUNCILLOR CRANE, MAYOR VEZINA, CLERK-TREASURER BUOB  
REGISTRATION: N/C**

Carried

- ii) Invitation to the Rural Health Fair and Histor Tea – Wednesday, May 29, 2024 at the Kakabeka Legion. The Clerk-Treasurer noted that one of the Township residents will be in attendance with some of the Township history books and merchandise to have for sale. Some old photos will also be provided for display.

- c) Westland Insurance – Invitation to Westland Education Event – June 5, 2024 – topics related to employee benefits and commercial insurance. It was

9. Moved by Brendan Rea  
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

**THAT THE FOLLOWING PERSON/S ATTEND THE WESTLAND EDUCATION EVENT TO BE HELD VIRTUALLY ON JUNE 5, 2024.**

**ERIN LAFOREST – ADMIN ASSISTANT  
REGISTRATION: N/C**

Carried

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d) Ontario Power Generation's Dam Safety Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (EPRP) Meeting for the Kaministiquia River System. It was

10. Moved by J. Sobolta  
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

**THAT THE FOLLOWING PERSON/S ATTEND THE ONTARIO POWER GENERATION'S DAM SAFETY EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLAN (EPRP) MEETING FOR THE KAMINISTIQUIA RIVER SYSTEM TO BE HELD ON MAY 28, 2024 IN THUNDER BAY.**

**CLERK-TREASURER BUOB, MAYOR VEZINA, FIRE CHIEF BILOSKI**

**REGISTRATION: N/C**

Carried

e) Township of O'Connor's 5-Year Energy Conservation & Demand Management Plan 2019-2023 for review and updating was available for discussion. It was agreed to defer this item to the June Council meeting when Council would have more time to review.

f) A date for Budget Meeting was discussed and it was

11. Moved by Carly Torkkeli  
Seconded by Brendan Rea

**THAT THE FOLLOWING DATE BE SET FOR A BUDGET MEETING JUNE 11, 2024 AT 7 P.M. IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS.**

Carried

Under Further New Business, Councillor Torkkeli informed Council that she has been approached by and asked to join the Northern Women's Caucus. She has agreed to join. The meetings will be held virtually, and there will be a small membership fee. Council was in full support of her participation.

Councillor Torkkeli also noted that Reeve Wright from Gillies has approached her in regard to the appointment to the Thunder Bay and Area Food Strategy Committee. It was agreed at the beginning of the current Council term that Gillies would appoint a member to the Board, that being Reeve Wright, for the first two years and O'Connor would appoint Councillor Torkkeli for the second two years. Reeve Wright would like to step down from the Committee and has asked if she would be willing to take over the seat early. She has agreed.

Council discussed further the concerns of Mr. and Mrs. Reed's deputation earlier in the meeting. It was agreed to send them a reply letter informing them that we cannot order the CBO to issue a permit if he does not feel that one is required, as it is only repairs to the existing system. Council feel that the issues described, and the photos shown, could implement that there are issues with the septic system and not the plumbing and Council would like to suggest that they consider having their septic system inspected and get a second opinion on the plumbing issues.

12. Moved by J. Sobolta  
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

**TIME BEING: 10:30 P.M. THAT THE BUSINESS OF THIS MEETING CONTINUE.**

Carried

13. 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**

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**OR EMPLOYEE NEGOTIATIONS; PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION 239(2)(D) OF THE MUNICIPAL ACT, 2001, AND TO DISCUSS A PERSONAL MATTER ABOUT AN IDENTIFIABLE INDIVIDUAL, INCLUDING MUNICIPAL OR LOCAL BOARD EMPLOYEES PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION 239(2)(E) OF THE MUNICIPAL ACT, 2001.**

**TIME BEING: 10:34 P.M.**

Carried

The applications for Deputy Treasurer were reviewed. Resumes for the Chief Building Official (CBO) position were reviewed. The Dog issues discussed during the deputation were discussed further.

- 14. Moved by Brendan Rea  
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

**TIME BEING: 11:02 P.M.**

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

Carried

Council would like the Clerk-Treasurer to contact Mr. Croft, the newly appointed Municipal Offences/By-law Enforcement Officer to address the two dog complaints. The information on the incidents to date will be forwarded to him.

The Deputy Treasurer position will be reposted with a deadline of June 10, 2024. A wage range of \$25.00 to \$32.00 / hour, depending on experience, will be included in the advertisement.

No decision was made in regard to the Chief Building Official (CBO) position at this time.

Issues brought forward or letters received were discussed as follows:  
a) IESO Community Engagement – Adequacy update – May 2024.

For information purposes Building Permits were approved as follows: #2024-03 – new home at 274 Highway 595, #2024-04 - demolition permit 19 Flint Road.

- 15. Moved by Brendan Rea  
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

**THAT THE COUNCIL MEETING ADJOURN TO COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON MONDAY, MAY 27, 2024 AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE O'CONNOR COUNCIL CHAMBERS.**

**TIME BEING: 11:03 P.M.**

Carried

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk-Treasurer