

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – NOVEMBER 13, 2023

Minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday, November 13, 2023 at 7 p.m. in the O'Connor Council Chambers.

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

Visitors: Road Superintendent, Kelly Johnson
Brendan Rea

Absent: Councillor Racicot

Mayor Vezina called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

1. Moved by A. Crane
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 Carly Torkkeli
Seconded by A. Crane

THAT THE MINUTES FROM THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, AUGUST 14, 2023 AND MONDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2023 BE ACCEPTED AS PRINTED.

Carried

The visitors were asked if they wished to address Council, and they replied, no.

Mr. Johnson, Road Superintendent, was welcomed to the table. A Road Department update and roadwork in general was discussed. The ditching project on Smart Road is complete. A jackhammer was brought in to take out some of the rock that was in the way and the road has been realigned. The Road employees will be adding more gravel to the road surface this week to finish up the project. The winter sand has been mixed at the Conmee pit. With the warmer weather this week, the grader will be out trying to smooth out some of the potholes on the roads before winter. The staff have been pulling out the beaver screens. Councillor Crane noted that he received a complaint from a resident on Loghrin Road regarding the mud on the road after the last snowfall. Mr. Johnson noted that there was new gravel applied to Loghrin Road this summer and unfortunately it seems to have more clay in the gravel, which is the reasoning. Next year, Council will make the decision as to how they will proceed with Loghrin Road's surface treatment. The intersection of Loghrin Road and Highway 590 was also discussed. It was suggested that the MTO be contacted to see if the intersection could be widened as the trucks turning down that road are crushing the ends of the culvert.

The Road Department Equipment Report was read. It was noted that Truck #9 will require a new box in 2024. The rear tires will also have to be replaced this year and were not budgeted for. The garbage truck will be in need of replacement in the near future.

Canada Summer Jobs program was discussed. The program will launch during the week of November 20, 2023, and will end on January 10, 2024. It was agreed to apply for two students for the Road Department and it was suggested that perhaps we should also consider applying for a student for the office. This will be discussed further at a later date.

Mr. Johnson provided an update regarding the campers that have set up at the end of Cliffmclean Road. Photos were provided to Council. A letter has been sent to the property owner informing them that there is no winter maintenance on that road beyond the last home and no persons shall plow that road on their own. Mr. Johnson will install

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a “No Winter Maintenance Beyond This Point” sign in the near future. The Township By-law's and Policies will be reviewed to see how to move forward with this situation if they do not leave before winter. If there is nothing addressing this, a by-law will be drafted and presented to Council for approval. The Official Plan does address a time limit in regard to residing in a camper on one's property.

Mr. Johnson updated Council on the Garage – Shop B construction. The reinstallation of the generator was discussed. It was agreed to hold off on the reinstallation at this time.

It was agreed to move New Business, item 16 b) ahead on the agenda to discuss with Mr. Johnson. Emergency Management Ontario (EMO) announced the opening of a Community Emergency Preparedness Grant with grants for supplies, equipment and services that range from \$5,000 to \$50,000. Applications are due by November 30, 2023, at 5 p.m. The purchase of generators is an eligible expense. Administration would like to recommend that the Township apply for generators for the Fire Hall and the Garage and add a transfer switch to connect the current Office generator to Community Centre with the funding. The size of the generators required was discussed. The Fire Department received two quotes for a generator for the Fire Hall in April and May, 2023. These contacts, along with a couple more electrical companies will be contacted for pricing and an application will be submitted for funding. The successful applicants will be notified in February 2024. Council agreed to have Administration apply for funding.

Mr. Johnson was thanked for attending and left the meeting at 8:08 p.m.

The Administration and Roads Voucher for November 13, 2023, was reviewed and it was

3. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

THAT THE ADMINISTRATION AND ROADS VOUCHER #2023-19 DATED NOVEMBER 13, 2023 TOTALLING \$169,911.81 BE APPROVED AND PAID.

Carried

The Statement of Revenue and Expenditures to September 30, 2023, was reviewed. Council had no questions or concerns.

By-law Number 2023-36 authorizing the execution of an agreement with the Ministry of Health for Central Ambulance Communication Centre (CACC) services was reviewed and it was

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

THAT BY-LAW NUMBER 2023-36 BEING A BY-LAW AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF AN AGREEMENT WITH HIS MAJESTY THE KING IN RIGHT OF THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO AS REPRESENTED BY THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH TO PROVIDE COMMUNICATION SERVICES BE PASSED AND ENTERED IN THE BY-LAW BOOK.

Carried

Resolutions for endorsement were read as follows:

- a) Township of O'Connor's draft resolution regarding Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) was discussed. A final draft will be brought back to the next meeting for approval.
- b) Town of Aurora regarding Cannabis Retail Applications for the Town of Aurora was filed.

Correspondence was read as follows:

- a) Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) regarding Final 2024 Budget – Notice of Meeting to Approve Budget. The Township of O'Connor's change is an increase of 4.25%.

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- b) Superior North Emergency Medical Service – 2023 Levy Information – 3rd quarter levies have been adjusted slightly based upon approved wage increases.
 - c) Northwestern Ontario Recreational Trails Association (NWORTA) regarding the Trans Canada Trail Affiliation Announcement. NWORTA has been officially recognized by Trans Canada Trail as an affiliated trail organization and partner. They will now be eligible to apply for funding to offset the costs associated with construction, maintenance, and signage for the Shabaqua Trail and proposed Kakabeka Falls trail.
 - d) Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) – i) Policy Update – October 31, 2023 – Strengthening Public Health Through Voluntary Mergers.
ii) Policy Update – November 2, 2023 – 2023 Fall Economic Statement.
 - e) AMCTO The Municipal Experts regarding the Advocacy Update: 2023 Fall Economic Statement.
 - f) Municipal Finance Officers Association of Ontario (MFOA) – MFOA's Summary of the 2023 Fall Economic Statement.
 - g) Northern Policy Institute – Homelessness, Mental Health, and Substance Use in Northern Ontario, Revisited.
 - h) North Superior Workforce Planning Board (NSWPB) regarding 2023-2024 Local Labour Market Plan and Data Annex.
 - i) Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) regarding Regulated Areas Maps - Fact Sheet. Copies of the document will be provided to anyone applying for a Building Permit and the Chief Building Official will be made aware of the requirement to confirm that an LRCA permit has been issued or is not required.
- The balance of the correspondence was passed around the table.

Under Old Business, Council discussed

- a) Erika Kromm, Municipality of Neebing's email regarding the new OPP Detachment Board Training Requirements. The new Community Safety and Policing Act is supposed to come into effect on April 1, 2024. The Lakehead Police Services Board (LPSB) will then have nine members, including one from each member community, two Provincial Appointees and two Community Representatives. Each of the appointed members will be required to take mandatory training before they can become a voting member on the board. Currently, Councillor Sobolta is sitting on the board as a non-voting member and he would be interested in remaining on the new board and will take the required training.
- b) Clerk-Treasurer's report was read regarding the lightning strike and requested reimbursement from Tbaytel. Tbaytel does not feel that there was any negligence on their part and they are not responsible for the Township Office's damage due to the lightning strike on August 25, 2023. Council would like to review the Agreement between Tbaytel and the Township of O'Connor for the next meeting.

Under Further Old Business, the Clerk-Treasurer informed Council of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's comments in regard to the Official Plan Amendment application received. The applicant will be notified of the additional requirements and the Clerk-Treasurer will look into drafting a new by-law mandating early consultation prior to submission of an application for future applications.

Under New Business, Council discussed

- a) Innovated Solutions regarding recommendations for computer backup. Council discussed the options provided and would like to have administration move forward with option one of the recommendations, if there is enough room on the computer as described. If not, option three, which is similar to what was previously used in the office will be considered.
- b) Emergency Management Ontario (EMO) regarding Community Emergency Preparedness Grant was previously discussed with Mr. Johnson.
- c) Thunder Bay District Municipal League survey regarding the upcoming 2024 Conference in Nipigon was discussed. The answers to the survey will be forwarded to The Executive-Director for further discussion at the League's next meeting.
- d) A date for an Emergency Tabletop Exercise was discussed and it was

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

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**THAT THE FOLLOWING DATE BE SET FOR A TABLETOP EXERCISE
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2023 AT 7 P.M.**

THE MEETING WILL BE HELD IN THE O'CONNOR COMMUNITY CENTRE.

Carried

- e) The Clerk-Treasurer requested to carry over her unused 2023 holidays, due to being short staffed in the office and being unable to take more time off.
6. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

**THAT THE CLERK-TREASURER BE ALLOWED TO CARRY OVER HER
UNUSED HOLIDAYS INTO 2024.**

Carried

- f) The sale of surplus chairs. The former Council chairs are being stored in the Community Centre and there has been a request to see if they are for sale. It was agreed that these chairs be declared as surplus and put up for sale.
- g) Ontario Honours and Awards Secretariat regarding the 2024 Ontario Volunteer Service Awards. The deadline for submissions is December 15, 2023. At this time no names will be put forward.
- h) Fire Underwriters Survey regarding support for Canada's volunteer firefighters and Search and Rescue personnel. Requesting the signing of a petition proposed by the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs to the Government of Canada to support Bill 310's amendments to the Income Tax Act to increase the amount of tax credit from \$3,000 to \$10,000. The petition will be forwarded to Council and the members of the O'Connor Volunteer Fire Department and First Response Team.
- i) TELUS Business regarding the Evolving Public Sector Landscape was filed.
- j) The Clerk-Treasurer informed Council that the current Casual Disposal Site Caretaker has provided notice that they are no longer available for the position. An advertisement will be included in the next issue of the Cornerstone requesting applications. In the meantime, Mr. Pitton, former seasonal employee will be available if needed.

Under Further New Business, it was suggested that Council draft a resolution to have the carbon tax removed from all sources of home heating. Mayor Vezina and Councillor Crane will draft a resolution for the next meeting for further discussion.

For information purposes, four building permits were approved since the last meeting: #2023-11 – Modular Home – 60 Luckens Road, #2023-12 – Garage – 22 Connolly Road, #2023-13 – Sun Porch – 156 Connolly Road, #2023-14 – Relocation of Building – 466 Sitch Road.

Mr. Rea left the meeting, and it was

7. 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 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: 9:07 P.M.

Carried

Staffing matters regarding the Office, Fire Department and Council were discussed in closed session.

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

TIME BEING: 9:27 P.M.

THAT WE NOW MOVE TO OPEN MEETING.

Carried

Council would like Clerk-Treasurer Buob to contact the potential candidates discussed in closed, both with municipal experience, to see if they would be willing to help the Township out on a casual/part-time basis, to help administration get caught up with the current work load, due to being temporarily short staffed and the lightning strike issues.

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

THAT THE COUNCIL MEETING ADJOURN TO THE COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2023 AT 7:00 P.M.

TIME BEING: 9:28 P.M.

Carried

Mayor

Clerk-Treasurer