

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – NOVEMBER 27, 2023

Minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday, November 27, 2023 at 7 p.m. in the O'Connor Council Chambers.

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

Visitors: Fire Chief Henry Mattas
Acting Deputy Fire Chief Greg Biloski
Brendan Rea

Absent: Councillor Racicot

Mayor Vezina called the meeting to order at 7:00 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, NOVEMBER 13, 2023 BE ACCEPTED AS PRINTED.

Carried

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

Fire Chief Mattas and Acting Deputy Fire Chief Biloski were invited to the table. The Fire Department Report from October 22 to November 23, 2023 was read. The team responded to two First Response calls in that time period. The Thunder Bay Central Ambulance Communications Centre (CACC) report, showing the total number of fire and medical calls to the end of October, for the area was reviewed.

The Fire Department Equipment Report was reviewed. The Report includes any work performed on the equipment, including mileage driven for the year. No major work was completed this year.

The Fire Department Building Report was reviewed. The Report includes any work that was completed on the Fire Hall and the Cold Storage building. It was noted that the Life Expectancy for the Cold Storage in the Asset Management Plan is coming to end of life and the building is still in good condition and the Life Expectancy should be extended. Council agreed to extend the Life Expectancy for another 25 years for a total of 50 years.

Fire Department issues were discussed. Fire Chief Mattas noted that he is currently working on the teams 2023 honourarium calculations for payment to the members in December. The Regional School for member training is located in Kakabeka Falls, but they are having trouble getting enough students to attend the courses due to the timing and the length of the courses.

The Community Emergency Preparedness Grant was discussed. Applications are due November 30, 2023 at 5 p.m. Quotes were received for application purposes. It was agreed to move forward with an application for generators for the Fire Hall, the Garage and a transfer switch from the Office to the Community Centre. If the project is approved, the cost will be more than the grant is offering, however Council will approach the O'Connor Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary to see if they will consider making a donation towards the purchase and the rest will be included in the budget.

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – NOVEMBER 27, 2023

It was agreed to move item 19a) Closed Session forward on the agenda to discuss a personal matter with Fire Chief Mattas and Acting Deputy Fire Chief Biloski. Brendan Rea left the room.

3. 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: 7:28 P.M.

Carried

A conversation was held in regard to the Fire Chief's position.

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

TIME BEING: 7:56 P.M.

THAT WE NOW MOVE TO OPEN MEETING.

Carried

Fire Chief Mattas and Acting Deputy Fire Chief Biloski left the meeting and Brendan Rea returned to the meeting at 7:57 p.m.

The Administration and Roads Voucher was reviewed and it was

5. Moved by Carly Torkkeli
Seconded by J. Sobolta

THAT THE ADMINISTRATION AND ROADS VOUCHER #2023-20 DATED NOVEMBER 27, 2023 TOTTALLING \$88,504.52 BE APPROVED AND PAID.

Carried

The Statement of Revenue and Expenditures to October 31, 2023 were reviewed.

By-law Number 2003-08, Being a by-law to provide financial hardship by allowing for the cancellation of increases in Residential Taxes for Low-Income Seniors and Low-Income Persons with Disabilities was once again discussed. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has reviewed the By-law and confirmed that it does meet the requirement as set out in the Municipal Act, 2001. It was recommended that the application form include a better explanation on how the credit is calculated. Council discussed the qualification requirements and entitlement amount. The amended document will be brought back to Council for final approval.

Resolutions for endorsement were read as follows:

- a) Municipality of Shuniah requesting the Province of Ontario enhance enforcement for deficient muffler systems to address concerns around excessive and unnecessary noise from engine brakes was filed.
- b) Township of Coleman requesting a Letter of Support for Conservation Officer Reclassification was filed.
- c) Township of O'Connor's draft resolution regarding Respiratory Syncytial Virus was discussed and amended and it was

6. Moved by A. Crane
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – NOVEMBER 27, 2023

WHEREAS RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS (RSV) IS A SEVERE AND HIGHLY CONTAGIOUS RESPIRATORY VIRUS FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN AND OLDER ADULTS. THE VIRUS SURGES IN LATE FALL AND LASTS UNTIL SPRING, AND IN ORDER TO REDUCE THE SPREAD, PROPER ACCESS TO THE HEALTH CANADA APPROVED VACCINATION IS CRITICAL; AND

WHEREAS OLDER CANADIANS ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTED BY THE RSV AND ACCOUNT FOR OVER 80% OF THE DEATHS FROM THE VIRUS; AND

WHEREAS HEALTH CANADA HAS APPROVED THE VACCINE FOR ADULTS OVER THE AGE OF 60, THIS VACCINE IS 82% EFFECTIVE IN PREVENTION; AND

WHEREAS OHIP HAS IMPLEMENTED FINANCIAL BARRIERS TO THOSE ADULTS SEEKING THE VACCINE WHILE AGING IN THEIR OWN RESIDENCE; AND

WHEREAS THE COST OF THIS VACCINATION IS COVERED FOR THOSE LIVING IN LONG TERM CARE BUT NOT FOR THOSE LIVING IN THEIR OWN RESIDENCE;

WHEREAS THE DECISION TO ONLY PROVIDE THE VACCINE TO THOSE IN LONG TERM CARE IS DISCRIMINATORY TO THOSE THAT ARE ABLE TO REMAIN IN THEIR HOME; AND

WHEREAS INCREASED ACCESS TO PREVENTATIVE MEASURES SUCH AS THE RSV VACCINATION CAN REDUCE THE STRAIN ON OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR HEREBY REQUESTS THAT THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO INCLUDE ALL RESIDENTS OVER THE AGE OF 60 REGARDLESS OF LIVING CIRCUMSTANCES;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT A COPY OF THIS RESOLUTION BE FORWARDED TO PREMIER DOUG FORD, MINISTER OF HEALTH SYLVIA JONES, MPP KEVIN HOLLAND, MPP LISE VAUGEOIS, LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION MARIT STILES, LIBERAL PARTY LEADER, AMO, NOMA, TBDML.

Carried

d) Township of O'Connor's draft resolution regarding home heating was discussed and it was

7. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

WHEREAS IN CANADA MOST CANADIANS CURRENTLY USE MORE THAN ONE FORM OF CARBON BASED FUEL FOR HEATING; AND

WHEREAS THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA REMOVED THE CARBON TAX ON THE HEATING FUEL THAT EMITS THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF GHG'S; AND

WHEREAS HOME HEATING OIL IS ONLY USED IN 3% OF HOUSEHOLDS IN CANADA FOR SPACE OR WATER HEATING; AND

WHEREAS THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA HAS NOT REMOVED THE CARBON TAX ON ALL FORMS OF HOME HEATING FUELS, THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA IS BREAKING THE PRINCIPLE OF "FAIRNESS" OR EQUALITY WITH 97% OF CANADIANS; AND

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – NOVEMBER 27, 2023

WHEREAS THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA IS PUNISHING 97% OF ALL HEATING HOMES WHO CURRENTLY EMIT LESS GHG'S FROM THEIR CHOICE OF SPACE AND WATER HEATING FUEL;

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR CALLS ON THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA TO EITHER REPEAL THE SUBSIDY THROUGH THE REMOVAL OF THE CARBON TAX, OR INSTEAD RECOGNIZE THE FINANCIAL PLIGHT OF ALL CANADIANS AND REMOVE THE CARBON TAX ON ALL FUELS USED FOR HOME HEATING.

Carried

e) Municipality of Tweed regarding re-establishing 1/3 funding agreements was reviewed and it was

8. Moved by A. Crane
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE MUNICIPALITY OF TWEED LOBBYING THE FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS TO ASSIST MUNICIPALITIES WITH LIMITED ACCESS TO FUNDING EXCEPT THROUGH MUNICIPAL TAXES TO REESTABLISH THE 1/3 FUNDING AGREEMENTS AND REQUESTING THAT THE RELEVANT FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL REPRESENTATIVES BRING THESE CONCERNS TO THE FOREFRONT BE ENDORSED.

Carried

Correspondence was read as follows:

- a) Lakehead Rural Municipal Coalition (LRMC) – September 21, 2023 - Meeting Minutes.
- b) The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBSSAB) Update from the Board – November 15, 2023.
- c) Superior Propane and Sarjeant Propane regarding the sale of some specific Superior locations to another supplier, Sarjeant Propane will now be the supplier for the Township of O'Connor.
- d) Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) regarding a support letter for private member's bill to make it illegal for a vehicle to pass on the left side of a lane when marked with two solid yellow lines. Mayor Vezina noted that there is concern in regard to this bill and not all are in favour, as it was felt that there should be common sense exceptions included, such as passing a slow moving vehicle, etc.
- e) Hydro One Community Relations regarding Waasigan Transmission Line – Notice of the final submission of Environmental Assessment (EA) to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. Mayor Vezina will be attending a meeting November 28, 2023, in this regard.

The balance of the correspondence to be passed around table.

Under Old Business, Council discussed

- a) Report from Clerk-Treasurer regarding Casual Administrative staff helping out in the office while we are short staffed. Council agreed to have the Clerk-Treasurer call in additional staff as needed.
- b) Tbaytel – Telecommunications Site Agreement regarding the cell tower located on the Township of O'Connor property was reviewed. The Agreement was signed in 2017 and is currently in the first of three five-year extensions. Council would like the Clerk-Treasurer to reach out to Dan Topatigh, CEO of Tbaytel, to discuss the lighting strike on the tower which affected the Township of O'Connor Office.
- c) The Clerk-Treasurer provided an update regarding the Chief Building Official's training. Council is currently satisfied with the progress in regard to the training for the position and will await the final date of certification.
- d) The Clerk-Treasurer provided a report regarding a conversation she recently had with the Auditor, BDO. As BDO informed Council at their Audit presentation, there are new reporting requirements for 2023 in regard to Building Assessment. The Township is responsible to determine the best estimated cost for asset retirement activities, which include the cost of remediation of any asbestos in the Township owned buildings, Disposal Site liability and the decommissioning costs of all

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – NOVEMBER 27, 2023

Township owned wells, septic fields, and in-ground tanks. Council would like the Clerk-Treasurer to reach out to local contractors for the costs of the wells and septic fields and a contractor regarding the asbestos, as well as other surrounding municipalities to see if we can share any information that may have already been collected for similar items. The Disposal Site study prepared four years ago will have the information required to determine the Disposal Site numbers.

- e) Official Plan Amendment Application and Planning Rationale for application were reviewed and discussed. A date for a Public Meeting for the Official Plan Amendment application was discussed and it was

9. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

THAT THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR HEREBY DIRECTS THE CLERK-TREASURER TO SET A PUBLIC MEETING DATE UNDER SECTION 17 AND 22 OF THE ONTARIO PLANNING ACT FOR MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 2023 AT 6 P.M. AS IT RELATES TO OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT APPLICATION NUMBER 2023-02. MEETING TO BE HELD IN THE O'CONNOR COMMUNITY CENTRE.

Carried

Under Further Old Business, Council discussed whether or not a fall Township Inspection would be held. It was agreed to wait until spring to discuss the next inspection.

Under New Business, Council discussed

- a) Oliver Paipoonge Public Library regarding funding for 2023. The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sports provides the Township of O'Connor with funding to contract with the library. When the Township receives the money from the Ministry it is then forwarded on to the library. To date, the payment has not been received by the Township, however, the library is close to operating in a deficit while they wait for these monies to arrive. The Clerk-Treasurer confirmed to Council that the money will be coming and asked if the funding could be forwarded to the library now. Council agreed to pay the funds in advance of the payment to the Township.
- b) Thunder Bay District Municipal League (TBDML) regarding the TBDML 2024 Conference & AGM Sponsorship Package. Mayor Vezina and Councillor Crane will make suggestions to the Executive Director for possible sponsors.
- c) Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) regarding Sustainable Northern Ontario Economic Development (SNOED) upcoming session November 30th to discuss concerns about how Forest Fires could impact your community. It was

10. Moved by Carly Torkkeli
Seconded by A. Crane

THAT THE FOLLOWING PERSON/S PARTICIPATE IN THE SUSTAINABLE NORTHERN ONTARIO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (SNOED) SESSION TO DISCUSS CONCERNS ABOUT HOW FOREST FIRES COULD IMPACT YOUR COMMUNITY TO BE HELD VIRTUALLY NOVEMBER 30, 2023.

**COUNCILLOR SOBOLTA
REGISTRATION: N/C**

Carried

- d) OPP MPB Financial Services – 2024 OPP Annual Billing webinar information. Sessions to be held either November 29, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. or December 7, 2023 at 1:00 p.m. It was

11. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

THAT THE FOLLOWING PERSON/S PARTICIPATE IN THE 2024 OPP ANNUAL BILLING WEBINAR TO BE HELD VIRTUALLY NOVEMBER 29, 2023 OR DECEMBER 7, 2023.

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – NOVEMBER 27, 2023

**MAYOR VEZINA, COUNCILLOR TORKKELI, COUNCILLOR SOBOLTA.
REGISTRATION: N/C**

Carried

A complaint was received from a resident on Highway 595 regarding residents using their driveway as a stop and turnaround to collect their mail, which antagonizes their dog. Council agreed that this is not a Township issue. The complainant, if they would like to pursue it further, can reach out to Canada Post to have the mailboxes moved or the Ministry of Transportation.

A potential Christmas Party for 2023 was discussed. Council would like Administration to look into pricing, with options of holding a party at the Kakabeka Legion, the same as last year, or hiring a caterer using the O'Connor Community Centre. The event will be held mid-February, depending on availability.

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

**THAT THE COUNCIL MEETING ADJOURN TO THE COUNCIL MEETING TO
BE HELD ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2023 AT 7:00 P.M.**

TIME BEING: 9:59 P.M.

Carried

Mayor

Clerk-Treasurer