

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 25, 2023

Minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday, September 25, 2023 at 7 p.m. in the O'Connor Council Chambers.

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

Visitors: Henry Mattas, Fire Chief
Brendan Rea

Absent: Councillor Racicot

Mayor Vezina called the meeting to order at 7:02 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 J. Sobolta
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

THAT THE MINUTES FROM THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2023 AND THE SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2023 BE ACCEPTED AS PRINTED.

Carried

Mr. Rea was asked if he wished to address Council and he replied, no.

Fire Chief Mattas was welcomed to the table. The Fire Department Report from June 22 to September 24, 2023, was read. In that period there were five (5) Fire-related calls, and three (3) First Response calls.

Fire Department issues were discussed. Fire Chief Mattas noted that he felt that the Special Meeting with Council and the Fire Department went well. He was disappointed that all members were not in attendance. Some members were working, but not all. The option was left open for members to come to Council anytime if they have any concerns that they want to express. Council would be willing to host another meeting in the future if the members would be interested. Fire Chief Mattas informed Council that the Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) flow test has been completed and all SCBA passed. It was noted that the flex hoses on the compressor have to be changed every ten years and are due. The company that did the testing will stop back on their way from the west to change them for the Department.

It was noted that a member of the Fire Department did sign up for the drone course, even though Council or the Fire Chief did not approve them taking it. The Township has now received the invoice. Council would like to have a process created where only the Fire Chief can register the members and verify that the course has been approved. Fire Chief Mattas noted that while the course is being held at the Oliver Paipoonge training facility, the application forms are submitted online to the Office of the Fire Marshal. Verification as to whether or not the member attended the course will be made and follow up as to who will pay the bill, the member or possibly the Auxiliary, if they feel it was appropriate.

The Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) Communique was read regarding Interpretation of s. 6(3) of the Fire Protection and Prevention Act (FPPA). The OFM has received a number of enquiries from the fire service about fire chiefs' roles and responsibilities with respect to municipal council. The FPPA specifies the relationship between the Fire Chief and Council as follows: A Fire Chief is the person who is ultimately responsible to

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the Council of a municipality that appointed him or her for the delivery of fire protection services. While a municipality may choose to have the Fire Chief report through an administrative organizational structure, the Fire Chief remains accountable directly and individually to Council for all aspects of fire safety and the delivery of fire protection services within the municipality. Mayor Vezina noted that this is in conflict of the Municipal Act, 2001, in which the Township follows.

Fire Chief Mattas was thanked for attending and he left the meeting at 7:23 p.m.

The Administration and Roads Voucher for September 25, 2023, was reviewed and it was

3. Moved by Carly Torkkeli
Seconded by J. Sobolta

**THAT THE ADMINISTRATION AND ROADS VOUCHER #2023-16 DATED
SEPTEMBER 25, 2023 TOTALLING \$210,549.56 BE APPROVED AND PAID.**
Carried

The Statement of Revenues and Expenditure to August 31, 2023, was reviewed. No questions or comments were asked.

By-laws and Policies were reviewed as follows:

- a) Circular Materials Operations (CMO) email regarding the requirement for an Amending Agreement was read. A copy of the current By-law # 2023-25 Exhibit 6: Compensation was reviewed for reference to proposed changes. By-law #2023-34 – Being a By-law authorizing the execution of an Amending Agreement of the Master Service Agreement with CMO was read and it was

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

**THAT BY-LAW NUMBER 2023-34 BEING A BY-LAW TO AMEND BY-LAW
NUMBER 2023-25 AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A MASTER SERVICE
AGREEMENT WITH CIRCULAR MATERIALS ONTARIO (CMO) AND THE
CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR BE PASSED AND
ENTERED IN THE BY-LAW BOOK.**
Carried

- b) The Clerk-Treasurer provided an update on the research regarding the By-law to provide Relief of Financial Hardship for Low-Income Seniors and Low-Income Persons with Disabilities. She did not receive any viable information at the AMCTO Conference recently attended. She has now reached out to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for information in this regard and will bring additional information to the next meeting.

Resolutions for endorsement were read as follows:

- a) City of Cambridge regarding Declaring Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) an Epidemic was filed.
- b) Municipality of Red Lake regarding supporting the provincial ask for federal operating funding for National Housing Strategy initiatives. It was

5. Moved by Carly Torkkeli
Seconded by J. Sobolta

**THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE MUNICIPALITY OF RED LAKE
SUPPORTING THE PROVINCIAL ASK FOR FEDERAL OPERATING
FUNDING FOR NATIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY BE ENDORSED.**
Carried

- c) City of Hamilton regarding a Request to Abandon Greenbelt Development. As the Provincial Government is rescinding some of their proposals, this resolution was filed.

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Correspondence was read as follows:

- a) The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) – Update from the Board – September 18, 2023. Mayor Vezina also noted that the TBDSSAB has received an additional \$60,000 in funding for Housing, which will lower the expenses passed on to member municipalities.
- b) Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing responding to the Housing Affordability Task Force's recommendations.
- c) Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) regarding the AMO 2023 Conference discussions.
- d) Department of National Defence offering a presentation from a CAF speaker during Veterans Week.
- e) Lakehead Rural Municipal Coalition (LRMC) – Minutes of Meeting held on July 17, 2023.

The balance of the correspondence was passed around the table.

Under Old Business, Council discussed

- a) Correspondence from Fotenn regarding an Official Plan Review. Council will take this information into consideration when reviewing the Official Plan Amendment Application recently received.
- b) Municipality of Shuniah regarding the OPP Police Service Board proposal - Thunder Bay Detachment. Mr. Greenwood, CAO for the Municipality of Shuniah, has received correspondence from the Ministry of the Solicitor General's (SOLGEN) office in reply to the Lakehead Rural Municipal Coalition (LRMC)'s proposal for Police Services Boards. The SOLGEN has added First Nations (FN) to each of the two proposed Boards as the Community Safety and Policing Act (CSPA) requires that an OPP Detachment board service all communities within a detachment who receive OPP policing. As such, the Ministry has communicated with First Nations who were part of a proposal to ensure that they have also been included in the catchment area of one of the proposed boards. When the LRMC reached out to the FN, prior to submitting the proposed structure, they received no response or ask to be a part of these Boards. Mr. Greenwood is expressing his concern of the three (3) First Nations being added to the Shuniah Board, given that the locations of these First Nations are much closer to the Armstrong OPP detachment and would have similar policing issues, rather than the Municipality of Shuniah, being over 200 km away. The revised composition of Board 1, which includes the Township of O'Connor, now includes the Lac des Mille Lacs First Nation and two new seats have been added to the Board, for a total of nine (9), including five (5) Council seats, two (2) Community Representative seats and two (2) Provincial Appointment seats. Mr. Greenwood tried to arrange a meeting with the SOLGEN on Friday, September 22, 2023, to discuss these concerns, however, Mayor Vezina was unaware as to whether or not the meeting took place.
- c) Joseph Ladoucer R.P.F. Greenmantle Forest Inc.'s email regarding the Proposed Regulations for Black Ash under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). In January 2022, the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) temporarily suspended protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) for two years. The MECP proposed new regulations that will apply to Black Ash once the temporary suspension ends on January 25, 2024. A summary of the proposed approach for species protection measures apply only to certain regions of the province and where Black Ash trees appear to have survived exposure to Emerald Ash Borer and remain in healthy condition. However, there are exemptions including where forest operations are not managed under the Crown Forest Sustainable Act including private lands. The deadline to provide feedback on this proposed regulation is November 2, 2023.

Under Further Old Business, Councillor Crane asked for an update on the request for speed enforcement on Loghrin Road and if letters had been sent to the businesses on Loghrin Road, as the traffic continues to speed. The Clerk-Treasurer confirmed that neither have been done but will be done in the near future.

Council also asked for an update on the lightning strike. The Clerk-Treasurer confirmed that she has not been able to reach anyone at Tbaytel at the phone number included in the Tbaytel agreement for the cell tower and she has left two messages. It was agreed

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to email Dan Topatigh, President and CEO of Tbaytel, directly, in regard to the possibility of the Township's damages being covered through Tbaytel's insurance and inquire as to why the ground to our building failed. The Clerk-Treasurer also reported that the computer backup is still at the computer repair store.

Regarding bringing Natural Gas into the Township, Councillor Crane was told that there is currently a gas line to the showers at the Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park, which is across the Kaministiquia River. Council would like the Clerk-Treasurer to follow up with Nicole Lehto from Enbridge to confirm if this is true or if she was aware and see if the gas line could be extended from there into the Township.

Council previously suggested that we advertise in the Cornerstone to see if anyone would be interested in volunteering in the office while we are short-staffed. An advertisement will be placed in the October issue to see if anyone would be interested in helping.

Under New Business, Council discussed

- a) Len Day, President, Northwestern Ontario Recreational Trails Association (NWORTA) – invitation to attend a "Discover the Trail" guided hike on a section of the newly established Shabaqua Trail. No one from Council will be able to attend.
- b) Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing - MSO North – 2023 Planning Workshop – to be held in Thunder Bay on October 25 & 26, 2023. It was

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

THAT THE FOLLOWING PERSONS ATTEND THE MINISTRY OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS 2023 PLANNING WORKSHOP TO BE HELD ON OCTOBER 25 AND 26, 2023.

**COUNCILLOR TORKKELI
COUNCILLOR CRANE
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT LAFOREST**

REGISTRATION: NO CHARGE

Carried

- c) Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO) regarding Pet Interments, Entombments and Scattering in Licensed Cemeteries Guideline. The BAO receives inquiries from consumers on a regular basis asking if they can arrange to have their pets buried with them once they die and licensing officers field questions regularly from Cemetery Operations asking if this would be permitted. The Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Act, 2002, is silent with respect to pet interments. The BAO is providing guidelines for those municipalities who would be interested in allowing pets to be buried with their owners. Council was asked if they would like administration to look further into this option to see what is involved. Council agreed to have administration look further into this and bring more details back to Council.

Under Further New Business, Mayor Vezina informed Council that at a recent meeting with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Ministry of Energy provided information regarding proposed changes to the Time of Use billing and the possibility of lowering the nightly, off-peak rate. It was noted that for Ontario Hydro One customers this would not mean much of a break. The province is trying to find new energy to meet the current energy needs.

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

- a) Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Policy Update – September 25, 2023. Premier Doug Ford has shuffled his cabinet as a result of MPP McNaughton's resignations.
- b) Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing responding to the Housing Affordability Task Force's Recommendations. The Ministry is asking Mayors for their top five recommendations for future consideration. While Mayor Vezina does not agree with

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only a Mayor's response and not all of Council, he would like Council to review the 74 unique recommendations, and together, at the next meeting, Council will choose the Township of O'Connor's top five recommendations.

For information purposes no new building permits have been approved since the last meeting.

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

THAT THE COUNCIL MEETING ADJOURN TO THE COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2023 AT 7:00 P.M.

TIME BEING: 8:23 P.M.

Carried

Mayor

Clerk-Treasurer