

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 27, 2021

Minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday, September 27, 2021 at 7 p.m. in the O'Connor Community Centre and virtually.

Present: Councillors: Crane, Handy, Loan, Racicot
Clerk-Treasurer Buob
Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Racicot

Visitors: Fire Chief Henry Mattas – virtually
Erin Laforest, Administrative Assistant – virtually
Cheri Biloski
Paul LeBoeuf, Janice LeBoeuf – arrived at 7:06 p.m.

Absent: Mayor Vezina

Acting Mayor Crane called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

1. Moved by B. J. Loan
Seconded by W. Handy

THAT THE AGENDA FOR THE MEETING BE APPROVED.

Carried

Disclosure of pecuniary interest and general nature thereof: Councillor Racicot declared an interest in item 16 a) as his spouse is an employee of the Township.

2. Moved by W. Handy
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

THAT THE MINUTES FROM THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2021 BE ACCEPTED AS PRINTED.

Carried

Visitors present were asked if they wished to address Council and they replied no.

Cheri Biloski was invited to the Council meeting to receive recognition for her Ten Years of Service as a volunteer on the O'Connor Fire Department Auxiliary. Acting Mayor Crane presented a Recognition Certificate and she was thanked for her dedication and support for the team.

Michael Carli was also invited to receive his Ten Years of Service Recognition Certificate but was not in attendance. Another date for his presentation will be arranged if possible.

Following the presentation, Ms. Biloski left the meeting.

Fire Chief Mattas was welcomed to the meeting virtually. The Fire Department report from June 26 to September 23, 2021 was read. There have been two Fire related calls and one First Response call in that time. Fire Chief Mattas also noted that there was one more First Response call since the report was provided.

Fire Chief Mattas expressed his concern for the very poor attendance at the Tuesday night training meetings. The members are not coming out. Two members from the O'Connor team did attend a free auto extrication course held in Upsala on the weekend, along with several others from the area departments.

Fire Chief Mattas is currently inquiring into paging options for the department.

The Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs have released a document with regard to COVID-19 and a key message and position on a Mandatory Vaccination Policy. Fire Chief Mattas noted that social distancing on a call is not possible, especially on a First Response call when the members have to assist a patient. It was also noted that if a mandatory vaccination policy is implemented the Volunteer Fire Department may lose some volunteers. It was noted that the First Response teams are no longer being called

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for assistance for the Superior North EMS to move a patient or if there is a positive case of COVID-19. It was

agreed that everyone is responsible for due diligence. There is currently no mandate to pass a policy and it was agreed that the Township needs more information and clarification on the situation prior to implementing a mandatory vaccination policy.

Council informed Fire Chief Mattas that during the Township Inspection held on Friday, September 24, 2021 the Fire Hall was inspected and compliments were made on how clean and organized it was. Fire Chief Mattas credited the new members for doing an excellent job.

Fire Chief Mattas was thanked for attending and he left the meeting.

The Administration and Road Voucher was reviewed and it was

3. Moved by Bishop Racicot
Seconded by B. J. Loan

**THAT THE ADMINISTRATION AND ROADS VOUCHER #2021-16 DATED
SEPTEMBER 27, 2021 TOTALLING \$79,051.02 BE APPROVED AND PAID.**

Carried

Policies were discussed as follows:

- a) Municipal Reserve and Reserve Funds. A report was read and discussed with regard to the draft policy presented, including the additional information with regard to targets, the current balances, and what the target percentage amounts included would equal. Two new reserves were also discussed, one for insurance and another for elections. It was also noted that the Deferred Revenue, previously included in an earlier draft was removed, as the monies in this account are considered a liability on the financial statements until it becomes relevant to current operations. If money is to be placed in the deferred revenue account, a formal agreement would have already been approved by Council and therefore, the placement of funds into the account would already be pre-determined and would not need Council to make any further decisions.

The draft policy was reviewed and no changes were required from the enclosed draft and it was

4. Moved by Jerry Loan
Seconded by W. Handy

**THAT THE MUNICIPAL RESERVE AND RESERVE FUND POLICY, DATED
SEPTEMBER 27, 2021 BE ENDORSED.**

Carried

- b) A draft policy for Municipal Investment was discussed. This policy would assist Administration in decision making with regard to investments of the reserve monies or any current surplus throughout the year. It was

5. Moved by W. Handy
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

**THAT THE MUNICIPAL INVESTMENT POLICY, DATED SEPTEMBER 27,
2021 BE ENDORSED.**

Carried

- c) A draft policy for a Mandatory COVID-19 Proof of Vaccination for entry into the O'Connor Community Centre as per Ontario Regulation 645/21 was reviewed. It was

6. Moved by J. Loan
Seconded by W. Handy

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THAT THE POLICY FOR MANDATORY COVID-19 PROOF OF VACCINATION – COMMUNITY CENTRE DATED SEPTEMBER 27, 2021 BE ENDORSED.

Carried

A Request for Proposal (RFP) for Design and Drawings for the Municipal Garage Shop B retrofit project were opened. The Clerk-Treasurer clarified that seven eligible firms were invited to the site visit, held on September 14, 2021, and only two companies attended. One proposal has been received by the deadline. The RFP was opened and reviewed from Approach Design. It was agreed to move forward and it was

7. Moved by W. Handy
Seconded by Bishop Racicot

THAT THE PROPOSAL SUBMITTED BY APPROACH DESIGN FOR DESIGN AND DRAWINGS FOR THE MUNICIPAL GARAGE RETROFIT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$22,400.00 PLUS HST BE ACCEPTED.

Carried

Resolutions for endorsement were read as follows:

- a) Municipality of Chatham-Kent regarding affordable internet and it was

8. Moved by Jerry Loan
Seconded by W. Handy

THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE MUNICIPALITY OF CHATHAM-KENT CALLING ON THE FEDERAL CABINET, PRIME MINISTER JUSTIN TRUDEAU, AND ISD MINISTER FRANCOIS-PHILLIPPE CHAMPAGNE TO OVERRULE THE CRTC'S REVERSAL AND IMMEDIATELY IMPLEMENT THE EVIDENCE-BASED 2019 RATE ORDER BE ENDORSED.

Carried

- b) City of Sarnia regarding increasing problem of renovictions in the Province of Ontario was filed.

Correspondence was read as follows:

- a) Lakehead Rural Municipal Coalition (LRMC) – Minutes of the following meetings:
i) June 15, 2021; ii) July 19, 2021; and iii) August 12, 2021.
iv) A memo from the Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge with regard to the Kakabeka Falls Good Doctors Telemedicine Clinic with regard to the current funding issue was read. Council agreed to lobby the Provincial Government to help find a solution and would like to invite the MPP for Thunder Bay-Atikokan, Judith Monteith-Farrell, to attend an upcoming Council meeting to discuss this matter.

9. Moved by Bishop Racicot
Seconded by W. Handy

THAT THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR SUPPORT THE GOOD DOCTORS IN THEIR RENEGOTIATIONS OF THE PHYSICIAN PAYMENT SYSTEM AND THAT MOH REINSTATE THE OTN PREMIUM OR OTHER FUNDING STREAMS ESTABLISHED.

Carried

- v) The Clerk-Treasurer provided an update from the LRMC September meeting with regard to shared Hazardous Waste Day. The LRMC members are not interested in holding a combined Hazardous Waste Day. At this time Council will not pursue hosting one on our own.
b) Association of Municipalities of Ontario – i) Policy Update – Vaccine Certification
ii) Municipal Cyber Security Forum – October 14, 2021. Administration has participated in a cyber security webinar, hosted by the Township's insurance company for free, and do not feel the need to attend this one.
c) Tom Peever, GB Agencies Ltd. regarding the Municipal Electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Council is not interested at this time.

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Under Old Business, Council discussed

- a) A letter from the Minister of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry informing the Township of O'Connor that the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) has approved funding for the Township's application to hire an intern for the Township's Road Department. A copy of the draft invitation to submit applications was reviewed and will be submitted in the Township of O'Connor's October issue of the newsletter, as well as posted on the Township's website, with applications due on October 22, 2021 for Council's review at the October 25, 2021 Council meeting.
- b) An email from Erika Kromm, Municipality of Neebing, with an update on the LRMC's Broadband application was read. Mr. Coull, Director of ICT, from the Northwestern Ontario Innovation Centre, who has submitted the application on the LRMC's behalf, has not been able to get any feedback as to the status of the application. Since the applications were submitted two major changes to the funding programs have occurred. Mr. Coull would like the municipalities to approach and lobby the staff at the Ministry of Infrastructure, our MPs and MPPs to reconsider their process and in involve the municipalities in what they are doing. It was

10. Moved by Jerry Loan
Seconded by W. Handy

THAT COUNCIL OF THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR SUPPORTS SENDING A LETTER TO THE MINISTRY OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE LOCAL MP'S AND MPP'S WITH REGARD TO LRMC BROADBAND PROJECT REQUESTING THAT THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT RECONSIDER THE CHANGES MADE TO THE PROGRAM PROCESS AND REQUEST THAT THE MUNICIPALITIES BE INVOLVED IN WHAT THEY ARE DOING.

Carried

- c) Wildfire Community Awareness Day was discussed. A report was read from Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Racicot with regard to potential plans for the funding that was provided and recommends that the Township of O'Connor use the monies to host a drive- thru Halloween event, in connection with the O'Connor Volunteer Fire Department. Funding will be used to purchase hot dogs and treats and "Fire Smart" will be promoted with draws for giveaways supplied through the program, as well as FireSmart brochures will be distributed. Due to COVID-19 restrictions and challenges, FireSmart Canada is allowing communities leeway with holding events this year and has agreed to these proposed plans. Council was in agreement as well. The event will move forward as described and will be promoted in the Township's newsletter and website.
- d) Northwestern Ontario Recreational Trails Association (NWORTA) update on the Kakabeka Falls to Shabaqua Trail was read. The organization has received Ontario non-profit incorporation status on May 13, 2021 and has the new official name. Their mandate is the creation, maintenance, and promotion of multi-use non-motorized recreation trails in the District of Thunder Bay. The trails will fall under the auspices of Trans Canada Trail Ontario and will form part of a planned land-base trail network across Northern Ontario, connecting to Sault Ste. Marie and the Manitoba border. An application for approval of the Trail Permit has been submitted to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. NWORTA is currently awaiting approval.
- e) A report with regard to the position of Disposal Site Attendant was read. Currently the Townships of Conmee and Gillies have one attendant at the site at a time. The costs of having a second attendant at the Township's site was reviewed and it was agreed that this will be discussed further during 2022 budget discussions. The working alone matter was discussed and it was agreed that the attendant should have a contact person when they are leaving the site to ensure they are safely heading home. Councillor Crane volunteered to accept these calls. The Clerk-Treasurer will speak with Mr. Ehn, Disposal Site Attendant, to discuss the matter further. The position of alternate attendant was also discussed and it was agreed that another advertisement for the position will be put into the next issue of the Cornerstone.
- f) Township Inspection held on September 24, 2021 was briefly discussed. Council found the inspection went well and was informative. Council complimented Mr.

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Johnson, Leadhand, on the good job he does with the Township roads. There was concern as to how quickly the washboard returns following a grading.

Under further Old Business, Council asked why the electronic speed limit sign, purchased last year was not setup this year. It was noted that the program will have to be setup and time has been limited. The Clerk-Treasurer will speak to Mr. Johnson about this. It was also noted that the streetlight at the intersection of Highway 590 and Loghrin road is current out, as discussed on Township Inspection. The Clerk-Treasurer reported that she has contacted the contractor and he will be fixing it in the near future.

Under New Business, Council discussed:

Councillor Racicot left the room.

a) September 30th has been declared a federal statutory holiday called the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation and the Road Employees Union Agreement recognizes any other day proclaimed as a paid holiday. The Road employees will be entitled to have this day off. The Administrative Benefits and Wage Review Policy does not state this and Council were asked if this would also be observed by non-union employees. Council was in agreement to include this holiday and it was

11. Moved by W. Handy
Seconded by Jerry Loan

**THAT THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR
RECOGNIZES SEPTEMBER 30TH NATIONAL DAY OF TRUTH AND
RECONCILIATION AS A DESIGNATED PAID HOLIDAY AND WILL ALLOW
EMPLOYEES TO OBSERVE AND PARTICIPATE IN THIS DAY STARTING IN
SEPTEMBER 2021.**

Carried

The policy will be updated to reflect the change.

b) A letter was read from Joyce Posthumus and Margaret Foster with regard to the position of Dog Control Officer. Ms. Posthumus and Ms. Foster would like to jointly share the position. The position was discussed and it was agreed to invite them both to attend a Council meeting to discuss the position further.

The Township Dog Running-at-large By-law is also under review and will be brought back to Council.

Paul and Janice LeBoeuf left the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

c) The date for a Township Table Top Exercise was discussed. An exercise must be held again this year after, due to COVID-19, the requirements to hold one in 2020 were withdrawn. A virtual attendance option will be included in this year exercise. It was

12. Moved by Bishop Racicot
Seconded by Jerry Loan

**THAT THE FOLLOWING DATE BE SET FOR A TABLE TOP EXERCISE
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2021 AT 7 P.M.**

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

Carried

Issues brought forward or letters received after the agenda was sent out were discussed as follows:

a) Healthy Communities Initiative reply to the Township's funding application. The Township of O'Connor's application for a new accessible ramp for the O'Connor

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Community Centre was not approved.

- b) Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) – i) regarding a vacancy for Zone 10 on the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) was discussed. Mayor Holland, Township of Conmee, was the representative for Zone 10 and upon his announcement of running in the upcoming Provincial Election, was required to step down from the position and the seat is now Vacant. NOMA is currently looking for expressions of interest for a replacement. Council at this time were not interested in putting a name forward.
- ii) The Clerk-Treasurer reported that the NOMA Board has the same policy in place as ROMA. As a result, Mayor Holland, holding the seat as the representative from the Thunder Bay District Municipal League on the Board, will also have to step down and a vacancy has been created. Mayor Vezina has expressed his interest to the Clerk-Treasurer for this seat. Council discussed the vacancy and the nomination of Mayor Vezina and it was
13. Moved by Jerry Loan
Seconded by W. Handy

THAT COUNCIL ENDORSES MAYOR JIM VEZINA'S NOMINATION TO SIT AS A THUNDER BAY DISTRICT MUNICIPAL LEAGUE'S (TBDML) BOARD MEMBER ON THE NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION (NOMA) REPRESENTATIVE COMMITTEE.

Carried

- c) Update on the Hydro One Energizing Life project, to install a backup generator at the Township office, was provided by the Clerk-Treasurer. The contractor has reported on the current status of obtaining a generator. Due to COVID-19 the delay in getting a Kohler generator is extended until January and he is asking if the Township would accept a Briggs and Stratton, which is available immediately. Council reviewed the comparison information provided and discussed the options. It was agreed to get more information with regard to the differences and bring it back to the next Council meeting before making a decision.

For information purposes, no building permits were approved since the last meeting.

It was

14. Moved by Jerry Loan
Seconded Bishop Racicot

THAT THE COUNCIL MEETING ADJOURN TO THE COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2021 AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE O'CONNOR COMMUNITY CENTRE, IF CONDITIONS WITH COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS ALLOW.

TIME BEING: 9:39 P.M.

Carried

Mayor

Clerk-Treasurer