

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – AUGUST 12, 2024

Minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday, August 12, 2024 at 7 p.m. in the O'Connor Council Chambers

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

Visitors: Kelly Johnson, Road Superintendent
Dustin Blunt, Kristen Blunt, Margaret Foster, Joyce Posthumus,
Kaitlyn Medendorp, Carlie Andreson,
David Lemieux arrived at 7:13 p.m.
Fire Chief Greg Biloski arrived at 7:21 p.m.

Mayor Vezina called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. Moved by Brendan Rea
Seconded by A. Crane

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, JULY 8, 2024, AND THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON JULY 8, 2024 BE ACCEPTED AS PRINTED.

Carried

The visitors were asked if they wished to address Council for anything not already on the agenda and they replied, no.

Dustin Blunt was welcomed to the table. Introductions were held. The procedures of a deputation were explained to Mr. Blunt. He was given ten minutes to make his deputation. Mr. Blunt expressed his concern of the Township paving Loghrin Road. His concern is in regard to not having heavy truck access to his property on Loghrin Road 365 days of the year and spring weight restrictions. In the past, to allow access during the half load season, an agreement was signed that they could haul on Loghrin Road and he would be responsible for any damage caused to the road due to hauling during the half load season. Mr. Blunt noted that on a gravel road this would be less of a concern, however now if the asphalt is damaged, he is not willing to sign an agreement and be responsible for replacing the asphalt. He noted that his business requires loaded trucks to haul on Loghrin Road 365 days of the year. Council agreed that they do not want to restrict his business from running year-round and it was suggested that an access agreement be entered into to allow year-round access. Council thanked Mr. Blunt for his deputation and noted that Council will discuss this matter further under Further New Business. Dustin Blunt and Kristen Blunt left the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Ms. Margaret Foster was welcomed to the table. Ms. Foster expressed her ideas for socializing dogs in the Township. During her time as Dog Control Officer, she was made aware of the need. She would like to try to organize something for the residents to bring their dogs to the O'Connor Community Centre recreation area to be around other dogs. Council had no objection to have her include an advertisement in the Cornerstone to see if there might be an interest. Ms. Foster was thanked for attending.

Mr. Johnson, Road Superintendent, was welcomed to the table. A Road Department update and Roadwork in general were discussed. The roads are being graded and two loads of calcium have been applied. The road resurfacing projects for three miles of Township roads started today. Once the projects are completed the third load of

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – AUGUST 12, 2024

calcium will be applied to these roads, as well as the balance of the roads that still need to be done.

The two generators have been installed for the Garage and Fire Hall, as well as the transfer switch from the Office to the Community Centre.

The weeds have been cut around the Township and now the Road Employees and Summer Student have been cutting the grass around the guardrails.

A request has been made by a member of the Hymers Agricultural Society, asking if the Township could do some Contract work for them on Fairgrounds property. The property is located near the Gillies/O'Connor Townline. Mr. Johnson asked if Council would permit him to provide this service outside of the Township boundary. Council agreed to allow the work being done.

The timing of the asphaltting of Loghrin Road was discussed. The road should be completed before the end of August. The residents on the road will be made aware of when it is happening prior to starting.

Mr. Johnson informed Council that Truck #9 will need to be replaced next year due to the condition of the frame of the truck.

The row of trees on the O'Connor Cemetery property, along Loghrin Road, need to be removed, however there is three phase power lines very close by. It was agreed to contact Hydro One to see if they would take them down, as there is a risk that they could take out the powerline if they were to blow over. Mr. Johnson will inquire into this.

The replacement of the compactor truck for the Disposal Site was discussed. No final word has been received from the insurance company regarding what the Township will be compensated. Mr. Johnson has reached out to a few people but so far has not found anything that meets the Township's needs or possible price range. He still has to contact the City of Thunder Bay to see if they might have any surplus. He also suggested that perhaps a track excavator could be used instead which could be multi-purpose. This will also be looked into.

The final 5-Year Road Plan was reviewed. No concerns were noted.

The Union Agreement for the Roads Department is due for negotiations. The Union will be contacted to discuss possible dates for a negotiation meeting. Council agreed the sooner the better, as the current Agreement expired July 31, 2024.

The harvesting of the wood off of the Township of O'Connor's property on Connolly Road was discussed. The Clerk-Treasurer noted that she reached out to a couple of the Logging businesses, as well as to the residents in the Township, who are in the logging business, to see if they would be interested.

Two proposals were received and discussed. It was

3. Moved by A. Crane
Seconded by Brendan Rea

THAT THE PROPOSAL SUBMITTED BY ECO LOGGING LIMITED ON JULY 5, 2024 FOR HARVESTING PRIVATE LAND BELONGING TO THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR, CONCESSION 4, LOT 10 BE ACCEPTED. THE CUT TO BE COMPLETED BY DECEMBER 31, 2024.

Carried

The Clerk-Treasurer will reach out to Eco Logging to let them know and negotiate a start time for the work to be done. An official Agreement will be brought back to Council for approval at the next meeting.

Mr. Johnson was thanked for his report.

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – AUGUST 12, 2024

Fire Chief Biloski was welcomed to the table. He provided Council with a verbal update. To date, for the year 2024, the Department has had twenty (20) calls and two (2) Motor Vehicle Collisions. The members are still organizing the Firehall and are getting rid of some of the old stuff still in storage. Fire Chief Biloski noted that a pump test will be performed on Pumper 42 on September 11th, by Ontario Fire Trucks. They will be in Thunder Bay for Fire Con and will be doing other Departments also, while they are here.

Fire Chief Biloski noted that both members of the team, Brittany Dumoulin and himself, attended the Auto Ex course and have passed both the written and practical testing.

The Fire Department will be participating at the Hymers Fair in the Zone 1 Fire Department Booth on the Labour Day Weekend. Fire Chief Biloski will be looking for volunteers to man the booth during the weekend.

Attendance at the Fire meetings has been low throughout the summer. Fire Chief Biloski is hoping that it will pick up again in the fall.

Fire Chief Biloski noted that he has been in contact with Fire Chief Horan regarding the surplus Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) equipment from the Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge. They have up to thirty-two packs and sixty cylinders, and they were in service until September 2022. He is waiting for Fire Chief Horan to get back to him with a price. He will continue to look into how many of each the Township may want. They will still require hydraulic and flow testing before being put into service. The Township's current equipment is getting harder to find parts for, as they are becoming obsolete.

Fire Chief Biloski noted that the Auxiliary has agreed to purchase some used Auto Ex tools from the United States. This includes cutter, spreader, and hose pump. This equipment will be more efficient in an emergency, than the current manual equipment. They are still working on getting a Broker to bring the equipment across the border.

There is a Fire Protection Grant currently available. One of the eligible funding options is personal protective equipment to prevent cancer. Fire Chief Biloski noted that the Zone One Fire Department members are collaborating to determine what would be needed and possibly shared amongst the different municipalities. Each department would still submit their own application, however for different items that could possibly be shared amongst the Departments. Fire Chief Biloski will continue to look at the application and speak with the surrounding Fire Chiefs to determine what to apply for so that the Township can get an application submitted. The deadline is September 5, 2024.

Council asked Fire Chief Biloski if anything further had been discussed in regard to entering into an Automatic Aid Agreement with the Nolalu Fire Department, as the Nolalu Team had been asking. At this point no final decision was made. The Clerk-Treasurer noted that the Township's insurance company did have some concerns with the Agreement and the Clerk-Treasurer will forward them to Fire Chief Biloski.

Fire Chief Biloski noted that as the Ontario Power Generation (OPG) would like to meet with himself and the Clerk-Treasurer to discuss the changes in the Access Agreement, he will provide his new work schedule so a date can be set.

Fire Chief Biloski was thanked for his report and he, Margaret Foster, and Joyce Posthumus left the meeting at 7:53 p.m.

The Administration and Roads Voucher to August 12, 2024, was reviewed and it was

4. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

THAT THE ADMINISTRATION AND ROADS VOUCHER #2024-14 DATED AUGUST 12, 2024 TALLING \$148,829.49 BE APPROVED AND PAID.

Carried

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – AUGUST 12, 2024

The Statement of Revenue and Expenditures to July 31, 2024, were reviewed.

Councillor Torkkeli, Kaitlyn Medendorp, Carlie Andreson and David Lemieux left the meeting at 7:56 p.m.

The meeting then moved into Closed Session. It was

5. Moved by Brendan Rea
Seconded by A. Crane

BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE NEXT PORTION OF THE MEETING BE CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC IN ORDER TO DISCUSS LABOUR RELATIONS OR EMPLOYEE NEGOTIATIONS; PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION 239(2)(D) OF THE MUNICIPAL ACT, 2001.

TIME BEING: 7:56 P.M.

Carried

Employment matters and personal information was discussed regarding the Deputy Treasurer position, the Janitor position and the Road Department Summer Student were discussed.

6. Moved by Brendan Rea
Seconded by A. Crane

TIME BEING: 8:35 P.M.

THAT WE NOW MOVE TO OPEN MEETING.

Carried

During the Closed Session, the Janitor position applications were reviewed, and it was agreed to hold interviews with the applicants.

7. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by Brendan Rea

THAT INTERVIEWS FOR THE JANITOR POSITION BE HELD ON AUGUST 20, 2024. TIME TO BE DETERMINED.

Carried

The Clerk-Treasurer will clarify with the applicants if they would be available for an afternoon interview. Times will be scheduled accordingly.

8. Moved by Brendan Rea
Seconded by A. Crane

THAT THE FOLLOWING PERSONS BE APPOINTED AS THE INTERVIEW COMMITTEE FOR THE POSITION OF JANITOR.

MAYOR VEZINA, COUNCILLOR CRANE AND SOBOLTA

THE INTERVIEW MEETING WILL BE HELD ON AUGUST 20, 2024.

Carried

It was agreed to move item 16. h) Further New Business, forward on the agenda to discuss with Mr. Johnson. Council then discussed further Mr. Blunt's concerns regarding possibly having restricted access to Loghrin Road during the half load season. Council agreed that they do not want to restrict access to Blunt Logging or Firesteel Contractors because of the paving of Loghrin Road, as the funding is specific to helping mining and forestry. Council agreed that they would like to enter into an Agreement with Mr. Blunt for a one-year period and see how the road holds up to the heavy trucks during that time. It will be stressed to Mr. Blunt that if he is aware of any issues or concerns with the Road that the Road Department be made aware of them

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – AUGUST 12, 2024

immediately to alleviate further damage. This agreement will also be made with Firesteel Contractors.

Mr. Johnson was thanked for attending and left the meeting at 8:46 p.m.

By-laws were discussed as follows:

a) By-law Number 2024-24 – Amending Schedule “A” to By-law Number 2023-11, the Helipad Agreement was read. Ornge has recognized the increase in costs associated with the upkeep of their helipads and has decided to offer an increase in the payment from \$3,500 to \$5,000 per year for the service provided under the Agreement. It was

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

THAT BY-LAW NUMBER 2024-24 BEING A BY-LAW TO AMEND SCHEDULE “A” OF BY-LAW 2023-11, HELIPAD AGREEMENT, BE PASSED AND ENTERED IN THE BY-LAW BOOK.

Carried

b) By-law Number 2024-25 – Being a By-law to Amend the Access Agreement with Ontario Power Generation Inc. (OPG) was reviewed, and it was

10. Moved by Brendan Rea
Seconded by J. Sobolta

THAT BY-LAW NUMBER 2024-25 BEING A BY-LAW TO AMEND BY-LAW NUMBER 2020-08, BEING AN ACCESS AGREEMENT WITH ONTARIO POWER GENERATION INC., BE PASSED AND ENTERED IN THE BY-LAW BOOK.

Carried

Resolutions for endorsement were read as follows:

a) Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) i) regarding Support for Nurse Practitioners to obtain Billing Numbers. It was

11. Moved by A. Crane
Seconded by Brendan Rea

THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION (NOMA) IN SUPPORT FOR NURSE PRACTITIONERS TO OBTAIN BILLING NUMBERS BE ENDORSED.

Carried

ii) regarding Supporting the Eastern Ontario Wardens’ Caucus (EOWC) launch to help government build housing faster across eastern Ontario was filed.

b) Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and Ontario Medical Association – urging the Province of Ontario to recognize the physician shortage in Ontario and it was

12. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by Brendan Rea

WHEREAS THE STATE OF HEALTH CARE IN ONTARIO IS IN CRISIS, WITH 2.3 MILLION ONTARIANS LACKING ACCESS TO A FAMILY DOCTOR, EMERGENCY ROOM CLOSURES ACROSS THE PROVINCE, PATIENTS BEING DE-ROSTERED AND 40% OF FAMILY DOCTORS CONSIDERING RETIREMENT OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS; AND

WHEREAS IT HAS BECOME INCREASING CHALLENGING TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN AN ADEQUATE HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE THROUGHOUT THE HEALTH SECTOR ACROSS ONTARIO; AND

WHEREAS THE NORTHERN ONTARIO SCHOOL OF MEDICINE UNIVERSITY SAYS COMMUNITIES IN NORTHERN ONTARIO ARE SHORT MORE THAN 350 PHYSICIANS, INCLUDING MORE THAN 200 FAMILY DOCTORS; AND HALF OF THE PHYSICIANS WORKING IN NORTHERN ONTARIO EXPECTED TO RETIRE IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS; IN (NORTHERN ONTARIO ONLY); AND

WHEREAS ONTARIO MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS PLAY AN INTEGRAL ROLE IN THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM THROUGH RESPONSIBILITIES IN PUBLIC HEALTH, LONG-TERM CARE, AND PARAMEDICINE; AND

WHEREAS THE PERCENTAGE OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS PRACTICING COMPREHENSIVE FAMILY MEDICINE HAS DECLINED FROM 77 PERCENT IN 2008 TO 65 PERCENT IN 2022, AND

WHEREAS PER CAPITA HEALTH-CARE SPENDING IN ONTARIO IS THE LOWEST OF ALL PROVINCES IN CANADA; AND

WHEREAS A ROBUST WORKFORCE DEVELOPED THROUGH A PROVINCIAL, SECTOR-WIDE HEALTH HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES ACROSS THE PROVINCE;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR URGES THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO TO RECOGNIZE THE PHYSICIAN SHORTAGE IN THE RURAL AREAS AND ONTARIO, TO FUND HEALTH CARE APPROPRIATELY AND ENSURE EVERY ONTARIAN HAS ACCESS TO PHYSICIAN CARE.

Carried

- c) Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury regarding Long Service Medals for paramedics and all police officers to receive the same long-service medal as the firefighters and Ontario Provincial Police officers was filed.
- d) The Voice of Northern Business request for a Council Resolution in support of a Set-Aside for Northern Ontario with the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP) was filed.

Correspondence was read as follows:

- a) Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) regarding a multi-minister meeting at AMO & ROMA Conferences. NOMA is requesting and expressing the need of the municipalities in Northwestern Ontario, who do not have the luxury of meeting regularly at Queen's Park, to be provided a meeting at the AMO and future conferences. A multi-minister meeting would reduce the barriers for all to advance the issues of the Northwest at the cabinet table.
- b) Ontario Provincial Police – Municipal Policing Bureau – regarding the new ratified collective agreement in effect January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2026. The Agreement has resulted in salary increases year-for-year from 2023 to 2026, as well as other compensation adjustments which will take effect in the 2025 calendar year. The 2025 annual billing statements will be issued in the fall of 2024 based on the estimates of the impact of the agreement.
- c) Superior North EMS regarding 2024 Levy Information. Their current collective agreements have expired or will expire in 2024 which could impact the 2024 levy.
- d) The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) regarding the TBDSSAB 2024 Association of Municipalities of Ontario Conference Briefings. Position Papers regarding the Supportive Housing Strategy, Social Assistance Modernization Update Request, Landlord Tenant Board Hearing Timelines and Planning for the Future of Housing in the District of Thunder Bay were included.
- e) Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) regarding an invitation to participate in virtual engagement session was reviewed. No one attended.
- f) NOSM University invitation to participate in a Survey. The survey is open from July 23 to August 23, 2024.
- g) City of Toronto requesting the Province to Support Family Physicians (Ward All).

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – AUGUST 12, 2024

- h) Town of Mono regarding MTO's Response to Mono's declaration of a road safety emergency Premier & MTO.
- i) Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Launching AMO's Workforce Development Project Roadmap.

The balance of the correspondence was passed around the table.

Under Old Business, Council discussed

- a) Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) – reply to Council's application for funding for an intern. The funding application was approved.
- b) Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) decision for the Township of O'Connor's Capital Grant Stream Application for playground equipment was declined.
- c) Employee Family Assistance Program (EFAP) update. As the Township of O'Connor's current supplier of the program will be closing effective October 31, 2024, the Clerk-Treasurer provided Council with information from Thunder Bay Counselling for this service. Council agreed to have the Clerk-Treasurer move forward with Thunder Bay Counselling effective November 1, 2024.
- d) Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Racicot's Retirement celebration discussions. Final details were discussed. The event will be held on September 14, 2024, from 1 – 4 p.m. Invitations will be sent out to staff, local dignitaries, the surrounding municipalities and associations. A gift will be purchased as per the Township Policy.

Councillor Torkkeli returned to the meeting at 9:41 p.m.

Under New Business, Council discussed

- a) Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) regarding the upcoming 2024 Fall Planning Workshop. The Ministry is currently seeking presentation topics and presenters. Council would like to suggest discussions on the legal requirements for a Planning Application, and discussions on precedent setting decisions, as well the new municipal responsibilities regarding Official Plans.
- b) Energy Research and Analysis – Innovation in Rural, Remote and Indigenous Communities, invitation to participate in an energy innovation project. No one will participate.
- c) Monika Endler, Township of O'Connor's Janitor, letter of resignation from the position. It was

- 13. Moved by Brendan Rea
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

THAT COUNCIL ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF MS. MONIKA ENDLER, JANITOR, AS OF SEPTEMBER 15, 2024.

Carried

- d) Hymers Agricultural Society request to sell 50-50 tickets in the Township of O'Connor. It was

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

THAT THE HYMERS AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY BE ALLOWED TO SELL 50/50 DRAW TICKETS IN THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR FOR THEIR UPCOMING FAIR FUNDRAISER. DRAW DATE BEING SEPTEMBER 2, 2024.

Carried

- e) Ken Campbell – Courageous Companions requesting support via a sponsorship ad. It was agreed not to place an ad at this time.
- f) The ownership of the BBQ warming station, a piece of equipment that was used during the former O'Connor Days, was discussed. The question of whether it belonged to Bishop Racicot or the Township was discussed, as it has been stored here in the Township since it was last used for O'Connor Day. Council agreed that it was most likely Mr. Racicot's and if Mrs. Racicot would like to have it, the Township would no longer need it and she would be free to take it back.
- g) Wishart Municipal Law Group regarding an Informational Webinar on the Changes to the Planning Act – Friday, August 16, 2024. No one will attend.

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – AUGUST 12, 2024

Under Further New Business, Councillor Sobolta informed Council of a request from the Lakehead OPP Detachment Board regarding insurance coverage for the Board members. The deadline to make a decision on the insurance coverage is August 23, 2024, and the Board does not meet until September. Councillor Sobolta noted that the Insurance Company and the Ontario Association of Police Services Board (OAPSB) are asking several questions regarding the Board. Councillor Sobolta will forward the email with the information to each member of Council for their review. Council is concerned with what coverage is included in the insurance and what this extra cost will be to the members of the Board. Council feel that the OPP should be covering the required insurance, as it is a mandated Board to be a part of. The question was asked if the Township had to be a part of the Board, as they are not clear as to what the benefits are to being on the Board. Councillor Sobolta will forward the email containing the information to Council for their review.

Council also discussed whether or not a public meeting would be held for Council to explain to the residents the large increase in taxes for 2024. It was agreed to hold a public meeting on September 18, 2024, at 7 p.m. in the O'Connor Community Centre.

For information purposes, Building Permits were approved for 77 Whittaker Road for a sunroom, 30 Sitch Road for a steel building, 558 Highway 595 for a house and 319 Earl Road for a lean-to on a garage.

It was

15. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by Carly Torkkeli

THAT THE COUNCIL MEETING ADJOURN TO THE COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2024 AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE O'CONNOR COUNCIL CHAMBERS.

TIME BEING: 9:58 P.M.

Carried

Mayor

Clerk-Treasurer