

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 9, 2024

Minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday, September 9, 2024, at 7 p.m. in the O'Connor Council Chambers

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

Visitors: None

Absent: Councillor Torkkeli, Councillor Rea

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

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

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 A. Crane

THAT THE MINUTES FROM THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, AUGUST 12, 2024 BE ACCEPTED AS PRINTED.

Carried

No visitors were present.

Mr. Johnson, Road Superintendent, was unavailable due to the work on Loghrin Road.

The Clerk-Treasurer provided a brief update on his behalf. Taranis Contracting started paving Loghrin Road today and Mr. Johnson is on site with the contractor.

A report was read which provided an update on the generator installations at the Garage and Fire Hall, through funding from the Community Emergency Preparedness Grant. The original generator installed was undersized and a larger one had to be purchased for the Fire Hall. The Clerk-Treasurer has confirmed with the funding agency and they have no concerns with the change. The cost of the larger generator still comes in within the approved funding amount.

Dates for Union Negotiations were discussed, and it was

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

THAT THE FOLLOWING DATE BE SET TO MEET WITH THE CANADIAN UNION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES LOCAL 87 TO NEGOTIATE A NEW UNION AGREEMENT FOR THE ROAD EMPLOYEES.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2024 AT 7 P.M.

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

Carried

A negotiating committee will be selected at the next meeting.

The Administration and Road Voucher was reviewed, and it was

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

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THAT THE ADMINISTRATION AND ROADS VOUCHER #2024-15 DATED SEPTEMBER 9, 2024 TOTTALLING \$112,326.45 BE APPROVED AND PAID.

Carried

The Statement of Revenue and Expenditures to August 31, 2024, were unavailable.

By-laws were reviewed and discussed as follow:

a) By-law Number 2024-26 to repeal By-law Number 2001-12, appointing Linda Racicot as Deputy Clerk-Treasurer, as she has retired as of August 30, 2024, and it was

- 5. Moved by A. Crane
Seconded by J. Sobolta

THAT BY-LAW NUMBER 2024-26 BEING A BY-LAW TO REPEAL BY-LAW NUMBER 2001-12, A BY-LAW APPOINTING LINDA RACICOT AS DEPUTY CLERK AND DEPUTY TREASURER BE PASSED AND ENTERED IN THE BY-LAW BOOK.

Carried

b) By-law Number 2024-27 to enter into an agreement with ECO Logging to harvest and remove timber and it was

- 6. Moved by A. Crane
Seconded by J. Sobolta

THAT BY-LAW NUMBER 2024-27 BEING A BY-LAW TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH ECO LOGGING TO HARVEST AND REMOVE TIMBER FROM TOWNSHIP OWNED PROPERTY BE PASSED AND ENTERED IN THE BY-LAW BOOK.

Carried

Lakehead Rural Planning Board – Consent Application 1B/03/24 for Johan and Victoria Huisman, 862 Highway 588 was discussed, and it was

- 7. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by A. Crane

THAT THE CONSENT APPLICATION 1B/03/24 FOR JOHAN AND VICTORIA HUISMAN, FOR THE PROPERTY DESCRIBED AS CONCESSION 2, S PT LOT 1 PCL 17217 FOR A SEVERANCE OF 6 HECTARES BE APPROVED.

Carried

Resolutions for endorsement were read as follows:

a) Township of O'Connor regarding a resolution requesting the Ontario Provincial Government consider establishing a funding program specifically for the purchase of Firetrucks. It was

- 8. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by A. Crane

WHEREAS FIRE SAFETY AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE SERVICES ARE CRITICAL TO THE WELL-BEING AND SAFETY OF OUR COMMUNITY;

WHEREAS TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR, ALONG WITH MANY OTHER MUNICIPALITIES, FACE SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES IN MAINTAINING AND UPGRADING ESSENTIAL FIREFIGHTING EQUIPMENT DUE TO FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS AND LIMITED TAX BASE;

WHEREAS THE PURCHASE OF NEW FIRETRUCKS IS ESSENTIAL FOR ENSURING THAT OUR FIRE DEPARTMENTS HAVE THE NECESSARY TOOLS TO EFFECTIVELY RESPOND TO EMERGENCIES AND PROTECT LIVES AND PROPERTY;

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WHEREAS THE COST OF ACQUIRING MODERN FIRETRUCKS REPRESENTS A SUBSTANTIAL FINANCIAL BURDEN FOR INDIVIDUAL MUNICIPALITIES, PARTICULARLY SMALLER AND RURAL COMMUNITIES;

WHEREAS THE ONTARIO PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT HAS THE CAPACITY TO PROVIDE SUPPORT THROUGH INTER-MUNICIPAL FUNDING INITIATIVES THAT COULD ALLEVIATE THESE FINANCIAL PRESSURES AND ENHANCE THE OVERALL SAFETY INFRASTRUCTURE ACROSS THE PROVINCE;

WHEREAS THE COLLECTIVE EFFORT OF MULTIPLE MUNICIPALITIES REQUESTING ASSISTANCE CAN DEMONSTRATE A UNIFIED NEED AND POTENTIALLY STRENGTHEN THE CASE FOR PROVINCIAL SUPPORT;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR HEREBY REQUESTS THAT THE ONTARIO PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT CONSIDER ESTABLISHING A FUNDING PROGRAM SPECIFICALLY FOR THE PURCHASE OF FIRETRUCKS;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR URGES THAT OTHER MUNICIPALITIES COLLABORATE IN ADVOCATING THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT FOR SUPPORTING THIS INITIATIVE, TO ENSURE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES AND ENHANCED FIRE SAFETY ACROSS THE PROVINCE.

Carried

- b) Township of Stirling Rawdon requesting the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act be updated to reflect the inflation rates since 1996; and further that the inflation rate be applied each year to the requirement to report public salaries. It was

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

THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE TOWNSHIP OF STIRLING RAWDON REQUESTING THAT THE PUBLIC SECTOR SALARY DISCLOSURE ACT BE UPDATED TO REFLECT THE INFLATION RATES SINCE 1996 BE ENDORSED.

Carried

- c) Township of Red Rock requesting additional funding in Ontario's legal system to support a meaningful resistance to the current catch and release practice. It was

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

THAT THE RESOLUTION FROM THE TOWNSHIP OF RED ROCK REQUESTING ADDITIONAL FUNDING IN ONTARIO'S LEGAL SYSTEM TO SUPPORT A MEANINGFUL RESISTANCE TO THE CURRENT CATCH AND RELEASE PRACTICE BE ENDORSED.

Carried

- d) City of Quinte West requesting a supplement to the allocations provided to municipalities under the AMO Canada Community Building Fund agreement for 2024-2028 was filed.
e) City of Quinte West calling on the Province to update the Municipal Election Act, 1996 with priority amendments as outlined by AMCTO was filed.

Correspondence was read as follows:

- a) The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board – Update from the Board – August 22, 2024.
b) Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) – 2025 Draft Budget.
c) Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Policy Update – Energy Procurements, AMO Community and Supportive Housing Event.

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- d) Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks regarding Proposed Amendments to Ontario's Producer Responsibility Regulations. The balance of the correspondence was passed around the table.

Under Old Business, Council discussed

- a) Update regarding the trees located in the O'Connor Cemetery, along the road allowance, which are close to power lines, and the Township's request for their removal by Hydro One. The Clerk-Treasurer reported that Hydro One will send out a technician to assess the issue which could take up to 30 business days. If a decision to remove the trees is made, it could take up to 180 business days to have the work completed.
- b) Hydro One power outages. The Clerk-Treasurer confirmed that a letter has been sent to Hydro One requesting the reasoning for so many power outages in the area lately when weather events are not the issue. They will look into the issues further and get back to the Township.
- c) A discussion was held regarding the Public Meeting for the 2024 tax increase, scheduled for September 18th, 2024. Mayor Vezina provided information on how he plans to explain the budget increase to the taxpayers. He will expand on the information he provided at last years' meeting. Mayor Vezina will try to have his presentation completed prior to the meeting to allow enough time to go over it with Council. It was suggested that perhaps the taxpayers could be asked for their suggestions as to how they feel Council can lower the tax increase. It was agreed to have Mayor Vezina do his presentation and if the taxpayers have questions following, they be allowed to ask, rather than offering them the opportunity to make suggestions when they may not fully understand how the process works.

Under Further Old Business, Councillor Sobolta provided Council with information regarding the Police Services Board. Training to be a member of the Board includes eight hours of mandatory online training. The Board's recommendation of General Liability Insurance coverage was also discussed. This will add an additional expense for the Board in the amount of over \$6,000. Council would like clarification as to whether or not the Township has to be a part of this Board, as they do not see the benefit to our Community, especially with the additional expenses. Policing Services will still be provided whether or not the Township is a member of the Board. Councillor Sobolta will discuss Council's concerns further at the next Board meeting.

Under New Business, Council discussed

- a) Signing Authority for the Township of O'Connor. As a result of Linda Racicot's retirement, she will be removed from the signing authority for the Township and Erin Laforest will be added. It was

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

BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR'S AUTHORIZED SIGNING OFFICERS FOR BANKING PURPOSES BE: MAYOR VEZINA OR COUNCILLOR SOBOLTA OR COUNCILLOR TORKKELI AND CLERK-TREASURER BUOB OR DEPUTY CLERK-TREASURER LAFOREST.

Carried

- b) The retirement of Monika Endler, as Janitor for the last fourteen years, was discussed. It was

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

THAT THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR COUNCIL RECOGNIZE MONIKA ENDLER, IN HER RETIREMENT AS JANITOR FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR OVER HER FOURTEEN YEARS IN THIS POSITION. COUNCIL WOULD LIKE TO GIVE A \$50.00 GIFT CERTIFICATE.

Carried

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- c) Ministry of Sport regarding the Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Fund Stream 1 – Repair and Rehabilitation, Stream 2 – New Builds/Signature New Builds. Stream 1 provides funding between \$150,000 and \$1 million to extend the lifespan of existing community sport and recreation facilities/spaces and improve local programming and accessibility features. The application deadline is October 29, 2024. The Township would be responsible for 30% of the total costs if funding was approved. Renovations to the Community Centre floor and the addition of an accessible door in the back of the Community Centre were discussed. It was agreed at this time that the funds to cover the 30% would not be available, so no application will be made at this time.
- Stream 2 would be for New Builds/Signature New Builds to invest in new, transformative community sport and recreation infrastructure, including assets that currently do not exist in a community or replacement of existing that have reached their end of lifespan. Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis until all funding has been allocated. For this stream Municipalities can request up to 50% of eligible costs. It was agreed that the Township would look further into applying for playground equipment. It was suggested that Community Fundraising could help to offset the Township's portion of the cost if the application was successful.
- d) Thunder Bay District Municipal League request for feedback on draft Strategic Plan. Council reviewed the Plan and feel that the document is moving in the right direction and is a good start. They did not have any suggestions for change at this time.
- e) Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility regarding the Ontario Senior Achievement Award nominations. The deadline for nominations is October 1, 2024. It was agreed to submit a nomination for one of our residents.
- f) Municipal Finance Officers Association (MFOA) – Northern Finance Workshop – October 16 – 18, 2024. It was agreed to bring this item back for the next agenda.
- g) Sarjeant Propane – quote for fixed price renewal September 1, 2024. It was

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

THAT THE QUOTE OF SARJEANT PROPANE FOR THE FUEL SUPPLY AND EQUIPMENT AGREEMENT FOR THE TERM OF SEPTEMBER 1, 2024 TO AUGUST 31, 2025 AT A COST OF \$.7050 CENTS PER LITRE, PLUS A HAZARDOUS MATERIALS FEE FOR DELIVERY OF \$19.95 BE ACCEPTED.

Carried

- h) Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) i) cover letter regarding additional information attached.
ii) Board Meeting Report for August 18, 2024.
iii) Solve the Crisis Campaign – requesting support. Council agreed that the Township does support the campaign, but will not submit a letter of support at this time due to staff time restraints.
iv) Letter of Support for Solve the Crisis Campaign.
v) NOMA Full Delegation Package presented at AMO Conference.
- i) NOSM University – Survey Letter of Information. The deadline to submit was September 6, 2024.

Issues brought forward or letters received after agenda was mailed:

- a) Fire Department Auxiliary request to put a door in the old office storage area to secure their supplies stored in this area. Council agreed to allow a door to be installed with funds from the Auxiliary.
- b) Hymers Agricultural Society request to purchase surplus coolers from the Community Centre. As Council has declared these items surplus in the past and the original sale falling through, it was agreed to sell two coolers for \$125.00 each, if they are interested.

For information purposes no Building Permits were issued since the last meeting.

It was

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

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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: 8:55 P.M.

Carried

Employee discussions were held in regard to the Deputy Treasurer position, Union Agreement negotiations and the minimum wage increase effective October 1, 2024.

- 15. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by A. Crane

TIME BEING: 9:32 P.M.

THAT WE NOW MOVE TO OPEN MEETING.

Carried

As a result of the increase in minimum wage, effective October 1, 2024 it was

- 16. Moved by A. Crane
Seconded by J. Sobolta

THAT THE STARTUP/PROBATION WAGE FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR NON-UNION PART-TIME/CASUAL STAFF COMPRISING OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT, DISPOSAL SITE CARETAKER, JANITOR, GROUNDSKEEPER, DOG CONTROL OFFICER, WILL RECEIVE AN INCREASE AS FOLLOWS: EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 1, 2024 INCREASE OF \$1.50 / HOUR.

Carried

- 17. Moved by J. Sobolta
Seconded by A. Crane

THAT THE COUNCIL MEETING ADJOURN TO THE COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2024 AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE O'CONNOR COUNCIL CHAMBERS.

TIME BEING: 9:36 P.M.

Carried

Mayor

Clerk-Treasurer