

Here are the highlights from the regular and special Lanark County Council meetings held Wednesday, June 26.

- **Provincial Cuts Affect Long-Term Care Funding:** Council has authorized Warden Richard Kidd (Beckwith Reeve) to send a letter to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care expressing concerns about provincial cuts to long-term care funding, particularly the elimination of two long-standing funding streams: the High Wage Transition Fund and the Structural Compliance Premium. This in-year funding change is a loss of \$80,000, which will shift to the municipal taxpayer unless service levels are reduced. Earlier this month, Interim Director of Long-Term Care Jennie Bingley provided a Lanark Lodge funding update to the community services committee. She noted that for the 2019/2020 fiscal year, the long-term care home's case mix index funding, which measures average care requirements of residents to determine funding allocation, has been reduced by almost \$59,000 despite rising care needs. She explained some announced funding increases are offset by the loss of the two major funding streams, leaving the home with the shortfall. Ms. Bingley indicated to mitigate the negative impact for 2019, a vacant management position in nursing is not being filled and overtime will not be approved for front-line positions unless absolutely necessary. "Management will not put residents at risk as it pertains to appropriate staffing levels," she said. "When the care needs dictate it, we will continue to staff at the required level, which may result in negative budget variances." The effect of the reduced funding in 2020 is expected to result in an increased burden on local taxpayers to maintain staffing levels. For more information, contact Jennie Bingley, Interim Director of Long-Term Care, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 7101.
- **Procedural By-law Amended:** Following a public notice period, council has approved amendments to the county's procedural by-law, which governs procedures for meetings. In January the striking committee established a Code of Conduct & Procedural By-law Working Group to review and suggest potential amendments, which met twice. Amendments include procedures for items related to county spokespeople, duties of the chair, procedures for asking questions at meetings, conduct, the inaugural meeting, timing of closed meetings, agenda creation procedures, pecuniary/conflict of interest, receiving and responding to communications, motions and recorded votes. For more information, contact Leslie Drynan, Clerk, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1502.
- **2018 Housing and Homelessness Report Released:** Council has accepted the 2018 Housing and Homelessness Report for Lanark County and Smiths Falls, which was presented to the community services committee by Housing Services Caseworker Karen Smith earlier this month. The report notes a big change occurred in September 2018 when the county assumed the administration of the Lanark County Housing Corporation, creating Lanark County Housing Services. This helped to integrate services and provide efficiency and effective long-term service planning. Ms. Smith outlined the various programs within the department, including the Housing Options Program, which helped 1,127 applicants last year to maintain or obtain housing. Renovate Lanark assisted 41 families to make necessary repairs to their homes. The rent-geared-to-income housing program consists of 774 units in the county. Five families received help with down-payments through the Homeownership Program, and 72 people were aided through the domiciliary hostel program, where they receive some assistance with daily tasks. Eight people benefited from the Homemakers Program. Ms. Smith also highlighted the completion of the 2018 Housing Study and the results from the 2018 homelessness enumeration survey. Thirteen new affordable housing units were built in the county in 2018, as well as four second-stage housing units with Lanark County Interval House

funded through the rent supplement program. A new portable housing benefit program began in 2018 as well. For more information about housing programs in Lanark County, visit the social services page on the county's website at www.lanarkcounty.ca. For more information, contact Emily Hollington, Director of Social Services, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 2101.

- **Department Allocates Housing Funds:** Housing Services Manager Sandy Grey outlined several funding allocation proposals to the community services committee earlier this month, which council has approved. Under the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative, an amendment to the investment plan for 2019/20 was made after the province announced a reduction in April from \$1.3 million to \$1.2 million. Consequently, costs related to a bi-annual enumeration of the homeless population were shifted to the administration budget. In another report, Ms. Grey explained the Transition to CHPI Program is provincial funding used in part to provide forgivable loans to low-income homeowners to make necessary repairs. Council has approved a recommendation to transfer repayments in this program from prior years to a housing reserve fund to augment the Rent Support Program, which was oversubscribed and ended due to lack of funds. Council also approved a recommendation to submit an investment plan to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for the 2019/2020 Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) allocated to the rental housing component. This is part of the Community Housing Renewal Strategy, which is a nine-year plan to stabilize and grow Ontario's community housing sector. The Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) and OPHI begin in 2019, with the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit to be introduced next year. COCHI funds can be used to repair, regenerate and expand community housing over time, and OPHI allows the county to address local housing priorities. Council has opted to allocate OPHI funds to rental housing. The Lanark County Housing Study completed in October 2018 identified the need for additional social and affordable housing units in Carleton Place. Given the short timeframe to spend the funds, it is proposed the OPHI allocation be used to either offset the cost of the affordable housing units or to fund all capital and operating programs as an alternative. The COCHI funds are to be distributed to eligible housing services providers on a per-unit basis. For more information, contact Sandy Grey, Housing Services Manager, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 2401.
- **2018 Auditor's Report Accepted:** After a presentation by Howard Allan of Allan and Partners LLP Chartered Professional Accountants to the corporate services committee earlier this month, council accepted the 2018 audited financial statements. Mr. Allan said 2018 was a good year for the county. "The county had very strong financial management," he said. The county's operating budget is about \$80 million, with capital spending total expenditures at close to \$100 million per year. "The trend is that the amount of money received from the province has decreased on a regular basis," Mr. Allan said. "In the county, the situation is that 45 to 50 per cent of the budget comes mostly from the provincial government. Ontario Municipal Program Funding cuts have been particularly troubling for rural Ontario." He added that since there is not a lot of industry in eastern Ontario, if tax dollars are taken away "this will fall disproportionately on the residential taxpayer" and urged less reliance on the province for funds. The county showed a surplus of about \$7.7 million in 2018, which Mr. Allan said is "not a big variance on a large budget." The county improved its financial asset position because of the operating surplus. "The county is considered to be in a low-risk financial position," he said, adding the debt is "very modest for the size of the budget and municipality." He congratulated county staff and commended the county's transparency during the audit process. For more information, contact Kevin Wills, Acting Treasurer, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1323.

- **Township Requests County Road Improvements:** Council has authorized staff to consider County Road 36 (Bolingbroke Road) for improvements in the area of the ABC Hall in Tay Valley Township. The township asked the county to look into various options to address safety concerns near the hall. In a report to the public works committee, Director Terry McCann indicated the location was reviewed and he supports lowering the grade of the hill to meet an 80 kilometre-per-hour road design. “Lowering the grade will provide the required sight distance, thereby improving safety when drivers are entering and exiting their driveways, while improving road condition and safety overall,” he said. This will be included in 2020 budget considerations. The county supports the township’s efforts to install a radar speed sign to help enforce limits in the area. For more information, contact Terry McCann, Director of Public Works, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 3190.
- **Vegetation Management Plan Update and Monarch Proclamation:** Council accepted an update about the county’s vegetation management plan and proclaimed June 26 as Mayors’ Monarch Pledge Day to support and promote restoration of pollinator habitat. Michelle Vala, Vegetation Management Intern, presented the report to the public works committee earlier in the evening. Ms. Vala explained the program to help control wild parsnip along county roadways began in 2015 and the Integrated Pest Management Vegetation Management Plan was adopted in 2016, which includes a long-term, multi-faceted approach that aims to reduce reliance on mowing, brushing and spraying while restoring pollinator habitat. To date, there has been a significant reduction of herbicide use on county roads and increased habitat restoration activities. Locations for a cutting and drowning trial project to control phragmites will be picked this year and the county is reaching out to stakeholder groups regarding a new Adopt-a-Bridge Program to improve litter collection, invasive plant and noxious weed management and to restore native pollinator habitat. She also outlined a new Monarch butterfly habitat restoration pilot program in partnership with the Canadian Wildlife Federation with funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. Other initiatives include hydro seeding bare ground disturbed by construction, reseeding areas after invasive plant removal with pollinator-friendly vegetation, and a multi-year pollinator patch project on county property. She noted the National Wildlife Federation Mayors’ Monarch Pledge is “a perfect fit with the county’s vegetation management goals.” Municipalities commit to creating habitat for the monarch butterfly and pollinators and to educate citizens about how they can help. Municipalities must take at least three of 25 actions within a year of taking the pledge. Most Canadian cities that have taken the pledge are located in southern Ontario and Quebec. “Lanark County has the opportunity to lead the way in providing pollinator habitat and encouraging monarch butterfly populations in eastern Ontario.” A public information session on wild parsnip, phragmites, site restoration and monarch recovery efforts is planned for July 17. A detailed media release on this and the Mayors’ Monarch Pledge will be forthcoming. For more information, contact Michelle Vala, Vegetation Management Intern, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 3114.

Information on Bill 108: In a consent report to the economic development committee, Planner Julie Stewart outlined the planning-related changes in Bill 108, which affects 15 other pieces of legislation. She indicated Bill 108 proposes to repeal many amendments made to the Planning Act in 2018, including appeal provisions related to official plan and zoning by-law amendments and reducing municipal processing timelines. It also includes a new “community benefits charges” section, which removes soft services (e.g. libraries and recreation) from the Development Charges Act. Ms. Stewart also outlined changes to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal, the Planning Act, the Conservation Authorities Act and endangered species. She noted changes to the Development Charges Act may

have financial implications to the county and local municipalities. Other municipalities have expressed concerns about the effect of the legislation on community-driven planning and limitations on a municipality's ability to continue to provide parks and a range of community services and facilities under the proposed community benefits charge framework, and they indicate the bill in its current state will have negative consequences on community building and proper planning. Ms. Stewart said she will update the committee as further information becomes available. For more information, contact Julie Stewart, County Planner, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1520.

- **Upcoming Meetings: Please note there are no regular council or committee meetings in July. County Council, Wednesday, Aug. 7, 5 p.m.;** Community Services, Aug. 7 (following County Council); Services, Aug. 7 (following Community Services). **County Council, Wednesday, Aug. 28, 5 p.m.;** Public Works, Aug. 28 (following County Council); Economic Development, Aug. 28 (following Public Works). All meetings are in Council Chambers unless otherwise noted. For more information, contact 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1502. Like "LanarkCounty1" on Facebook and follow "@LanarkCounty1" on Twitter!