

Here are the highlights from the regular Lanark County Council meeting held Wednesday, April 8.

- **Future Meeting Procedure and Procedural By-law Amendment:** In light of the province providing authority to municipalities to conduct virtual meetings as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic state of emergency in Ontario, the corporate services committee has made recommendations for the future meeting schedule and virtual meeting options. Council approved amendments to the procedural by-law to temporarily allow for meetings to be conducted virtually for the duration of the emergency and for livestream or recordings to be made available to the public. Delegations or presentation can be arranged through approval and would be provided with details needed to connect to the meeting electronically. The April 8 meetings were conducted by teleconference with audio and agendas livestreamed on the county's Facebook page. The committee has recommended the same procedure be used until further notice. For more information, contact Leslie Drynan, Clerk/Deputy CAO, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1502.

- **Council Sets 2020 Taxation Policies and Tax Relief Measure:** Council has passed by-laws related to 2020 taxation policy, including tax ratios and levy apportionment to local municipalities. Council also passed a by-law amendment to temporarily eliminate the interest charges on overdue tax installments from the local municipalities. This comes in light of the employment and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the financial upheaval affecting many ratepayers' abilities to pay their property taxes. "The amendment will help the local municipalities manage their financial operating line and provide relief to ratepayers," said CAO Kurt Greaves. Council passed the 2020 budget in November with a levy of \$35.8 million and a net tax increase of 1.6 per cent, which is collected through the towns and townships. At the corporate services committee meeting in March, Mr. Greaves outlined the three areas of tax policy that get determined by council: the levy, tax ratios and capping. Council apportions the tax burden between the various tax classes, determines the levy from each local municipality and decides on the mandatory continuation of tax protection (capping) for the commercial and industrial tax classes. "Again this year, the recommendation from Lanark County treasurers is to maintain revenue neutral tax ratios to ensure reassessment does not shift the tax burden between the tax classes," Mr. Greaves explained. The county will refund its portion of landfill taxation to local municipalities, which was a property tax and tax ratio introduced in 2017. Mr. Greaves noted there are options available to allow municipalities to slowly reduce the number of properties in capping situations. "The number of properties affected by the capping rebates following reassessment continues to decline, and the recommendation is to adopt all provisions to eliminate capping by 2023." The county portion of the tax bill is one of three components on the tax bill, with the local municipality and education portion making up the balance. For more information, contact Kurt Greaves, County CAO, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1101.

- **Social Services Relief Funds Allocated:** On March 23, the province announced a \$148 million relief fund for social services to help support vulnerable populations in communities through the COVID-19 pandemic. The county posted a request for submissions from community partners/agencies on March 27, with an April 2 deadline. To be eligible, submissions had to qualify under Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative guidelines. Lanark County's allocation is \$1.6 million. Council passed a motion allocating money received as part of the Social Services Relief Fund in the following categories: \$300,000 for emergency shelter solutions, \$165,000 for housing with related supports, \$298,228 for services and supports, \$500,000 for homelessness prevention, a contingency of \$18,572 and \$160,200 for administration. Eight of the agency submissions met the

Social Services Relief Fund eligibility requirements, and more than \$380,000 of the funding is being allocated to those projects, which include items such as staffing support, equipment, transportation, a food program for children and youth, additional food purchases for food banks and personal protective equipment (PPE) purchases for their staff, additional staff support and equipment for front-line crisis services, additional support for a mental health support line, and a multi-agency supported COVID isolation centre. The county's allocation also supports hostels with their communal environment and the need for cleaning, PPE and isolation; assistance for non-profit housing providers; a rent bank to help eligible individuals and families with rent over the period of the pandemic; additional funds for after-hours support to assist with an increase in demand; hotel/motel costs as temporary shelter for homeless individuals; and support for each of the three primary food banks and others currently providing this service. For more information, contact Emily Hollington, Director of Social Services, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 2101.

- **Director Positions Filled:** Council approved by-laws appointing two interim directors to permanent positions. Jennie Bingley, who had been in the position of county treasurer, has been the interim Director of Lanark Lodge since 2018. Financial analyst Kevin Wills became interim treasurer at that time. "Both of these individuals stepped into important roles for Lanark County when they were needed and we are grateful for their hard work and effort," said Warden Brian Campbell (Tay Valley Reeve). For more information, contact Kurt Greaves, County CAO, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1101.
- **Upcoming Meetings: County Council, Wednesday, April 22, 5 p.m.;** Public Works, April 22 (following County Council); Economic Development, April 22 (following Public Works). **County Council, Wednesday, May 13, 5 p.m.;** Community Services, May 13 (following County Council); Corporate Services, May 13 (following Community Services). Virtual meetings to be conducted until further notice; watch for access details on agendas and through online notifications. For more information, contact 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1502. Like "LanarkCounty1" on Facebook and follow "@LanarkCounty1" on Twitter!