

MINUTES
Special/Budget Meeting
June 24, 2020
7:00 p.m.

Present: Absent:
Reeve: Rodney Wood
Councillors: Mike Garside
Pat Garside
Dianne Holt
Dave Leask
Road Superintendent: Lyn Garside
Clerk Treasurer: Valerie Obarymskyj

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

This Special Meeting was called to address a few issues that required Council's immediate attention, as well as, a review of the 2020 Draft Budget.

Moved by Dave Leask 2020-36
Seconded by Pat Garside
Resolved that we do accept the Agenda as amended. *Carried*

Moved by Dianne Holt 2020-37
Seconded by Mike Garside
Resolved that we do approve the Minutes of the Regular Meetings of March 4, 2020 and June 1, 2020 as presented. *Carried*

Moved by Mike Garside 2020-38
Seconded by Dave Leask
Resolved that we do approve the Minutes of the Closed Meeting of June 1, 2020 as presented. *Carried*

The Hilton Union Fire Board Budget was reviewed. This year's budget continued to include the same reduction to the Fire Equipment Reserve Fund as in 2019. In recent years the Fire Board had authorized annual \$20,000 transfers to the Reserve Fund but given the anticipated life of the recently acquired vehicles, the Board agreed to continue the reduced transfer of \$10,000 this year. There is still some additional work to be done to the modified tanker for which \$4,000 has been budgeted.

Moved by Mike Garside 2020-39
Seconded by Dave Leask
Resolved that we do approve the Hilton Union Fire Board Budget for 2020 in the amount of \$43,926 which includes municipal levies from the Township of Hilton and the Village of Hilton Beach in the amount of \$18,913 each. *Carried*

Moved by Dave Leask 2020-40
Seconded by Dianne Holt
Resolved that we do approve the Hilton Union Fire Public Library Board Budget for 2020 in the amount of \$34,804 with a Hilton Township municipal levy of \$12,548. *Carried*

Moved by Dave Leask 2020-41
Seconded by Pat Garside
Resolved that we do approve the St. Joseph Island Museum Budget for 2020 as presented in the amount of \$42,365 with Hilton Township's share being \$5,421 (21.12%);
Be it further resolved that we also contribute \$400 as our share of the cost of a riding lawnmower for use on the Museum grounds. *Carried*

The Clerk advised Council of area municipal discussions/webinars and conference calls that have been taking place over the past couple months regarding the issue of Asset Management and upcoming requirements per O.Reg. 588-17. The new requirements have three different deadlines: Stage 1 (July 1, 2021) requires an Asset Management Plan (AMP) which addresses core infrastructure assets; Stage 2 (July 1, 2023) requires an AMP which expands on Stage 1 by including all infrastructure assets; Stage 3 (July 1, 2024) requires an AMP that expands on Stage 2 by requiring proposed levels of service, lifecycle management and financial strategies, identifying lifecycle activities and growth considerations. The proposed agreement with Public Sector Digest, dependent on a successful 90% funded grant application with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, will result in an AMP that satisfies the requirements for Stages 1 and 2: providing current levels of service for each asset category, establishing the lifecycle activities needed to maintain the current levels of service, and growth considerations. It will also include cost of the CityWide software and migration of our most recent audited data and administration training in use of the software. The annual fee of \$1,900 for support and maintenance will be

included in the grant application. The Clerk was asked to confirm the stability of the \$1,900 annual support fee going forward. Given the percentage of funding available to municipalities under 1,000 population, the cost of the new AMP, software, training and support fee totals \$44,900 but only \$4,490 will be the financial responsibility of the Township. The Clerk recommended the Township's contribution be funded through the Modernization Funding received in 2019 from the Province with its intended use being to find efficiencies in the municipality's operations.

Moved by Pat Garside

2020-42

Seconded by Mike Garside

Be it resolved that Council directs staff to apply for a grant opportunity from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Municipal Asset Management Program for Asset Management Systems and Plan Enhancements in Hilton Township;

Be it therefore resolved that the Township of Hilton commits to conducting the following activities in its proposed project submitted to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Municipal Asset Management Program to advance our asset management program:

- CityWide Asset Manager License
- Implementation, Data Work and Training for Asset Manager Software
- Ontario Regulation 588/17 Compliant Asset Management Plan

Be it further resolved that the Township of Hilton commits \$4,490 from its budget toward the costs of this initiative. *Carried*

The Clerk advised Council of another grant opportunity offered through the Enabling Accessibility Fund (EAF). There is a due date of July 13, 2020 for submissions. The Small Projects Component of the EAF will provide grant funding for small scale construction and communication technology projects that improve accessibility in communities or workplaces. Council was reminded that under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) of 2005, by 2025 our municipal office should be satisfying certain accessibility requirements. The EAF recognized the time involved in obtaining contractor quotes and was now offering a "Flat Rate" basis of funding that attributed specific costs to ramps, accessible doors and accessible washrooms. Council reviewed and approved the completed grant application presented by the Clerk for renovations to the municipal office building. Council was advised there are also upcoming website accessibility requirements as of January 2021. More information needs to be acquired in terms of the cost of software to make all web content accessible or how to complete the work in-house. Given the time constraints with the EAF funding deadline, the Clerk recommended submitting the application for the construction work as the Flat Rate approach was only offered with such building projects and not communication technology. Discussion will continue with our website provider on this issue.

Moved by Dianne Holt

2020-43

Seconded by Dave Leask

Resolved that Council for the Township of Hilton does authorize the submission of an application for funding under the Enabling Accessibility Fund (EAF) – Small Project Component – Community Accessibility Stream to provide an accessible washroom and front entryway at the Municipal Office. The application will be submitted based on the "Flat Rate" cost basis. *Carried*

Council reviewed the Clerk's report addressing the draft budget for 2020. This year's draft budget includes an increase to the municipal levy of approximately \$31,000 over 2019. This levy included bringing forward \$20,000 from Federal Gas Tax funds given the significant cost of road construction projects this year. Despite the increased levy, the combined municipal and education tax rate will be reduced 0.4% due to increases in assessment. If a resident's assessment did not change, the property taxes for 2020 will decrease 0.4%. Given the average assessment increase of 3.73% to *Seasonal Recreational Dwellings* (representing 246 of the total 318 residences), the final effect on taxes to be paid will be approximately 3.32% more for these properties. *Single Family Dwellings* saw an average assessment increase of 6.14%; therefore, these properties (72 of total 318 residences) will pay approximately 5.72% more in overall taxes for 2020.

The reasons for the increased levy are linked to both reduced revenue and increased expenses. Revenue decreased approximately \$15,000: OMPF down \$4,000; Interest and Penalty down \$4,000 as a result of Covid-19 relief measures given; Contracted Plowing down \$7,500 as we no longer plow the Village of Hilton Beach. Expenses increased approximately \$37,000: Administration up \$7,000 re new laptop/software/external hard drive/fire permit software module/Covid-19 measures; Roads up \$24,000 for increased sand but mainly additional road projects; Social Services up \$6,000 linked to our increased assessment.

The Clerk recommended an additional \$20,000 be transferred from the General Working Capital Reserve to the Succession Plan Reserve that was established in 2019. Given the projected retirement of both full-time employees within the next decade, setting aside these funds for future training costs and overlap of employee salaries will ease the burden on taxpayers when that time comes.

Included in the budget is the purchase of a tractor and attachments to enable the Township to perform roadside maintenance and mowing in-house, multiple times per year. The budget allocated \$70,000 for the tractor/attachments, as well as, \$50,000 for a driveshed/storage building for both Recreation and Roads purposes.

These items will be funded through the Modernization Grant of \$224,000 received in 2019 which was distributed to municipalities to help them find efficiencies in their operations. As noted earlier, part of the remaining funds will be used to cover Administration needs related to new software for asset management purposes, as well as, possibly accessibility requirements.

While a number of road construction improvements are planned for this year, two major projects include the surface treatment of Milford Haven Road (\$71,000) and Garside Road West (\$76,000). The smaller projects will be on Canoe Point Road, the aprons of Trainor Side Road and Haight Road (all totaling approximately \$20,000). The work on Garside Road West will be offset with \$50,000 from the 2020 Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund grant and \$20,000 from Federal Gas Tax. The resulting taxpayer contribution of \$97,000 for road construction remains on target with our goal of \$75,000 to \$100,000 road improvements each year.

Council reviewed details explaining the effect of the proposed tax rate on residential taxes. Total taxes on a \$100,000 assessed property (if assessment did not change) would decrease to \$876.20 in 2020 from \$879.69 in 2019 (\$3.49 reduction). Given, however, the approximate 3.73% average assessment increase to most residential properties, taxes on the increased assessed value of \$103,730 for 2020 would result in taxes of \$908.89 (\$29.20 increase). The Clerk confirmed that if a resident's assessed property value increased more than the average 3.73%, there would be a greater increase in taxes.

The Road Superintendent advised there would need to be an increase to the projected Roads Operation Expenses of \$3,500 as new tires had just been purchased for the float and the pickup and unexpected repairs had just occurred with the excavator.

In terms of donations for 2020 and how some regular contributions (fireworks/baseball/soccer) would not be made, Council did authorize contributions to some local groups that had stepped up to help those in need as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic (Lions Club/Trefry/Legion). Regular donations will be continued to CASS for graduating students, as well as, Matthews Memorial Hospital. The Clerk noted the Village of Hilton Beach had advised that the proceeds from the refundable bottles/cans collected this year at the landfill will be sent to the local Food Bank as a joint donation from both our municipalities. The values resulting from this effort have ranged from \$900 to \$1,800 in recent years.

The Clerk will make the necessary changes to the budget and it will be presented for approval at the next regular meeting of Council scheduled for July 8, 2020.

The matter of trying to improve on the delivery of internet services within Hilton Township is one that Council has been pursuing for some time, along with most other rural municipalities in all of Ontario. Prior to the Covid-19 Pandemic and the full realization of the limited capability in our area, communications with Bell representatives and provincial government officials have been pursued but with little improvement resulting. This year in April 2020 we, along with many area municipalities, wrote to the CRTC requesting support for Bell's application under the Broadband Fund noting the many areas of municipal concern linked to inadequate internet. In May 2020 we added our support to another area municipal submission for regional broadband from Echo Bay to Nairn Centre, including St. Joseph Island, and also extending to Elliot Lake and Espanola to Manitoulin Island. The Huron North Community Economic Alliance (HNCEA) (including St. Joseph Island) has been working with the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre seeking a broadband infrastructure and business model to lead to a long-term solution. Currently, Bell is contracting some work that should lead to improvements on St. Joseph Island in some areas, as well as a Fibre to the Home product in the more populated areas of the Island. The terrain of Hilton Township makes the burying of cables especially difficult and use of aerial cables can be held up as companies negotiate with Algoma Power for use of its infrastructure. Acquiring adequate internet service for our residents is not something we can accomplish on our own, no matter how much money we set aside in Reserves each year. The Province recently announced a \$315 million dollar initiative targeting reliable broadband and cellular service. The costs are beyond one municipality's capability but we will continue to support area-wide initiatives. The working-from-home request during the current pandemic has dramatically identified the many areas affected by underserved and unserved areas. Certainly, St. Joseph Island is not alone in needing these improvements and it would appear the Province is prepared to work with the telecom companies and contribute financially to bring forward the changes necessary. The following resolution is to formalize the verbal support extended in May 2020.

Moved by Pat Garside

2020-44

Seconded by Mike Garside

Resolved that Council for the Township of Hilton supports the letter from Huron Shores regarding the need for Regional Broadband in the area of Northern Ontario from Echo Bay to Nairn Centre including St. Joseph Island Elliot Lake and Espanola to Manitoulin Island. *Carried*

The issue of legally finalizing the transfer of the Grace United Church Cemetery to the Township of Hilton was discussed. The Township has been taking care of the grounds during the transition period. The matter of a survey will be addressed as well as the licensing requirements.

Moved by Dianne Holt 2020-45
Seconded by Pat Garside

Resolved that the Township of Hilton does agree to assume ownership of the Grace United Church Cemetery in accordance with the request of the Grace United Church Trustees and that a meeting be held as soon as possible to finalize the legal transfer of property and financial assets. *Carried*

Moved by Mike Garside 2020-46
Seconded by Dave Leask

Resolved that we do authorize the payment of Township bills for the months of March 2020 (\$112,602.27); April 2020 (\$51,309.74) and May 2020 (\$55,190.61) as per attached Vouchers 03-20; 04-20 and 05-20. *Carried*

Moved by Dianne Holt 2020-47
Seconded by Pat Garside

Resolved that we do pass By-Law No. 1271-20 being a by-law to confirm the proceedings of this meeting. *Carried*

Moved by Dave Leask 2020-48
Seconded by Mike Garside

Resolved that we do adjourn at 11:05 p.m., Council to meet again at the Hilton Township Municipal Office at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, July 8, 2020 for the next regular meeting of Council. *Carried*

Reeve, Rodney Wood

Clerk, Valerie Obarymskyj

2020 Budget Adoption

Council for the Township of Hilton is planning to adopt both the 2020 Municipal Budget and 2020 Tax Rates at its regularly scheduled meeting on Wednesday, July 8, 2020, beginning at 7:00 p.m. at 2983 Base Line, Hilton Beach, Ontario, P0R 1G0. While all Council meetings are open to the public, given the current restrictions in place limiting such a gathering of individuals to 10, residents are asked to contact the Clerk to schedule a specific time if they wish to address Council in person at the meeting. Residents remain welcome to submit any questions or concerns regarding the 2020 budget in writing by mailing to the Township Office (2983 Base Line, Hilton Beach, Ontario P0R 1G0) or dropping a letter in the Office door slot or by emailing: admin@hiltontownship.ca