



Council News & Notes

From Tuesday, April 9, 2024

Upcoming Meetings

Council Meeting
April 23

6 pm

Regular
Council Meeting

Council Meeting
May 7, 2024

9 am

Regular Council
Meeting

[View Calendar >>](#)

Mayors' Message

I would like to begin by taking this opportunity thank Kate Lessard, Chair of the Emergency Management Committee, and participating members, for ensuring that we were well prepared for an anticipated influx of traffic and visitors due to the solar eclipse. A great deal of effort and communication goes into preparedness planning for such an event.

I would also like to acknowledge the lovely letter we received from the Oil King's Equipment Manager thanking Rachelle Hardesty and her Team for going above and beyond to ensure that the Oil King's needs were met. Congratulations Rachelle. It is always nice to be recognized for a job well done.

On March 27th Councillor Valiquette and I joined CAO Raybone as we conducted Municipal Clerk interviews all day. On the 28th I attended County Council where I tabled a motion on the lack of support from the federal and provincial government. That afternoon Councillor Valiquette and I meet with a business owner to discuss a number of issues.

On March 30th I made my way to Moira Place for their annual Easter Egg Hunt. There were a whack of kids in attendance all vying for their share of the 30,000 eggs scattered throughout the property. Bedlam ensued and all to the delight of the onlookers. I challenged Councillor Valiquette, one of the event moderators, to wear his chicken hat. Thank you AON and Moira Place for being such a good corporate citizen.

On March 31st we visited the Palmateer Sugarbush for their annual pancake breakfast. The meal was amazing. We arrived bright and early and just before the onslaught that greeted us as we departed.

On April 2nd I meet with Andrew Redden from Hastings County Economic Development to discuss strategies for sharing the department's successes. On April 4th Councillor Valiquette and I continued our discussions with the business owner referred to earlier. I am happy to report that significant progress has been made. Later that day I attended both the Kiwanis Executive and Club meetings.

On April 5th I received an email from MPP Ric Bresee's office noting that Housing-Enabling Water Systems Fund application has been amended to now include required studies. We will be submitting an application for the George/James rehabilitation initiative. If approved we will then begin working with Hastings County to secure funding for a 25 unit mixed rental apartment building. We will also be using this funding opportunity to promote the subdivision infrastructure needs of our urban developers.

On April 6th Chuck and I hosted Nicole & Doug McNNeill, the owners of the Riverside Campground, for dinner. The meeting was an opportunity to discuss their vision for the campground and the community. They have some very exciting plans. On the 8th many of us made the most of that cloudy day and the solar eclipse. I was one of the lucky ones when the clouds dispersed and I actually had a wonderful view for about five minutes.

Last night Ric Bresee and I touched base re our application for the Housing Enabling Water Systems Fund. He was blown away with what we have been doing in our community and what is planned. We will be looking to include in the application, not only funding for the George/James rehabilitation project but for our three potential subdivisions as well.

I remind everyone that there is an Enbridge information session tonight re the expansion of their gas service in our area. The open house is scheduled from 5:00-800 at the Tweed Hungerford Agricultural Building.

As mentioned, I tabled a motion at County Council which basically reflects the concerns that I have been sharing with you during our Council meetings. The motion was supported unanimously. The four tenets of the motion are:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Hastings County call on the Ontario and Federal Government to implement sustainable infrastructure funding for small rural municipalities;

AND THAT small rural municipalities are not overlooked and disregarded on future applications for funding;

AND THAT both the Federal and Ontario Governments begin by acknowledging that there is an insurmountable debt facing small rural municipalities;

AND THAT both the Federal and Ontario Governments immediately commission a Working Group that includes a member of the Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus, to develop a plan on how to deal with the impending debt dilemma.

The full motion, as well as my introductory remarks to the motion, are captured in today's agenda under Correspondence – Information.

In my remarks of January 24, I made reference to Adam Greche, from the Ministry of Emergency Preparedness, and how we were advised, after six months of back and forth, that the federal government would not be providing assistance to those effected by the EF2 Tornado. He stated it was a provincial responsibility. I am not going to reiterate the conversation here. However, I did note that I wanted a formal letter from the Minister stating that we were not receiving any assistance. I also wanted a list of names and dates related to any discussion on this topic. I received a letter from Minister Sajjan on April 2nd. The letter basically blames the province and ignores all previous correspondence on this issue with those in his office. There was no chronology of events as requested. I am not at all surprised. We are but a flea on a camel's back... a minor irritant. I will write one more letter noting our displeasure and disgust at the lack of concern for those in our small rural community who were devastatingly impacted by that EF2 Tornado.

I know I am beginning to sound like "Donny Downer" but statements like Premier Ford's rant just get me going:

Well that was enlightening.

1. "Start giving people relief like we have." Like I said to Parliamentary Assistant Byers: Every time you cut taxes I got to raise mine." For example, the historic download of OPP policing costs to rural communities, in the case of the Municipality of Tweed, a \$1.05 million savings for the province but a huge expense for us. That amounts to 20% of your tax revenues.

2. Someone should tell Premier Ford that when it comes to taxing "overtime hours" his little hands are in your pocket.

3. Property taxes...like we take great pleasure in raising taxes. Let's not forget the Ontario government made significant cuts to our OCIF funding (Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund). We lost \$50K which represents a 1% tax increase. All our neighbours had their OCIF cut. Well you have to find the money somewhere to help Toronto with their \$1.5 billion dollar deficit.

And then there is the cancellation of the license plate sticker fee. An annual loss of over \$1 billion dollars that could have been used for infrastructure funding. So yes...Premier Ford can give everyone a big tax break but he will do it on the backs of small rural communities.

Then I reflect on Premier Ford's comment: "Start giving people relief like we have rather than always trying to gouge the people". It was certainly an eye opener for me when it was recently reported that Premier Ford's inner office went from 20 employees and \$2.9 million when he became Premier, to 48 employees and \$6.9 million representing a 136% increase. Premier Ford is breaking all kinds of records...the size and cost of the government have reached new highs under his watch. Yet he wants me, this Council, small rural Ontario to cut costs during an explosive inflationary cycle while he channels your hard earned dollars to swing ridings along with cuts he has made to your Council's funding. And yes the \$6.9 million that it costs us taxpayers to run his office is only \$1.4 million more than the \$5.5 million in taxes we bring in to run your entire municipality. Now if we just step back and digest the numbers where do you think you are getting the best bang for your buck!

Award RFP - Needs Studies

Council accepted the lowest bid from The Greer Galloway Group Inc, in the amount of \$28,845.00 for the Roads, Water & Wastewater Studies.

Stoco Yard Oil Tank Removal

Council approved the quotation supplied from Specialized Onsite Services Inc. in the amount of \$12,950.00.

Amend User Fees By-law

Council authorized staff to bring forward an amendment to By-law 2024-05 - User Fees, to include Ice Surface Advertising at the Arena at a rate of \$600.00 plus HST.

Assessment Roll Access & Reproduction Policy

Council authorized staff to bring forward a By-law to adopt the draft policy at the next Regular Council Meeting.

Council Meeting Dates Changes

Council changed the date of the Regular Council Meeting scheduled for Tuesday May 28, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. to Wednesday May 29, 2024 at 6:00 p.m;
Council changed the date of Regular Council Meeting scheduled for Tuesday May 14, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. to Tuesday May 7, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.

"Leaders at every level of government have to keep costs down for the hardworking people of Ontario. What don't you politicians get? We're in a very tough situation... prices are going up. Start giving people relief like we have rather than always trying to gouge the people. You know you work overtime...you know whose there in your pockets, the government has their hands in your pockets. Property taxes...whose there? Municipal governments gouging you for more money! Why don't you run the government efficiently and stop taxing the death out of people in Ontario. What is it with governments...no matter what level."