

County Council Summary

February 28, 2024

Below you will find highlights of the County of Renfrew County Council meeting from January 31, 2024

Please note that this summary does not constitute the official record of the meeting and approved minutes should be consulted for that purpose.

The full [County Council package](#) can be found on our website.

[February meeting](#) YouTube link.

Warden's Address

Key highlights

- Warden Emon noted that Andrea Patrick has accepted the position of Director of Community Services , after holding the position of Manager of Ontario Works and performing in the acting position since Laura LePine's departure in January.
- On February 22, the Warden welcomed the four new international Personal Support Worker recruits at Bonnechere Manor in Renfrew. Fleury Dushime of Burundi, Achile Awashare and Linda Samule-Uche of Nigeria, and Mavis Kissi Ghana received a warm welcome from Bonnechere Manor staff as they began orientation at the long-term care home. See our [media release](#) here.
- He participated in a fireside chat at the Ottawa Valley Business Summit held by the Upper Ottawa Valley Chamber of Commerce. Topics discussed included an overview of County Council and how it relates to local municipalities and the Province; an update on the Renfrew County Virtual Triage and Assessment Centre, and the continuance of its success and ongoing development; and the County's role in the local economy, understanding the labour shortages, how to attract new residents to the area, and continuing to make Renfrew County an attractive and welcoming community, as well as what partnerships can be gained through the private sector and not-for-profit agencies.
- Warden Emon thanked Deputy Warden Dan Lynch and the Community Services Department for attending the Coldest Night of the Year walk, hosted by The Grind Pembroke. County Council and staff also supported fundraising initiatives organized by the Community Services Department over the past few weeks.
- The Warden continues to Chair the Warming Centre meetings and noted a report on the progress will be forthcoming.
- He participated on a United Way of Eastern Ontario panel on rural Ontario economic development and opportunities. He spoke about municipal sustainability challenges and the results of many years of provincial downloading.
- He attended the Short-Term Accommodations meeting arranged by the Township of Laurentian Valley with politicians and staff, to discuss the issues and concerns with short-term rentals. It was a fulsome discussion and a report will be coming in the future.

- The Warden noted the Ottawa Valley Tourist Association has launched the 2024 Tourism Awards which recognize and honour tourism champions across the Ottawa Valley. The Ottawa Valley Tourism Awards are presented annually by the OVTA to individuals, businesses, and events that recognize the importance of working together for the growth of the local tourism industry, as well as offering exceptional visitor experiences. The nomination deadline is March 25, 2024. For more information visit <https://www.ottawavalley.travel/industry/>
- Warden Emon expressed sincere condolences to the family, friends, and Arnprior community on the passing of Glenn Arthur, who passed away on February 16, 2024. Mr. Arthur spent 35 years leading Arnprior’s recreation department. He continued volunteering after his retirement and received Arnprior’s Volunteer of the Year in 2023. The Warden noted Mr. Arthur was a key player in the origins of planning the 2023 Ontario Winter Games and he stepped in at the last moment to assist with hosting an event in Arnprior.

During the month of February 2024, Warden Peter Emon attended 26 meetings on County business.

- On February 2, CAO Kelley and the Warden met with local publishers from the Valley Gazette, North Renfrew Times and the Eganville Leader to listen to their concerns regarding advertising and publishing. They spoke of the increased costs associated with running the local newspapers and competing with online newspaper versions.
- On behalf of the Eastern Ontario Warden’s Caucus, he was at Queen’s Park to meet with the Director of Policy within the Premier’s Office, with Minister Lisa Thompson, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs; and Minister Kinga Surma, Minister of Infrastructure, to discuss the EOWC ‘7 in 7’ Regional Housing Plan.
- He and Pembroke Mayor Ron Gervais met with staff at Algonquin College, Pembroke Waterfront Campus, to discuss the Province’s announcement regarding capping enrollment of international students and what the impact would be on the College and the community.
- On February 26 Warden Emon, along with MPP John Yakabuski, and County staff attended a post-ROMA Conference meeting with the Ministry of Infrastructure Parliamentary Assistant Amarjat Sandhu to further discuss the implementation of a consistent Provincially mandated Pavement Condition Index (PCI) process and the expansion of Highway 417 including alternative solutions.

Delegations

- Dr. Jason Morgenstern, Medical Officer of Health with the Renfrew County and District Health Unit appeared to address the possible merger between health units.
- Ian Duff, President of McSweeney and Associates, presented the County of Renfrew’s new three-year Economic Development Strategic Plan. The planning process was conducted in partnership with the Renfrew County Community Futures Development Corporation (RCCFDC) and resulted in a separate plan for each organization. Later in the meeting, County Council adopted the 2024-2026 [Economic Development Strategic Plan](#) as presented. It begins on page 93 of the council package.

Finance & Administration Committee

Presented by: Jennifer Murphy, Chair

- The final County of Renfrew consolidated budget, including all items approved at the Budget Workshop held on January 24 and 25, 2024, is available in Adobe and Excel versions on the County of Renfrew website at the following link: [Budget and Finance Reports - County of Renfrew](#).
- County Council adopted the revised By-law for the Remuneration of Members of the Council of the County of Renfrew effective January 1, 2024. Following the adoption of a resolution at a Special County Council Meeting on March 23, 2022, the Council base remuneration of \$16,428 was changed to \$18,001 on January 1, 2024, an annual phase in to the base salary of \$1,573 and as approved at the January 25, 2024 Budget Workshop, a 4.79% Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) increase was also approved, adjusting the Council base remuneration to \$18,863 effective January 1, 2024. The current per diem rate of \$243 per ad hoc committee meeting will be maintained.
- County Council updated several key appointments, including Craig Kelley as Deputy-Clerk, Gwen Dombroski as Clerk, and Daniel Burke as Treasurer for the County of Renfrew.
- County Council approved several changes to the Non-Union Staff Salary Grid within Employment By-law #1 including the removal, reclassification, creation and renaming of several positions, many as a result of the business cases presented as part of the 2024 Budget Workshop.
- County Council supported the resolution from Halton Region – a proposal that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Board of Directors consider a biennial election process.

Community Services Committee

Presented by: Anne Giardini, Chair

- The new *mesa* Team, the new name for the Health and Housing Crisis Engagement Team (formerly referred to as the 'Hub' model), marks a pivotal initiative within the County of Renfrew to address the critical intersection of health and homelessness. This collaborative initiative will be led by the Paramedic Service, Community Services, and Development and Property departments. Recognizing the urgent need for a unified and multi-sectoral approach, *mesa* establishes an evidence-to-action model that not only acknowledges the complex challenges at the nexus of health and homelessness but also delineates a roadmap for coordinated, integrated solutions. This report underscores the commitment of the County of Renfrew's administration, community services, development and property, and emergency services departments to work synergistically in executing a transformative strategy that goes beyond individual silos and leverages the collective expertise and resources of the community.
- County Council unanimously passed a resolution requesting the Ministry of Education increase the licensed child-care space allocation for the County of Renfrew through the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child-Care (CWELCC) system. See the full [child-care resolution](#) on our website.
- The Affordable Homeownership Program can provide up to \$25,000 towards the purchase of a new home for qualified households. Applications are currently open and are available on the County of Renfrew website or can be requested by contacting a Community Services office. In

2023, five applications (two each in the City of Pembroke and Town of Renfrew and one in the Town of Deep River) were approved for a total of \$113,400.

- The Ontario Renovates Program can provide up to \$10,000 for essential household repairs or accessibility upgrades. The program is currently closed; however, it will open again for applications in the spring of 2024. In 2023, \$92,850 was paid out to 14 projects (City of Pembroke and Townships of Whitewater Region, Horton, North Algona Wilberforce, Madawaska Valley, Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglan and Town of Petawawa).

Development & Property Committee

Presented by: James Brose, Chair

- County Council directed staff to create and issue an Expression of Interest (EOI) to develop affordable housing on County-owned lands. The purpose of this EOI process is to develop a pilot project for alternative housing options. Staff will provide recommendations to Council at a future meeting. Local municipalities that wish to be involved are encouraged to contact [Craig Kelley](#) or [Jason Davis](#).
- The Ottawa Valley Tourist Association's (OVTA) annual tourism conference and AGM is scheduled for April 16, 2024, during National Tourism Week. This full day event includes speakers and presentations about relevant tourism matters, the annual general meeting, and the presentation of the Ottawa Valley Tourism Awards.
- Enterprise Renfrew County (ERC) has developed a sponsorship package that offers community partners, municipalities, and stakeholders the opportunity to formally support entrepreneurs accessing programs, training, and events regionally. The package and various sponsorship opportunities are available on the [Enterprise Renfrew County website](#).
- Enterprise Renfrew County is now actively recruiting for the 2024 edition of the Summer Company and the spring intake session of the Starter Company Plus programs. The Summer Company program, which is open to students aged 15-29 who plan to return to school in the fall, has five seats available. More information, including how to apply before the May 15, 2024 deadline is available at <https://www.enterpriserenfrewcounty.com/summer-company>.
- Starter Company Plus is a fast-tracked program that provides new or existing adult entrepreneurs, who have been in operation for less than five years, with training and support in establishing their business. Virtual information sessions for the spring intake of the Starter Company Plus program are scheduled for April 2 and 4, 2024, with an application deadline of April 12, 2024 at 12:00 p.m. More information about the Starter Company Plus program, including how to register for an information session is available at <https://www.enterpriserenfrewcounty.com/starter-company-plus>.
- A decision has been reached and posted by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) on how the Endangered Species Act, 2007 protections apply to black ash and its habitat. As of January 26, 2024, healthy black ash over 8cm at 1.37m diameter at breast height (DBH) are protected under the Endangered Species Act, 2007 (ESA) in the Town of Arnprior, and the Townships of Admaston/Bromley, Greater Madawaska, Horton, and McNab/Braeside. Should any black ash in these areas greater than 8cm DBH require removal, it needs to be assessed by a "qualified professional". If the tree is deemed "unhealthy", a report can be submitted and it can be removed. If the tree is deemed "healthy", it needs to be protected by a 30m radius reserve. No decision has been made on the proposal for a new conditional

exemption for forestry operations on private and municipal lands. Since 2021, comments have been submitted by County staff at all stages of consultation on this process.

- Draft approval was issued for the Morison Townhouses development in Deep River for 12 units. The developer will have up to three years to clear the conditions and attain final approval.
- The first subdivision application for 2024 was received and deemed complete. The subdivision is being called “River Lane Estates” and is located in the Township of Greater Madawaska on the south side of the Madawaska River and adjacent to the Township of McNab/Braeside. The subdivision proposes to create 26 waterfront lots. Information about the application can be found on the County of Renfrew [Zencity](#) engagement platform for public review.
- County Council directed the Warden and Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk to execute a Memorandum of Understanding with the Town of Renfrew regarding the potential development(s) at Renfrew County Place and Bonnechere Manor, both in Renfrew, Ontario.
- County Council adopted a By-law to enter into a lease agreement for a two-year period commencing March 1, 2024 with Paradise Childrens Programs Inc. for space at Renfrew County Place, 450 O’Brien Street, Renfrew, Ontario.
- County Council adopted a By-law to approve Official Plan Amendment No. 43 in the Township of McNab/Braeside to change the designation of the lands from Agriculture to Rural. The application to amend the County of Renfrew Official Plan proposes to re-designate a vacant 9.0-hectare waterfront property along the Madawaska River (Lake Madawaska above the Arnprior Generating Station) from Agriculture to Rural. The property was previously severed from a larger farm and includes direct access to Moreau Road.

Health Committee

Presented by: Michael Donohue, Chair

- The County of Renfrew has received confirmation from the Honourable Caroline Mulroney, President of the Treasury Board, Minister Responsible for Emergency Management, that it was successful in its grant application for \$49,600. The Emergency Services Department applied for the Ontario Community Emergency Preparedness Grant to help communities and organizations purchase critical supplies, equipment and deliver training and services to improve local emergency preparedness and response. The goal of the grant is to purchase a gravity-feed sandbag processing machine, supplies and equipment to be shared among all local municipalities and First Nations. The balance of the application focuses on services such as coordination of staff operators / volunteers from the County of Renfrew and participating local municipalities and partners for the delivery of shared public education, training, planning and coordination for flood mitigation, readiness, response, and recovery efforts across the County of Renfrew and its 17 member municipalities and the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation. A 2024 goal is to adopt a local response model of coordinating local staff and local volunteers i.e., one staff and up to six volunteers from each of the 20 organizations coming together to learn the essentials of basic emergency management, command, and control models, how to lead flood mitigation efforts locally and how to support one another through inter-operable teams across Renfrew County.
- The first four of the anticipated twenty international personal support workers as approved by Council in May of 2023, commenced employment with Bonnechere Manor on February 22, 2024. This endeavour is intended to bolster permanent staffing stability.

- County Council approved the sale of four County of Renfrew decommissioned 2018 vehicles to St. John's Ambulance (1), Algonquin College (1), and St. Lawrence College (2) at a purchase price of \$5,000.00 per vehicle.
- County Council adopted a By-law authorizing the Warden and Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk to sign a lease agreement with ZOLL Canada for the ZOLL ONE Program to acquire and operationalize thirty-five (35) X-series monitor/defibrillator units to replace the existing fleet of monitor/defibrillators at an annual cost of \$344,241.30. The cardiac monitor/defibrillator is a vital piece of equipment that allows paramedics to perform vital signs, cardiac monitoring and provide lifesaving interventions of cardioversion or defibrillation. Most of the existing fleet of 33 Defibrillators were purchased by the County in 2012 and are now two years beyond the recommended lifecycle.

Operations Committee

Presented by: **Dave Bennett, Vice-Chair**

- County of Renfrew By-law 11-12 is a By-law to Designate a Reduced Load Period on County Roads and pertains to spring load restrictions. A notice has been issued that Spring Load Restrictions on some County of Renfrew roads come into effect Monday, March 4 at 12:01 a.m. and continue until Friday, May 31, unless notified. The list of County Roads can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/SpringLoadRestrictions>.
- County Council directed staff to commence the process required for closure and removal of County Structure B232 (Cochrane Creek Bridge), located on Cement Bridge Road, Township of North Algona Wilberforce. Cochrane Creek Bridge is located on a seasonally maintained road, supports less than 10 vehicles per day during operational months, and would only incur an additional 7.6km of travel in the rare instance a traveller is attempting to reach the other side of the bridge from Burchat Road.
- County Council approved amendments to the 2024 Capital budget as follows:
 - increase the budget for County Road 37 (Murphy Road) by \$922,365 from \$1,537,635 to \$2,460,000;
 - decrease the budget for County Structure B103 (O'Grady Bridge) by \$198,500 from \$238,500 to \$40,000;
 - decrease the budget for County Structure B156 (Burnt Bridge) by \$427,000 from \$477,000 to \$50,000; and,
 - decrease the budget for County Structure B232 (Cochrane Creek Bridge) by \$350,000 from \$450,000 to \$100,000.
- County Council adopted a By-law approving the alterations to County Roads and Structures. This is a By-law passed annually which allows for the implementation of detours, road closures and traffic accommodations during work on County Roads. For several of our 2024 capital projects, the work may include temporary or permanent changes, alterations or restrictions to the use of the highway, or to private entrances.
- County Council approved Corporate Policy PW-22, Naming Bridges and Culverts, for all County of Renfrew owned Bridges and Culverts. A draft Policy PW-22, Naming Bridges and Culverts as presented in November 2023 after receiving no further comments from the consultation process.

- County Council approved several contracts as submitted:
 - For the rehabilitation of County Structure B102 (Brennans Creek Bridge), Township of Killaloe, Hagarty and Richards, by KB Civil Constructors Inc., North York, Ontario, in the amount of \$344,296.67, plus applicable taxes.
 - For the relining of various culverts, by Aqua Tech Solutions Inc., Schomberg, Ontario, in the amount of \$207,725, plus applicable taxes.
 - For the rehabilitation of County Road 64 (Opeongo Road), from Wieland Shore Road to Constant Lake Road, a distance of 8.20 km, Township of Bonnechere Valley, by Greenwood Paving (Pembroke) Ltd., Pembroke, Ontario, in the amount of \$1,718,606.60, plus applicable taxes.

Additional Information

Craig Kelley, Chief Administrative Officer

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