

County Council Summary

March 29, 2023

Below you will find highlights of the County of Renfrew County Council meeting from March 29, 2023.

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 agenda](#) can be found here.

March 29 meeting [YouTube](#) link

Warden's Address

Key highlights

During the month of March, Warden Peter Emon attended 25 meetings on County business.

- On March 24, the Warden, along with other members of County Council and staff, attended the announcement for permanent funding for the Renfrew County Virtual Triage and Assessment Centre. MPP John Yakabuski, announced an investment of \$3.2 million in 2023-24 from the provincial government, which is very good news for rural municipalities as it has proven to be an innovative health-care delivery model that will continue to address medical needs of area residents without a family physician. See our media release on the [RC VTAC funding announcement](#).
- On March 6, he attended the Francophone Networking Breakfast event held at Le Centre culturel francophone de Pembroke. Marie-Josée Lévesque, founder of Bumpy Roads Studio Inc. was presented the [Francophone Entrepreneur Award](#) from Enterprise Renfrew County in recognition of her community contributions, business coaching and dedication to creative entrepreneurship.
- On March 6 and 13, he attended interviews for an AMO Board of Directors Rural Caucus vacancy.
- On March 9 and 10, he attended the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus 2023-2024 Strategic Priority Setting meeting. This was an important and unique session in comparison to other EOWC meetings as it set the priorities which provide direction to CAOs and staff for the upcoming 12 months. See the EOWC media release on [2023 priorities](#).
- On March 17, he attended a ROMA Board of Directors meeting. Policy updates were brought forward on drainage issues, update on the expansion of presumptive coverage for cancers for firefighters and new excess soil regulation.
- On March 20, he attended an SVN Affordable Housing webinar. All levels of government are working towards creating a platform to encourage the development of affordable housing.
- On March 22, he made a presentation on the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus '7 in 7' Regional Housing Plan to the County of Haliburton.
- On March 23, he attended the Ministry of Finance Pre-Budget Consultations 2023.

- On March 23, he also attended an AMO Committee of the Whole meeting and on March 24 attended an AMO Board of Directors meeting. The Membership Centre launched a recruitment process for cohorts of the AMO Youth Fellowship Program, and three successful Fellows are being mentored. Warden Emon is currently mentoring Morgan Carl from the City of Peterborough who is currently pursuing a Master of Public Policy and Administration degree from Carleton University. With a background in political economy, anti-poverty advocacy and social services, Morgan’s research is focused on municipal policy solutions for housing and homelessness issues.
- On March 24, he attended and brought greetings to the County Child Care Professional Development Day (PlayLearnThink) held in Pembroke.
- On March 28, he attended a meeting with the Algonquins of Greater Golden Lake to discuss shared projects and common interests.

Delegations

- JoAnne Brooks, Coordinator for End Violence Against Women - Renfrew County (EVA) and Lisa Oegema, Anti-Human Trafficking Program Manager, Victim Services of Renfrew County, appeared before council to highlight the work of the two groups to eliminate violence against women in Renfrew County and to ask council to act and endorse recommendation #1 from the jury at the coroner’s inquest into the murders of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk and Nathalie Warmerdam. EVA also asked Renfrew County to take action on Recommendations 8, 10, 19, 21, 23, 49 and 52 which will be discussed at a future meeting of the Community Services Committee.
- Chris VanDooren, Senior Program Manager, Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) provided an overview of Asset Management. A free interactive workshop on current constraints, potential opportunities, and upcoming challenges in sustainable service delivery in relation to asset management is planned for April 27 in Bonnechere Valley Township and is open to all interested municipal leaders and staff.
- Jason St. Pierre, Chief Executive Officer and Koren Lam, Technical Analyst, Eastern Ontario Regional Network provided an update on the Cell Gap Project. The goals are to achieve 99% coverage in the eastern Ontario region where people live, work and travel on major roadways so that they can make and receive cell phone calls; achieve 95% coverage with standard definition service level which can support email, web browsing and social media services and 85% coverage with high-definition service level which can support video conferencing, movie streaming and other more data intensive applications. Confidential updates were also provided to Council on the ongoing cell and fiber builds across the County.

Announcements

- The County of Renfrew has passed a resolution declaring intimate partner violence and violence against women an epidemic following the jury recommendations resulting from the inquest into the murders of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk and Nathalie Warmerdam. See our [media release](#), which includes the full resolution of council.
- County Council passed a resolution pledging its support for the Eastern Ontario Wardens’ Caucus ‘7 in 7’ Regional Housing Plan. Under the plan, the EOWC is committed to increase its

share of rental supply by 7,000 units across eastern Ontario within seven years. Council's resolution urges all orders of government, private, and non-profit partners to fill the housing gap by collaborating, innovating and investing in filling the rural housing gap.

- County Council passed a resolution endorsing Councillor Glenn Doncaster as he stands for election on Federation of Canadian Municipalities' (FCM) Board of Directors and appointments to Standing Committees for the period starting in May 2023 and ending at the AGM in 2025. FCM's virtual Annual Conference and Trade Show will be held May 25 to 28, 2023.

Finance & Administration Committee

Presented by: Jennifer Murphy, Chair

- In October 2022, under the direction of the CAO, the Human Resources division launched an engagement survey to capture the feedback of employees on their current County of Renfrew working experience, with a focus on understanding the organization's demographical changes, trends, opinions, strengths, and opportunities. Several themes came from the survey and are now being discussed by the Senior Leadership Team with suggested action items that are being further evaluated before bringing in front of Committee for consideration. These themes include Work/Life Balance & Wellness; Manager Relationship; Talent Attraction/Retention; Career & Development Plans; Organizational Awareness & Connectedness and County Culture & Pride.
- The final County of Renfrew 2023 Consolidated Budget, including all items approved at the Budget Workshop held on February 22 and 23, 2023, was presented. This revised budget reversed \$699,664 in proposed service level reductions and also provides funding for \$811,796 in service enhancements for a total expense increase of \$1,511,460. The increase in expenses was not financed through the County levy, rather, County Council approved a reduction in the transfer to our Tangible Capital Asset Renewal Reserve. County Council's decision to fund \$1.5 million in operating expenses by reducing capital reserve contributions in 2023 will reduce the County levy increase from 5.5% to 2.5%. However, staff advised County Council that the decision to reduce funding into the capital reserves by \$1.5 million in 2023 has a 10-year ripple effect on the County's Long-Term Financial Plan.
- County Council passed a resolution directing the Warden to send a letter to the Honourable Michael Kerzner, Solicitor General, seeking clarification on the substantive decrease in the number of fines being dispensed in the County of Renfrew over the last three years.
- County Council approved the changes to Employment By-law #1 effective January 1, 2023 to Article 4 - Rates of Pay: A 2.0 % wage increase for all non-union staff (except students) as outlined in Schedule "A".
- County Council adopted the revised By-law for the Remuneration of Members of the Council of the County of Renfrew effective January 1, 2023. Following a Special County Council meeting on March 23, 2022, County Council accepted the recommendations of the County of Renfrew, Elected Officials Market Review Final Report. Therefore, the Council base remuneration of \$14,533 was changed to \$16,106 on January 1, 2023, an annual phase-in to the base salary of \$1,573 and as approved at the February 22, 2023 Budget Workshop, a 2.0 % Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) increase was also approved, adjusting the Council base remuneration to \$16,428 effective January 1, 2023. The current per diem rate of \$243 per ad hoc committee meeting will be maintained.

- County Council d approved the revised Corporate Policies C-02 – Pension Plans and G-07 – Employee and Family Assistance Program.

Community Services Committee

The March committee meeting was cancelled.

Development & Property Committee

Presented by: James Brose, Chair

- The new Economic Development website www.InvestRenfrewCounty.ca has launched. The website is a marketing tool that provides information for potential investors, developers and entrepreneurs interested in doing business in the County of Renfrew. The Ottawa Valley Tourist Association (OVTA) launched their new consumer and industry-facing website www.OttawaValley.travel in late January. The new site is the OVTA's primary marketing tool and highlights the vast array of tourism experiences and communities, including places to stay, play and dine.
- Nominations are now open for the Ottawa Valley Tourism Awards. The annual awards are an opportunity to celebrate industry achievements, strive for future excellence and honour the memory of those before us. Three new categories have been added bringing the total to six awards, including:
 - Tourism Champion (individual)
 - Business/Organization of the Year
 - Event of the Year
 - Tourism Marketing (new)
 - Sustainability Champion (new)
 - New Tourism Product (new)

More information, including award criteria, eligibility and online nomination forms can be found at www.OttawaValley.travel/industry. Nominations will be accepted until Monday, April 3, 2023. Municipalities are encouraged to nominate individuals and businesses from their communities. The Ottawa Valley Tourism Awards will be presented during the OVTA's Tourism Conference and Annual General Meeting (AGM) being held on April 25, 2023 at Maplehaus in Hardwood Lake near Palmer Rapids.

- The Starter Company Plus program is now open and accepting applications. Eligible businesses include new start-ups and existing businesses registered for less than five years. Participants receive fast-track training in writing a business plan and developing two years of cash flow projections, mentoring, and the opportunity to pitch for up to a \$4,000 grant. Enterprise Renfrew County (ERC) Small Business Advisor, Heather Inwood-Montrose, is currently conducting outreach and virtual information sessions are scheduled for April 11, from 10-11 a.m., and April 13, from 1-2 p.m. Participants must attend one information session to obtain an application form. Participants interested in registering for an information session can do so at <https://ovta.typeform.com/to/hRDXNeRE>. More information is available at <https://www.enterpriserenfrewcounty.com/programs/> or by emailing ercinfo@countyofrenfrew.on.ca.

- As noted in the Forest Harvest Update, this winter season has been a busy one for harvest operations within the County of Renfrew. Harvest and haul at Brudenell Tract are now complete and final information for invoicing is pending. Harvesting is underway at Pershick Tract. Beachburg Tract operations are also complete, without any complaints or major issues with recreationalists. Staff monitored the operations frequently, and provided updates on the Renfrew County Forest Facebook page, to recreational groups, and maps on site.
- The Planning Division has had two vacant positions for a period of several weeks, which has impacted the timelines for processing applications. While the County is in the process of filling these positions, and on-boarding future new staff (a process that can take many months), it is anticipated that timelines and delays may increase.

Staff is prioritizing:

- Plan of subdivision applications,
- Applications that would generate employment uses (i.e. commercial/industrial), and
- Local approvals (for municipalities that have an agreement for planning services).

To achieve the timelines associated with the priority files, there may be delays to general inquiry responses, consent applications, special projects (i.e. zoning by-law updates), and requests for support from municipalities that do not have an agreement for planning services.

- County Council passed a resolution to send a letter under the Warden's signature expressing the County of Renfrew's support for the creation of the South Eastern Ontario Production Accelerator Fund, a separate film stream fund under the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade Eastern Ontario Development Fund (EODF). The South Eastern Ontario Production Accelerator Fund is an initiative led by a volunteer industry committee comprised of independent film and television producers, film commission offices and regional marketing boards who are proposing the creation of a \$25 million fund dedicated to supporting Eastern Ontario's film and television industry. The proposal, modelled after the successful film stream fund run out of the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation, requests that the fund be established through the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade's Eastern Ontario Development Fund (EODF). Warden Emon attended a reception in Toronto on February 28 which brought together film and television industry representatives, MPPs and cabinet staff in advance of pre-budget announcements. A copy of the full proposal is available here: <https://www.seopaf.ca/learn-more>.
- County Council passed a by-law to delegate authority for the granting of consents to the Land Division Committee and appointed officers. The public no longer has the ability to appeal the decision of the County with respect to consent applications. The removal of public concerns/objections will reduce application processing times, reduce County costs (staff and Committee), and reduce costs to the applicant from having to attend a Committee Hearing.
- County Council approved the request for proposal for the construction of an affordable multi-residential housing project on Lea Street in the City of Pembroke as submitted by Brawn Construction Limited, Ottawa, Ontario and the amendment of the agreement with +VG Architects, Ottawa, Ontario to include Contract Administration and Construction Supervision services.

Health Committee

Presented by: Michael Donohue, Chair

- County Council authorized the Warden, Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk and the Director of Long-Term Care to sign the Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) for Bonnechere Manor and Miramichi Lodge and submit to Health Quality Ontario before the March 31, 2023 deadline. A QIP is a formal, documented set of commitments that a health care organization makes to its residents, staff and community to improve quality through focused targets and actions.
- County Council approved the revisions to the County of Renfrew Paramedic Service Deployment Plan – Service Delivery Statement and that the changes be incorporated into the Service Deployment. The goal of the Service Delivery Statement is to ensure an efficient paramedic response that is capable of both predicting and responding to the evolving needs of the community.

Operations Committee

Presented by: Glenn Doncaster, Chair

- All local municipalities were invited to participate in planned tenders for the County of Renfrew Public Works and Engineering Department in January with the following municipalities requesting participation: Town of Arnprior and the Townships of Bonnechere Valley, Greater Madawaska, Horton, Laurentian Valley, Madawaska Valley and McNab/Braeside. These municipalities are selectively participating in pavement marking, traffic signs, decals and blanks, steel signposts, street sweeping, and maintenance hole and catch basin cleaning.
- The County of Renfrew has budgeted for the rehabilitation of County Structure B044 (Douglas Bridge) in 2023. Douglas Bridge is located on County Road 5 (Stone Road), 0.2 km south of Highway 60, in the Township of Admaston/Bromley. Originally the most cost-effective means of traffic management during construction was a full closure of the bridge with a 15.7km detour. Upon consultation with the Township of Admaston/Bromley Public Works staff, it was identified that this should be reconsidered, as a detour would have a significant impact on the response time of their Fire Department to any fires south of the bridge. County staff worked with the design consultant to review the options for traffic management and recommended staged construction, close and detour Hyndford Road.
- County Council passed a resolution to consider the assumption of Campbell Drive from Osborne Street to Highway 17 under the Road Rationalization Policy in effect at the time of the request. Staff will bring a report to council with a recommendation on cost sharing.
- County Council adopted a by-law to approve an amended Policy PW-04 Regulating Advertising Signs and Devices within the County Road Allowance. The previous County Signage Policy was approved in November 2001 and had not been updated since. The Policy was drafted with the intention of being very restrictive, in essence not allowing any private advertising signage to be placed within a County Road allowance. Periodically, staff has removed signage that has been placed within the road allowance, particularly in cases where it may create a safety hazard. The enforcement of a zero-tolerance approach to private advertising within County Road allowances has been time intensive and the subject of much displeasure among Renfrew County businesses.

Since the implementation of the previous Sign Policy, County Road allowances have become wider, as staff continues to purchase property for road widening to meet the County's standard of 26-metre road allowance widths. Staff feels allowing signage within the County Road allowance under clear guidelines would be a benefit to County businesses and the Public Works and Engineering Department. A fee structure will be developed which would provide a source of revenue to the County.

- County Council approved Policy PW-19 Road Rationalization, outlining the criteria for lower-tier municipal roads being integrated into the County of Renfrew Road system. The policy has been developed based on the Ontario Good Roads Association, February 1998 Road Rationalization Guidelines with specific requirements to be met and are included in the Terms of Reference.
 - Consider road condition and compensation throughout the discussion of road transfers. A municipality may upgrade the roadway or provide the estimated amount of money for rehabilitation to the County of Renfrew.
 - Pavement must meet or exceed the current County of Renfrew's Council adopted road system average Pavement Condition Index (PCI) using the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario's SP-024 to determine the deterioration and ride condition to calculate the PCI.
 - Road Structure must meet or exceed the current County of Renfrew standard specification as outlined in Policy PW-01 Roadway Classification and Design. The County of Renfrew may request geotechnical testing from the municipality to confirm roadway structure.
 - Involve the local municipalities in the decision-making process by encouraging feedback and comments.
- County Council approved the County of Renfrew portion of the Request for Proposal PWC-2022-25 as submitted by McIntosh Perry Consulting Engineering Limited, Carp, Ontario for Professional Services for a Transportation Master Plan (TMP) in the amount of \$151,787 plus HST. The TMP will provide a 'roadmap' for transportation planning needs over a ten-year period, from 2025 to 2034 in order to optimize the performance of existing infrastructure, identify areas where capacity is anticipated to be exceeded, and identify a sustainable approach to accommodating further development moving forward. In addition to the County of Renfrew, the TMP will also include the Town of Arnprior and the Townships of Bonnechere Valley, Horton, Laurentian Valley, Madawaska Valley, and Whitewater Region.
- County Council passed a By-law to execute a Road Access Agreement along County Road 64 (Opeongo Road), in the Township of Bonnechere Valley with the applicants. The creation of the new lot has been granted on the condition that the applicant enters into an agreement with the County regarding access to County Road 64 due to restrictions in entrance spacing and sight line requirements. The mutual access will serve as the access point for both the severed lot and the retained lands.

Additional Information

Craig Kelley, Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk

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