

County Council Summary

November 29, 2023

Below you will find highlights of the County of Renfrew County Council meeting from November 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 County Council package](#) can be found on our website.

[November meeting](#) YouTube link.

Warden's Address

Key highlights

- The Warden and staff are to meeting weekly with the Pembroke and Area Warming Centre Ad Hoc Committee about the warming centre being established in Pembroke on the site of the Pembroke Farmers' Market. The centre, being run by The Grind and by volunteers, is expected to open early in December.
- The Warden congratulated Laura LePine, Director of Community Services, on receiving the 2023 Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) Patti Moore Human Services Integration Award. The award recognizes an OMSSA member and a social services leader who has a proven and respected track record and has displayed extraordinary leadership and has made an exceptional contribution to human services integration.
- Warden Emon expressed his condolences to the Briscoe Family and the Township of Admaston/Bromley work family on the passing of Beverly Briscoe, who passed away on November 9, 2023. Bev was the Clerk Treasurer at Admaston/Bromley Township for 37 years.
- He also expressed his sincere condolences to the Pecoskie family and the community of the Township of Killaloe, Hagarty, Richards on the passing of former Councillor Stanley Pecoskie. Stanley was a huge supporter of local events and relished his role as a municipal councillor.
- The Warden shared that the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation recently declared a State of Emergency due to the opioid crisis, noting that the County of Renfrew shares concerns surrounding this issue and is committed to working with all levels of government to address that fact that society is facing a serious public health, social and safety issue due to the opioid crisis.
- On December 6, 2023 at 12 noon, EVA – Renfrew County is hosting a vigil at the Women's Monument at 2 Harry Street in Petawawa. This vigil will honour the 14 women who were killed in Montreal in 1989, honour the women killed in Renfrew County and will remember the missing and murdered Indigenous women. Everyone is invited to attend this event. Earlier this year, the County of Renfrew, along with many local municipalities have declared Intimate Partner Violence an epidemic. This vigil commemorates those who we have lost to Intimate Partner Violence and reminds us that the work to end Intimate Partner Violence is still ongoing.

- The Warden noted EVA – Renfrew County is also one of this year’s recipients of United Way East Ontario’s Community Builder of the Year Award, for its work that has had a unique and lasting impact on our community, that exemplifies compassion for others, and that builds stronger, healthier communities for everyone.
- Members of County Council and staff wore white ribbons at the meeting to signify the White Ribbon Pledge which is an international campaign aimed at raising awareness about and ending violence against women.

During the month of November, Warden Peter Emon attended 12 meetings on County business.

- He presented the Eastern Ontario Wardens’ Caucus Regional Housing Plan at the ROMA Board Meeting held on Friday, November 10.
- On November 23, he attended meetings with several key members of the Ontario Legislature at Queen’s Park to discuss the strategic priorities of the Eastern Ontario Wardens’ Caucus and brought greetings from Renfrew County.
- On November 27, he attended the 2023 Housing Forum in Toronto, where several housing-related topics were discussed.

Warden’s Community Service Awards

Warden Peter Emon presented the 2023 Warden’s Community Service Awards as follows:

Individual Category – Wanda Hilts of Laurentian Valley, nominated by Kathy Frederick.

Wanda Hilts has made substantial community contributions through the Alice and Fraser Recreation Centre in the Township of Laurentian Valley for more than 40 years. She was instrumental in the revival of the Laurentian Valley Alice in Winterland Carnival and assisted with the creation of the Laurentian Valley Fall Flavours Festival. Wanda’s most recent endeavor is creating the Laurentian Valley 50+ Fit and Feisty group. This program offers daily low cost or free physical activity opportunities for Renfrew County residents aged 50-plus. In its first year, the group already has 315 members. This latest initiative addresses a gap in the rural area for organized physical activities for people over 50. The group’s aim is to offer physical activity; travel, culture and entertainment; and activities to build social connections, such as the coffee connect with guest speakers on a wide range of topics.

Individual Category – Clair Cox, Laurentian Hills, nominated by Bruce Boucher.

Clair Cox of Laurentian Hills began his illustrious volunteer career with the local cross-county ski club in 1975 and continued for six years before moving to the Valley Snow Travellers Snowmobile Club and then the North Renfrew Snowmobile Association, which he has been a member of for more than three decades. His stellar dedication to snowmobiling is an example for many club members. Over the years he held many positions within the club, but most notably the grooming coordinator. Clair expertly scheduled and led a group of 17 volunteer groomer operators possessing various levels of competency when operating the Club’s groomer, calmly dealing with all factors that routinely come into play during a grooming season, including breakdowns and weather. The consummate community orientated volunteer, Clair not only promotes volunteerism within the group through coordination, training and scheduling, but also by simply providing a stellar example for the rest of the organization to emulate.

Not-for-profit Organization – Whitewater Sno-Goers Snowmobile Club, nominated by Derek Chapman.

Whitewater Sno-Goers (WWSG) Snowmobile Club has been an active club in the Ottawa Valley since the 1970s and incorporated as a not-for-profit organization in July 1990. The club is one of the premier clubs within Eastern Ontario District 6 – Snow Country. Club activities consist of maintaining nearly 250 kilometres of trails across four townships – Whitewater, Horton, Admaston/Bromley and McNab/Braeside. The Whitewater Sno-Goers operate two groomers with an average operating time of 770 volunteer hours annually which assists the growth of local winter tourism. WWSG creates social and economic opportunities for Ottawa Valley residences during the isolated winter months. In 2022 they added a volunteer focused on applying for grants, successfully securing a grant to assist building a trail side warmup shack, and additional grants to create a new paved ramp in Renfrew for snowmobiles/groomer to drive across O'Brien Road and not damage the millennium walking trail. The club worked with a local Westmeath business owner to fund the building materials for a second warmup shack in Beachburg. The building was constructed by 20+ volunteers at a value of \$14,000 donated by the local business.

Delegations

- Sabine Mersmann, President and CEO, and Scott Coombes, Vice-President Finance and Corporate Services/CFO, Pembroke Regional Hospital (PRH) provided an update on programs and services offered by the PRH, including patient volumes. The presentation focused on the hospital's conversion to Electronic Medical Records, with a request to the County of Renfrew to provide financial assistance towards the multi-million-dollar project.
- CAO/Clerk Craig Kelley presented the County of Renfrew's [2023 Report Card](#) which can be found on page 50 of the County Council package. He highlighted the numerous achievements by department and provided a status update on the points set out under the County's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan goals and objectives: financial sustainability, workforce development, community wellness and healthcare, shared services and resources, attainable housing and infrastructure and environmental resiliency.

Finance & Administration Committee

Presented by: Jennifer Murphy, Chair

- Since early October 2020, the County of Renfrew has been engaged with StrategyCorp on an update to the Service Delivery Review, including an examination of the composition and responsibilities of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) given the impending changes coming due to retirements. Interviews and consultations have occurred with members of the SLT, and with the Chairpersons of the standing committees. It is anticipated that the Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk will receive a draft report with several recommendations by the end of November 2023, and will bring them to a closed meeting of County Council when fully analyzed for potential impact.
- The Clerk's office would like to adopt the practice of an agenda automation system to improve the workflow process and eliminate inefficiencies and duplication of work. Staff has determined it is time to move to a platform that suits the needs of the County of Renfrew. An Electronic Agenda

Management System essentially manages the documents from creation to archive for easy retrieval. Staff has been in touch with several colleagues across the eastern region group of clerks, as well as many of the local municipalities, on their preferred software platforms. These platforms will be assessed against the needs of the County of Renfrew and one to move forward with will be chosen. Funding required for implementation will be included in the appropriate budget(s) and likely shared across departments.

- The County of Renfrew is currently hosting two co-op students at Miramichi Lodge and hopes the experience helps the students confirm career decisions before starting post-secondary education, including apprenticeships. Further, the County of Renfrew hopes the students can build an evidence-based career portfolio to support the application process for work, college or university. Lastly, the largest benefit to the County of Renfrew is the establishment of contacts in the workplace for networking opportunities and demonstrate that municipal jobs are an attractive career path.
- County Council approved the County of Renfrew's contribution of \$36,000 to the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC) 7 in 7+ Regional Housing Plan deliverables to March 31, 2024 as presented by Eastern Ontario Regional Network (EORN). The total cost of \$468,000 will be shared equally amongst the 13 EOWC member municipalities.
- County Council approved a resolution directing staff to review the information from the Town of Arnprior and provide a report to a future meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee detailing the projected impact on the County of Renfrew to participate in the (brownfield) tax assistance program for the Town of Arnprior.
- County Council adopted By-laws to enter into service agreement renewals with Cowan Benefits Consulting and Manulife Financial for the provision of a benefits insurance program, both for the period of January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024.

Community Services Committee

Presented by: Anne Giardini, Chair

- Senior Women Living Together will be launching in Renfrew County in January 2024. SWLT is a housing program/platform that connects senior women to shared housing opportunities. Originally operating in Peterborough, now thanks to its success, the program is branching out into other communities, Renfrew County being the first in the area that this program is moving into.
- The Point-In-Time Count (PIT) is an annual homelessness enumeration survey that helps identify how many people experienced homelessness on a set date. This year the PIT date was Friday, October 27 and the survey period extended from that date up to Friday, November 3. Surveys were completed at over a dozen locations across the County of Renfrew by the staff and volunteers of various agencies, as well as staff from the Community Services Department, Paramedic Services, and the Renfrew County District Health Unit. Thank you to the participants who shared their information and to the surveyors who helped to not only collect data but to connect people with services. See our [Point-in-Time Count media release](#) outlining the results.
- County Council supported the resolution from the Municipality of Bluewater regarding the critical issue of childcare availability in the province of Ontario and how it is linked to educational requirements and low wages within the child-care sector. Council directed staff to send a letter of support to the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services with copies being sent to the Premier of Ontario.

- County Council approved a By-law authorizing the County of Renfrew to enter into an agreement with Candace Gellert (Laurentian Valley) for the provision of Licensed Home Child-Care services.

Development & Property Committee

Presented by: James Brose, Chair

- The fourth [Taste of the Valley](#) event was held in Cobden on October 14, 2023, with more than 135 vendors in attendance and more than 5,000 visitors. The last event in the series is the Holiday edition scheduled for December 16, 2023, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Germania Club in Pembroke.
- During the month of October, the County received six applications for subdivision approval (typically the average is 3-4 a year) as follows:
 - 47T-23003 – Elias Lane (Greater Madawaska) – 8 lots
 - 47T-23004 – Sipolins Road (Greater Madawaska) – 6 lots
 - 47T-23005 – Rose Lane (Greater Madawaska) – 6 lots
 - 47T-23006 – River Road Estates (McNab/Braeside) – 23 lots
 - 47T-23007 – Robinson Lane (Laurentian Valley) – 156 lots (55 singles, 34 semi, 34 multi attached, 33 condo)
 - 47T-23008 – Black Bay Road (Petawawa) – 56 lots

Staff is in the process of circulating these applications for review with the local municipalities, the required agencies under the Planning Act, peer reviewers, and the public. As a result of recent changes to the Planning Act there will be no public meetings regarding these developments.

- County Council passed a resolution directing staff to undertake an Official Plan Amendment to introduce alternative notice policies for Planning Act Applications. The Warden will also write a letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, in support of the resolution from the Corporation of the Municipality of Wawa, requesting the Provincial Government make an amendment to the Legislation Act, 2006, to include digital publications as an acceptable means of publication and notice requirements for Provincial Acts and Regulations. This action is in response to print newspapers ceasing publication in many communities across the province.
- County Council adopted a By-law to enter into an agreement with the Corporation of the Town of Renfrew for office space for Enterprise Renfrew County commencing on January 1, 2024, for a five-year period. This space is within the Ottawa Valley Business Hive located within Town Hall at 127 Raglan Street South, Renfrew, Ontario.

Health Committee

Presented by: Michael Donohue, Chair

- Ms. Judy Hill, Executive Director of the Petawawa Centennial Family Health Centre and Dr. Jonathan Fitzsimon, Medical Lead, Renfrew County Virtual Triage and Assessment Centre, presented an update of the Integrated Virtual Care Program. The Petawawa Centennial Family Health Centre was congratulated for being awarded the Association of Family Health Teams of Ontario 2023 Bright Lights Award in the category of: Using a population-based approach to

provide care to the community Achievement: Integrated Virtual Care. See our [media release](#) here.

- County Council passed a resolution authorizing the Warden and Clerk to sign a Memorandum of Agreement with the Ministry of Health for \$421,000 in one-time funding for the 2023/24 funding year to support the Dedicated Offload Nurses Program.
- County Council passed a resolution authorizing the Warden and Clerk to sign a Memorandum of Agreement with the Pembroke Regional Hospital for Advanced Care Paramedics to participate in the Emergency Department to facilitate early ambulance offload transfers of patients onto hospital stretchers.
- County Council passed a resolution authorizing the Warden and Clerk to sign a Memorandum of Agreement with the Renfrew County and District Health Unit to contract the Community Paramedic Program to deliver/assist with delivery of influenza and COVID-19 vaccinations for the term October 30, 2023, to December 31, 2023.

Operations Committee

Presented by: Glenn Doncaster, Chair

- A Policy for Naming Bridges and Culverts has been developed to ensure that the naming of bridges and culverts is consistent with the Public Works and Engineering Department's primary objective of providing and maintaining a safe road system. This also provides an opportunity to honour the heritage of the area. To be considered as part of the final policy to be presented to County Council in February 2024, staff is requesting that comments from local municipalities be provided to the Director of Public Works and Engineering, Lee Perkins, by January 15, 2024.
- A County Council resolution that would have directed staff to advise the Township of Whitewater Region that the intersection of County Road 61 (Haley Road and Godfrey Road) with Haley Road and Fire Hall Lane does not meet the warrants for an all-way stop did not move forward. A report will come back to Council through the Operations Committee in 2024.
- County Council approved a bid in the amount of \$533,424, plus applicable taxes, as submitted by Toromont CAT, Ottawa, Ontario, for the acquisition of one-wheeled excavator and required attachments.

Additional Information

Craig Kelley, Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk

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