

County Council Summary

January 31, 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.

[January meeting](#) YouTube link.

Warden's Address

Key highlights

- Warden Emon thanked Councillors and staff who attended the ROMA conference and advocated for the County of Renfrew, whether through important topics in their municipality or for the general betterment of all residents in the County.

During the months of December 2023 and January 2024, Warden Peter Emon attended 36 meetings on County business.

- On December 1, 2023, he joined Councillor Jennifer Murphy and Development and Property Committee Chair James Brose at a press conference in Eganville for a funding announcement by the Honourable Graydon Smith, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, along with John Yakabuski, MPP for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, to recognize two local forestry companies in Renfrew County:
 - Lavern Heideman & Sons, in partnership with Harvest Bioindustrial Group from Burlington, will receive \$120,000 to study and increase the use of underutilized hardwoods to produce biochemicals and other products.
 - Roseburg Forest Products Inc. will receive \$100,000 to improve supply chain resiliency, support forest sector diversification and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by exploring energy production using forest biomass.
- On January 12, he attended the inaugural meeting of the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus in Kingston. He was re-elected as Chair for this coming year while Peterborough County Warden Bonnie Clark was acclaimed as Vice-Chair of the Caucus for 2024.
- During the ROMA Conference in Toronto Warden Emon participated in the following EOWC Delegation Meetings: Hon. Kinga Surma, Minister of Infrastructure, the Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Ministry of Long-Term Care – Parliamentary Assistant John Jordan, the Liberal Caucus, and the NDP Caucus.
- He attended the AMO Board meeting on January 26, and noted the board received updates on the following:
 - Housing, including the Government priorities for the next Housing Supply Action Plan

- Access and Privacy Legislation
- Ontario Health and Safety Act (OHSA) City of Greater Sudbury Decision
- Energy Procurements
- Child Care Update
- Response to the Final Report of the Independent Fourth Review of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

Delegations

- Warden Jane Toller, MRC Pontiac, presented a proposal to build a 400,000-ton energy-from-waste facility in the MRC Pontiac which could receive municipal waste from the City of Ottawa, County of Renfrew, City of Pembroke and other regions in the Outaouais. An energy-from-waste facility works by taking waste that cannot be recycled or composted and converting its potential energy into any type of usable energy, with the three main forms being heat, electricity and transportation fuels. It is proposed the MRC Pontiac facility could produce 45 megawatts of electricity and steam heat for district heating.
- Sean Teixeira, Business Development Manager & Support and Saad El-Kassab, Lead Consultant, from Ainsworth, provided an overview of the process of developing the County of Renfrew's Climate Change Action Plan which will outline short-term targets and actions required to improve energy efficiency, reduce energy consumption, scale up renewable energy generation, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It is anticipated that the plan will be completed by the consultants in July 2024.

Announcements

- Councillor Neil Nicholson presented [a motion on the unaffordability of rural and small urban water and wastewater systems](#) and cited a study which shows Renfrew County residents, as a percentage of their household income, disproportionately pay for these services. The motion received unanimous support from members of County Council.
- Councillor Dan Lynch challenged Council and staff to participate in the Push-Up Challenge for the Canadian Mental Health Association. The challenge takes place from February 1-23. Teams or individuals can register online, pledge to complete 2,000 push ups in the push for mental health and raise funds towards key mental health services in Canada. For more information visit www.thepushupchallenge.ca.

Finance & Administration Committee

Presented by: Jennifer Murphy, Chair

- The County of Renfrew was successful in obtaining five delegations at the ROMA Annual Conference held from January 21-23, 2024:
 - Ministry of Health – Seeking the Government of Ontario's policy and financial support to better engage people in our communities struggling with life-threatening mental health, addictions and homelessness circumstances and requesting \$2.1 million annually for the creation and operation of the Community Well-Being Program serving 17 municipalities in the County of Renfrew, the City of Pembroke and the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan.

- Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing – Requesting the Province to fund and launch a new round of funding under the Municipal Modernization Fund that would enable municipalities of all sizes to build on the progress and efforts made during previous iterations.
- Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport – Joint meeting on behalf of the Counties of Frontenac, Haliburton, Hastings, Lanark, and Lennox and Addington requesting increased financial support for the Ontario’s Highlands Tourism Organization – Regional Tourism Organization 11.
- Ministry of Transportation – Requesting continued expansion and widening of Highway 17/417 and improved safety enhancements along the Highway 17 within the County of Renfrew.
- Solicitor General – Seeking funding to improve first responder interoperability, access and reliability of the public safety radio systems in the County of Renfrew.
- The Canada Revenue Agency Automobile Allowance rates for 2024 have increased to 70 cents per kilometer for the first 5,000 kilometers and 64 cents over 5,000 kilometers.
- MIS Municipal Insurance Services has advised the annual renewal premium for the County of Renfrew for 2024 will increase by 8% over the 2023 premium. The driving factors behind our premium increases are a 5% increase in our liability rates, a 3% increase in auto rates, a 5% increase in property insurance rates, a 38 % increase in medical malpractice and cyber liability remains unchanged. This increase is a result of insurers working to adjust premiums to align with the new and growing exposure. Insurance premiums for municipalities across the province continue to rise; it is the understanding of staff that the average 2024 premium increase is around 12%. Due to the continuing pressure of this issue, AMO has created a working group to study the problem.
- The Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) provided details of the 2024 funding requirements. Due to the current economic situation, MPAC is facing the need to increase the levy amount to address the impact of inflation on its operations, including rising labour costs. Based on assessment data, the annual 2024 levy amount for the County of Renfrew will be \$1,570,574.71 a 1.96% increase over 2023. The 2023 funding requirement for the County of Renfrew was \$1,540,414.86.
- Renfrew County and District Health Unit has provided notice to the County of Renfrew that the Board of Health estimates it will require \$1,954,497.00 to defray expenses for 2024, which is an increase of 10.55% from 2023.
- A resolution from the Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO) regarding advocacy efforts with the Province of Ontario to ensure that a social and economic prosperity review is completed, given the financial challenges faced by all municipalities was passed. Read the [full AMO resolution](#) on our website.
- A resolution to pay the 2024 membership fee to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) in the amount of \$23,859.16 including HST was approved.
- County Council supported a resolution from the City of Greater Sudbury on December 5, 2023 seeking an amendment to the Occupational Health and Safety Act to clarify the definition of “Employer” to exclude owners that have contracted with a constructor for a project.
- Revised Corporate Policies A-03 – Recruitment, J-06 – Return of Service Incentive Program; new Corporate Policy A-19 – Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and the removal of A-09b – Equality and Diversity were approved.

Community Services Committee

Presented by: Anne Giardini, Chair

- The County of Renfrew received a memorandum from the Early Years and Child Care Division for the Ministry of Education regarding the 2024 Child Care, EarlyON Child and Family Centres and Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) funding. The County will receive \$18.9 million for the provision of these programs.
- County Council approved a By-law authorizing the County of Renfrew to approve the addition of a new policy to the Licensed Home Child Care Policies and Procedure, outlining the requirement to have a safe arrival and dismissal policy for children in all programs.

Development & Property Committee

Presented by: James Brose, Chair

- Staff is working towards creating an all-encompassing by-law in relation to governing activities in the County of Renfrew-owned forests and on trails including the Algonquin Trail and K & P Recreational Trail. To assist with this process, staff is requesting input on the trails through a [Zencity public engagement page](#), which is open until February 29, 2024.
- The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) has announced the Commission's decision to amend the nuclear research and test establishment operating licence held by Canadian Nuclear Laboratories (CNL) for Chalk River Laboratories. The amendment authorizes the construction of a Near Surface Disposal Facility (NSDF) on the Chalk River Laboratories site, which is located in Deep River, Ontario, and on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabeg peoples. The amended Nuclear Research and Test Establishment Operating Licence that was issued to Canadian Nuclear Laboratories for Chalk River Laboratories will remain valid until March 31, 2028.
- Enterprise Renfrew County is hosting a variety of webinars in February, including a tax information series in preparation for the upcoming tax season. More information and registration available at <https://www.enterpriserenfrewcounty.com/workshops-events>.
- Work commenced in November 2023 on the first phase of the future Eganville Paramedic Base to address Post Disaster compliance with the Post Disaster Structural Work, which was completed in December 2023. Staff met with the Paramedic Service in late December 2023 to review the next phase which includes the interior design and office renovation fit-up for the first and second level. County Council approved a contract in the amount of \$154,500, plus applicable taxes as submitted by TS General Contracting, Pembroke, Ontario for the proposed retrofit at the new Paramedic Service Base in Eganville, Ontario.
- County Council supported the resolution received from the City of Stratford requesting the Federal Government extend the full Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) program deadline by extending the forgiveness (up to \$20,000 of the maximum \$60,000) deadline for businesses to coincide with the new repayment deadline of December 31, 2026. Council also directed Warden Emon to send a letter of support to the Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Finance Minister.

Health Committee

Presented by: Michael Donohue, Chair

- County Council reviewed the initiatives taken by the Community Paramedics within the County of Renfrew Paramedic Service within the month of December. Among the items was an update on the Renfrew County Virtual Triage and Assessment Centre Statistics for December 2023:
 - 5,907 medical reception triage encounters (inbound phone calls)
 - 3,165 virtual visits booked with RC VTAC physicians,
 - 367 in-person visits booked with paramedics at Clinical Assessment Centres across Renfrew County.
- The annual submission to the Office of the Fire Marshall and Emergency Management was completed in December 2023. Health Committee, as the Emergency Management Planning Committee, took part in an exercise in October of 2023, as required to meet compliance legislation. A Certificate of Compliance for 2023 should be received in March 2024.
- County Council adopted a By-law authorizing the Warden and Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk to sign the 2023/24 Virtual Care Programs – Online Appointment Booking Agreement with Ontario Health. The implementation of Online Booking will improve access and the patient experience, as they will be able to book appointments with their primary care provider online. This will provide more choice to patients in how and when they access their care as well as increasing their ability to schedule based on individual needs.

Operations Committee

Presented by: Glenn Doncaster, Chair

- Staff from the County of Renfrew and Town of Petawawa will continue to work together to find cost savings and come to a cost-sharing agreement for the County Road 37 (Murphy Road) project. Originally planned for a complete rehabilitation spanning 2.6 kilometres from Portage Road to County Road 51 (Petawawa Boulevard) in the summer of 2023, the project scope was adjusted to 1.2 kilometres. This decision was influenced by ongoing neighbourhood developments along the roadway, prompting collaboration with the Town of Petawawa to finalize an urban design for the section between Woodland Crescent and County Road 51 (Petawawa Boulevard).
- Staff is in the process of preparing tenders for a variety of procurements relative to the maintenance, materials and services for roadway operations. A letter has been circulated to all the local municipalities, advising them of the planned tenders and providing them with an opportunity to participate.
- County Council declared the land identified as part of Lot 1, Concession 6, in the Township of Madawaska Valley as surplus. The County of Renfrew Public Works and Engineering Department has been approached by a landowner who wishes to purchase a portion of land adjacent to its property. The land currently forms a part of County Road 62 (Combermere Road) road allowance, located in part of Lot 1, Concession 6, in the Township of Madawaska Valley. The subject road allowance once formed part of a Ministry of Transportation (MTO) highway and the overall width of the road allowance in this location is greater than 50 metres, which exceeds the desired County Road Right-of-Way width of 26 metres.

- County Council passed a Speed Limit By-law to revise the location for the 60 km/hr speed limit on County Road 512 (Foymount Road) currently set from Civic Address 3467 Foymount Road to Miller Road to reflect the change from Civic Address 3467 Foymount Road to Lake Clear Road.
- County Council approved a By-law amendment to implement a No Parking Zone on both sides of County Road 52 (Burnstown Road) from the intersection of County Road 508 (Calabogie Road) to the northern limit of the Burnstown Bridge, a distance of approximately 250 metres. The Township of McNab/Braeside made the request and will be responsible for enforcement of the No Parking Zone in accordance with the County of Renfrew By-law.
- County Council approved a contract in the amount of \$1,564,071, plus applicable taxes, as submitted by Bonnechere Excavating Inc., Renfrew, Ontario, for rehabilitation of County Structure B007 (Butler Bridge), located on Butler Road, approximately 1km south of Highway 60, in the Township of Admaston/Bromley.
- County Council adopted a By-law amendment with respect to Roads and Bridges included in the County Road System, to add County Structure C338 (McMahon Road Culvert) to the County Road System effective February 1, 2024. Due to the failed state of condition of the culvert, located on McMahon Road, 0.18km east of Ferguslea Road, Township of Admaston/ Bromley, it was replaced in 2023. The costs for design and construction on the McMahon Road Culvert were shared equally by the County and the Township.

Additional Information

Craig Kelley, Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk

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