

Here are the highlights from the regular Lanark County Council meeting held Wednesday, April 9.

- **Tax Rates and Ratios Adopted:** Council has approved bylaws setting the 2014 levy amounts to be collected from ratepayers, as well as tax ratios and tax-capping provisions. In November, council passed its budget with a levy of almost \$30 million to be collected through the towns and townships. The county residential tax rate for 2014 is lower than the previous year, and amounts to \$392 per \$100,000 of assessment. "Average taxpayers will have a 4.3 per cent phase increase on their property reassessment, but the tax rate is lower by the same amount, which results in a zero per cent tax increase. They will pay the same amount they paid to the county in 2013," explained Kurt Greaves, CAO/treasurer. Once the tax levy is established, council sets tax ratios, which distribute taxes between the various classes (e.g. industrial, commercial, residential). The county portion is only one of three components on the tax bill, with the local municipality and education portion making up the balance. For more information, contact Kurt Greaves, CAO/Treasurer, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1101.
- **Resolution Supports Kemptville Campus:** Council has passed a resolution that strongly supports a two-year moratorium on the closure of the Kemptville College campus, which would allow the school to accept students in the Fall 2014 semester. The move comes following the announcement that the University of Guelph would be closing this satellite campus along with one at Alfred, Ontario. The resolution also urges the province to work with local stakeholders to develop a new model to operate the Kemptville campus to ensure its sustainability and viability in eastern Ontario. It notes Premier Kathleen Wynne, in her capacity as Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, challenged the industry last autumn to double its growth rate and create 120,000 new jobs by 2020. It identifies the two campuses as outstanding postsecondary schools that have delivered specialized and high-quality programs to generations of students and says the future success of the region's agri-food industry depends on continuing this strong partnership. It adds Kemptville campus ensures the industry has access to the knowledge, research and innovation that are critical for Ontario to remain competitive in this rapidly changing sector. "Agriculture is still a major economic driver in Lanark County," said Warden Richard Kidd (Beckwith Reeve). "The loss of Kemptville College would eliminate an opportunity for local youth to be exposed to innovative new technology in the industry. This is why we're strongly urging the province to implement a two-year moratorium." The resolution is being widely circulated. For more information, contact Leslie Drynan, Deputy Clerk, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1502.
- **Maple Production Approved in Community Forest:** Council has approved a proposal seeking commercial use of a maple stand for sugar bush operations within a community forest. After a public tender the contract agreement will be for 10 years with two five-year options to extend. Over the past several years, the community forest working group has developed a commercial use policy that will now allow it to respond to such requests. Brian Anderson, the county's contracted forester from Mississippi Valley Conservation, compared maple syrup production and traditional timber production as uses of the forest and identified both options as acceptable with comparable values. It is also in keeping with the county's brand as "Maple Syrup Capital of Ontario." The identified portion of forest in Lanark Highlands has about 75 acres proposed for maple production. Forest management will continue during the agreement to ensure a safe and healthy managed forest. For more information, contact Jonathan Allen, Operations Manager, Public Works, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 3170.
- **Parameters for 2014 Renovate Lanark Set:** Council has approved the parameters for Renovate Lanark 2014, which is part of the Investment in Affordable Housing program funded by the federal and provincial governments up to 2015. Funding for this year amounts to \$238,920, which is divided between three components: homeownership, rent supplement and renovations. The goal is to assist low-income homeowners to remain in their homes and, in some cases, to improve their energy efficiency. Provincial guidelines set maximum limits for house price and household income, and the local service managers, such as Lanark County, can determine local limits up to that maximum. This year's parameters are set at \$60,000 for the homeownership component, \$134,020 for Renovate Lanark and

\$44,900 for rent supplement. The maximum income limit for the Renovate Lanark program remains at \$50,000, and the maximum house value, which is based on the average resale price for the area as adjusted quarterly, is \$259,777. Additional funding was allocated to the Renovate program to allow more low-income residents to remain in their homes. The funds provided to date for Renovate Lanark have assisted 33 people at an average loan of \$6,666. For more information, contact Nancy Green, Director of Social Services, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 2101 or Sandy Grey, Social Housing Manager, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 2401.

- **Youth Centre Update Received:** Councillors received a report updating them on the activities of youth centres in Almonte, Carleton Place, Lanark Highlands, Perth and Smiths Falls as a follow-up for funding provided by the county in 2013. Children's Services manager Mary Lou White noted the county has funded the coalition of youth centres for more than 10 years, initially through the National Child Benefit Supplement Reinvestment Program, and then through the municipal levy when the program ended. The funding supports the executive director positions at the centre, allowing them to pursue other funding opportunities and build their programs. Services and programs provided by the youth centres include homework, life skills, culture and recreation, social networking, nutrition/cooking and wellness. The centres work together on funding proposals, advocacy, planning, policies and procedures. They receive no annual federal or provincial funding for operations, and rely on grants for specific project funding. "Community involvement is a critical part of the programming, as they encourage youth to actively participate and engage in their communities," Ms. White added. For more information, contact Nancy Green, Director of Social Services, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 2101 or Mary Lou White, Children's Services Manager, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 2301.
- **Upcoming Meetings:** Economic Development, April 23, 5 p.m.; Public Works, April 23 (following Economic Development). **Regular County Council, Wednesday, May 14, 5 p.m.;** Community Services, May 14 (following County Council); Corporate Services, May 14 (following Community Services). For more information, contact 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1502. Like "LanarkCounty1" on Facebook and follow "@LanarkCounty1" on Twitter.