

Here are the highlights from the special Lanark County Council meeting held Wednesday, Oct.22 and the Special County Council Meeting held Oct. 8.

- **County Expresses Condolences:** Lanark County Councillors expressed shock and condolences in the wake of the violent acts taking place in Ottawa at the National War Memorial and Parliament Hill on Wednesday, as well as the incidents in Quebec on Tuesday, all involving Canadian soldiers. "Lanark County is proud of our military and the uniform they wear is a symbol for Canadians," said Warden Richard Kidd (Beckwith Reeve). Councillor John Fenik (Perth Mayor) added that there is a bigger role "for all levels of government to give a united message on this kind of darkness." Several councillors commented on support for Canadian soldiers and all agreed to write a letter to the Governor General expressing this sentiment. For more information, contact Leslie Drynan, Deputy Clerk, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1502.
- **County Receives Additional Funds:** The county is proceeding with an agreement with the provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing that will provide additional funds in the Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario Housing program. The program was introduced in 2011 with funding allocations for three years. The federal and provincial governments have extended it for a further six years in an effort to improve housing options for Ontarians. Various programs can be delivered, and the county provides Homeownership Loans, Renovate Lanark and Rent Supplement programs. The allocation for the 2014-2015 year for the county is \$381,700, with subsequent years announced when census data is available. Social Housing Manager Sandy Grey indicated the extension amount is enough to fund two units of new rental construction; Renovate Lanark funding would be used to assist 13 applicants who are on a waiting list and, if there are funds left, more would be issued on a first-come, first-served basis. The Housing Allowance Funding would assist 26 clients for five years with a \$200 per month subsidy. For more information, contact Sandy Grey, Social Housing Manager, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 2401.
- **County Pushes for Reform:** Council voted to write a letter to the Attorney General of Ontario (Madeline Meilleur), copied to the premier, to encourage the reconsideration of options in the issue of joint and several liability reform. The corporate services committee heard earlier in October that the current joint and several liability legislation is resulting in increasing insurance rates. The Association of Municipalities of Ontario has been pushing for reforms and has suggested various options, but the province, based on the advice of trial lawyers and the Law Commission of Ontario, has declined to proceed with them. Senior Financial Analyst Kevin Wills explained under the current system, if a defendant is found to be only 1 per cent liable for damages caused to an injured party, that defendant can be burdened with responsibility for paying the entire damage award if the co-defendants lack the ability to pay. "As 'deep pocket' defendants with seemingly limitless public resources at their disposal through the power of taxation, municipalities have often become the targets of litigation when other defendants do not have the means to pay high damage awards." Mr. Wills explained other jurisdictions have implemented legislative protections, but Ontario has not, which results in increased insurance premiums. The county's premium has increased at a rate much greater than inflation. For more information, contact Kevin Wills, Senior Financial Analyst, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1323.
- **White Papers Address Financial Sustainability:** Council accepted a report outlining several Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus white papers related to financial sustainability of local government in this region. CAO Kurt Greaves presented the report to the corporate services committee earlier in October. One paper concerns municipal infrastructure and demonstrates municipal capital spending cannot keep up with the \$3.83-million infrastructure deficit in rural eastern Ontario. A paper on municipal affordability addresses the growth of operating expenditures, noting in four services alone they grew by more than 50 per cent since 2000. While an upload of social services created some temporary budget flexibility, real growth in assessment has been limited. The ratepayer affordability white paper analyses typical residents of rural eastern Ontario in terms of earnings, demographics, education and shelter costs/home ownership. An environmental services paper examines water/waste water and sewer

expenditures as well as solid waste management and associated liabilities. Finally, the social housing white paper highlights declining federal support and subsidies combined with changing housing needs, including increased mental health issues and an increase in hoarding and other damage, as well as increased energy costs. In all of the white papers, recommendations are provided for local, regional and provincial bodies in terms of strategic approaches, collaboration and advocacy. The white papers can be viewed at <http://www.eowc.org/en/futuredirections/Municipal-Affordability---EOWC-White-Paper--August-2013.asp>. For more information, contact Kurt Greaves, CAO, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1101.

- **Former 5N Property Sold:** At a special meeting on Oct. 8, council approved a bylaw to sell the county property known as "5N" in Tay Valley Township. The 240-acre property was originally intended to be a county-wide landfill site, but the initiative dissolved in 1999 and the property was declared surplus to the county's needs in December 2013. A disposal process was undertaken with the nine local municipalities that originally contributed to the process to develop the landfill. The property was sold by public tender to the highest compliant bidder, 2218737 Ontario Ltd., for \$430,000. For more information, contact Janet Tysick, Public Works Business Manager, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 3110.
- **Upcoming Meetings: County Council, Wednesday, Nov. 12, 5 p.m.;** Community Services, Nov. 12 (following County Council); Corporate Services, Nov. 12 (following Community Services). **County Council, Wednesday, Nov. 26, 5 p.m.;** Economic Development, Nov. 26 (following County Council); Public Works, Nov. 26 (following Economic Development). For more information, contact 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1502. Like "LanarkCounty1" on Facebook and follow "@LanarkCounty1" on Twitter!