

Here are the highlights from the regular Lanark County Council meeting held Wednesday, Nov. 26.

- **County Budget Preview Provided:** Lanark County councillors will receive their first budget overview on December 17 with a presentation about Lanark Lodge, followed by "Financial Friday" on Jan. 9, when the rest of the departments will present their proposed budgets. At the corporate services committee meeting earlier this month, CAO Kurt Greaves congratulated outgoing councillors on their efforts towards sustainability with the county budget. For 2015, Mr. Greaves is projecting growth of 1 to 1.5 per cent and an equivalent tax increase. "In the last two years we have increased the net capital levy by \$1.1 million with total real tax increases of zero per cent and less than 1.5 per cent," he said. For more information, contact Kurt Greaves, CAO, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1101.
- **Hostel Agreement Proceeds:** Council has authorized the renewal of an agreement with various hostels throughout the county and Town of Smiths Falls to provide services for 2015. These include Rideau Ferry Country Home, Victoria House, Paradise Valley and Countryview Lodge, as well as a month-to-month agreement with Villa Montague (formerly Shardon Manor) until permanent ownership is confirmed. The program provides a permanent residence and some support for daily living for people with special needs, such as persons with serious mental illness, addictions, developmental disabilities and/or the frail/elderly. In a report to the community services committee, social housing manager Sandy Grey said this group would be at risk of homelessness without the program. Staff visit the hostels each year to review required standards and ensure compliance, and there is regular monitoring throughout the year. The health unit and fire departments certify facilities for health and safety requirements. With the cost of providing shelter increasing as energy, property taxes and food costs rise, council has also authorized an increase in the per diem rate provided to hostel operators, as well as an increase in the personal needs allowance rate. Domiciliary hostels are funded through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative allocation provided to the county by the provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. For more information, contact Sandy Grey, Social Housing Manager, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 2401.
- **Receiving Additional Funds for CHPI:** Council has authorized the acceptance of additional funding for 2014/2015 for the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI). CHPI was introduced by the provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in 2013 to consolidate homelessness-related programs. It aims to prevent, address and reduce homelessness by improving access to adequate, suitable and affordable housing linked to support services. The county received \$876,053 for 2014/2015, with an additional \$339,525 announced this fall. The most common assistance provided here is housing loss prevention, such as payment of rent arrears, energy arrears and last-month rent deposits. Using the county's Ten Year Housing and Homelessness Plan as a guide and in consultation with community partners, staff will recommend a strategy for the additional funds to the community services committee in January. One program to be presented is a contract with a community partner to provide homelessness services outside of regular business hours for social services offices. For more information, contact Sandy Grey, Social Housing Manager, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 2401.
- **Council Accomplishments Highlighted:** To mark the last meeting for the current term of council, Warden Richard Kidd presented outgoing councillors with stained-glass plaques created by Mississippi Mills-area artist Stephen Braithwaite. He commended those councillors for their hard work and for the strength of ideas they brought to the table. "There is no use for us being here if we are all thinking the same way," he said. "With a diverse group it is a lot easier to reach decisions." Several outgoing councillors expressed their thanks for the support from council and county staff over the years and highlighted accomplishments and experiences. Council also accepted a report from CAO Kurt Greaves outlining a long list of those accomplishments by the 2010-2014 council. Several projects were related to infrastructure, such as the fire communications system, various road and bridge projects and paved shoulders. Corporate initiatives included development charges, recruitment and restructuring, asset management, a capital investment plan, the Sustainable Community Official Plan project, the sale of the 5N property and the renovation/new construction of public works facilities. Other highlights included the

Renovate Lanark Program, the Ten Year Housing and Homelessness Plan, the Energy Management Plan, the Rural Connections High-Speed Internet Project, the Deer Lake evacuation, the Automated External Defibrillator program, the CP/Ottawa Valley Railway "Rails to Trails" project, OPP costing discussions, support for local youth centres, ATVs on county roads, combined heat and power units for Lanark County Housing Corporation properties and the review of the Lanark County Municipal Trails Corporation. The inaugural meeting for the new council, at which the warden for 2015 will also be selected, is scheduled for Tuesday, Dec. 16 at 11 a.m. At least seven new councillors will be at the county table. For more information, contact Kurt Greaves, CAO, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1101.

- **Upcoming Meetings: Inaugural Meeting, Tuesday, Dec. 16. County Council, Wednesday, Dec. 17, 5 p.m.;** Economic Development, Dec. 17 (following County Council); Public Works, Dec. 17 (following Economic Development). Lanark County Council "Meet and Greet" and Orientation, Wednesday, Dec. 10, 5 p.m. For more information, contact 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1502. Like "LanarkCounty1" on Facebook and follow "@LanarkCounty1" on Twitter!

– 30 –