

Here are the highlights from the regular Lanark County Council meeting held Wednesday, March 23.

- **Tax Rates and Ratios Approved:** Council has approved bylaws setting the 2016 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 \$31.6 million to be collected through the towns and townships. “In a comparison between 2008 and 2015, tax rates are becoming more even across the county,” explained Kurt Greaves, CAO, noting it is difficult to compare the tax rates due to varying service levels between municipalities (e.g. garbage pick-up), as well as population density and average assessment. The net tax increase for the county portion of the tax bill in 2016 was 1.9 per cent. When the tax levy is established, council then sets tax ratios, which distribute taxes between the various classes (e.g. industrial, commercial, residential). This done in consultation with local municipal treasurers. “The recommendation from the Lanark County treasurers is to adopt revenue neutral tax ratios,” Mr. Greaves said. “This will ensure reassessment does not shift the tax burden between the tax classes.” Recommendations were also made regarding provincially mandated tax capping provisions, which establish tax protection for multi-residential, commercial and industrial classes. “Every reassessment changes property valuations and taxpayers can be protected by phase-in for all classes and tax capping for the business classes,” Mr. Greaves explained. “Capping places a limit on the allowable increase, and claw-backs pay for the capping by phasing in the decreases to business class properties that have a lower value from reassessment.” He said the number of properties affected by this complexity continues to decrease. “The good news is the capping options now available are allowing municipalities to slowly reduce the number of properties in capping/claw-back situation.” 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, County CAO, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1101.
- **CHPI Investment Plan Outlined:** Council has approved the 2016/2017 Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) Investment Plan. The county’s allocation from the province for the coming year is \$1.2 million. The goal is to prevent, address and reduce homelessness by improving access to adequate, suitable and affordable housing linked to flexible support services based on peoples’ needs. The county, as a service manager, has the flexibility to use the funds to address local homelessness needs in its communities and has allocated the funding based on priorities identified in its Ten-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan. The guidelines allow for administration costs of up to 10 per cent of the total allocation, and there are four applicable service categories in the program. An allocation of \$35,000 will go to the emergency shelter solutions category, which includes emergency hotel stays and a contract with the Salvation Army to provide after-hours social services. For the housing with related supports category, such as domiciliary hostels and deposits for rent and utilities, the budget is \$570,040. An additional program is being recommended this year to support applicants for rent-geared-to-income subsidy in Carleton Place while the Lanark County Housing Corporation determines future plans for one of its projects. A budget of \$150,000 has been set for the services and supports category, which covers a full-time staff member, a minor home repair program, an awareness event and emergency supports for homeless people. Finally, the homelessness prevention services category has a budget of \$339,000 for eviction prevention services. For more information, contact Sandy Grey, Social Housing Manager, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 2401.

- **Public Information Centre for Forest Conservation By-law:** Lanark County is hosting a Public Information Centre on the proposed Tree Conservation By-Law on Thursday, April 7 in the council chambers from 4 to 7 p.m. A copy of the draft By-Law can be found on the county's website at www.lanarkcounty.ca or can be picked up at the Public Works Office between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. weekdays. A comment sheet can also be found on the website. The PIC is to provide information on the proposed by-law and to receive input and comments from interested persons. For more information, contact Jonathan Allen, Facilities Coordinator, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 3170.
- **Upcoming Meetings: County Council, Wednesday, April 13, 5 p.m.;** Community Services, April 13 (following County Council); Corporate Services, April 13 (following Community Services). **County Council, Wednesday, April 27, 5 p.m.;** Economic Development, April 27 (following County Council); Public Works, April 27 (following Economic Development). For more information, contact 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1502. Like "LanarkCounty1" on Facebook and follow "@LanarkCounty1" on Twitter!

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