

Here are the highlights from the regular Lanark County Council meeting held Wednesday, June 27.

- **Lanark Lodge Funding Highlighted:** In an effort to prepare for the 2019 budget, councillors received an update at the community services committee meeting earlier this month from Treasurer Jennie Bingley about recent funding announcements for Lanark Lodge, the county's long-term care home. Despite funding that results in an increase in direct care hours and a falls prevention initiative, as well as a pending application for Late Career Initiative Funding, there are two main issues that continue to put pressure on the budget: the lack of provincial funding to cover existing staffing levels and to address the need to increase direct care staff hours to properly care for residents due to rising acuity (intensity of nursing care needed). Ms. Bingley explained there are no minimum provincially mandated staff-to-resident ratios with respect to direct care staffing, and levels have been largely unchanged for at least 10 years while acuity has steadily increased. The increasing workload has negative effects on staffing, and retention is also an issue within the highly-competitive field. Ms. Bingley predicted the levy to taxpayers will continue to grow at a higher rate than past years to cover provincial subsidy shortfalls for staffing. "Management has done an excellent job to find costs savings to offset cost-of-living increases to wages and benefits," she said, adding it is unlikely this trend will be sustainable, and the result will be increased costs to taxpayers. She said the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is being lobbied to recognize and address the funding shortfalls for long-term care. Further analysis is planned, combined with evaluating funding models for comparative homes. For more information, contact Jennie Bingley, Treasurer, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1320.

- **Calls for Cross-Border Ambulance Changes:** Council supported a motion by the United Counties of Prescott Russell regarding municipalities that fail to pay for cross-border ambulance calls. The motion calls for the City of Ottawa to enter into good-faith negotiations on cross-border ambulance compensation with neighbouring paramedic services, and for the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to amend the Ambulance Act to require a cross-border ambulance compensation agreement. The motion is being circulated to Ottawa, neighbouring municipalities and the ministry. The move comes as municipalities adjacent to Ottawa are facing increased provincial dispatch calls for ambulances to service needs in Ottawa, which increases strain on services to meet their own local response times and also has financial consequences. For more information, contact Kurt Greaves, CAO, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1101.

- **2017 Auditor's Report Accepted:** Council accepted the 2017 audited financial statements following a presentation at the corporate services committee of the whole meeting earlier this month by Howard Allan of Allan and Partners LLP Chartered Professional Accountants. "Overall, all of the financial indicators for the county are good," he said, adding 2017 was a good year. "The balance sheet is in good shape. Council and staff have also been sensitive to increases in taxation." The acquisition of the Ottawa Valley Recreation Trail land as a capital asset creates a "stunning" surplus, he said, adding net financial assets increased in 2017 by about \$3.52 million. "Financial administration at the county is good; they are paying attention to numbers during the year." He said expenditures and revenues were in the \$80-million range and very close to budget. "The county spent less on social services than budgeted, and in operations there was a surplus of about \$4 million." He said the province has introduced a new financial indicator that measures a ratio of operating surplus to total revenues. "I'm interested in this because you have to raise money to

spend money on capital. It can make us more self-sufficient and less dependent on the province.” For more information, contact Jennie Bingley, Treasurer, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1320.

- **OVRT Agreements Approved:** Council has approved by-laws authorizing two agreements related to leasing portions of the Ottawa Valley Recreation Trail (OVRT): one with the Canadian Co-Operative Wool Growers Ltd. (CCWG) in Carleton Place and the other with the Town of Carleton Place. With the purchase of the former CP Rail lands that now form the OVRT, the county is a co-owner (with Renfrew County and Papineau-Cameron Township). The town wishes to lease part of the property to construct a park that is compatible with the proposed use of the OVRT, which includes a portion of lands already leased by the CCWG. The new lease with the CCWG will eventually serve to clearly identify the lands to be leased and establishes terms and conditions during the construction phase of the park being developed by the town as part of the trail. The agreement with the town similarly identifies the lands and conditions around its development, including provisions for activities to take place, such as commercial and festivals/events. For more information, contact Janet Tysick, Business Manager, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 3110.
- **Upcoming Meetings: Please note there are no meetings in July. County Council, Wednesday, Aug. 8, 5 p.m.;** Community Services, Aug. 8 (following County Council); Corporate Services, Aug. 8 (following Community Services). **County Council, Wednesday, Aug. 29, 5 p.m.;** Public Works, Aug. 29 (following County Council); Economic Development, Aug. 29 (following Public Works). All meetings are in Council Chambers unless otherwise noted. For more information, contact 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1502. Like "LanarkCounty1" on Facebook and follow "@LanarkCounty1" on Twitter!