

September 8, 2020

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Elgin County Warden's Report - August 2020

The Warden presented a report to Council outlining his activities for the month of August and providing updates regarding the County's COVID-19 response.

He thanked all Elgin County staff for their considerable efforts in serving Elgin County during this time of great uncertainty. All departments and services have been affected by the pandemic and this has meant that staff have had to adapt to continuous and rapid changes over the past six (6) months. Staff have accepted redeployments, adjusted hours and duties, and implemented enhanced health and safety requirements to ensure that County employees, Long-Term Care residents, and members of the community remain safe and healthy during these unprecedented times.

With much regret the Warden announced the cancellation of the 2020 Warden's Dinner in November as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Warden informed Council that Premier Ford had announced that the envelope and structure of the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund (OMPF) would remain unchanged for 2021. This will guarantee \$500 million of critically important funding for municipalities, particularly in rural and northern communities. The Warden had sent correspondence to the Province earlier this year, on behalf of Elgin's Local Municipal Partners, asking that funding remain stable in order to allow municipalities to plan for economic recovery.

The Warden announced that the 2021 application intake period for the Community Grant Program is now open and the County will be accepting applications until November 10th. Grant applications and information about the Community Grant Program can be found online at www.elgincounty.ca/communitygrantprogram.

Final Approval for Plan of Subdivision

The Manager of Planning informed Council that Final Approval had been granted to the Kemsley Farms Plan of Subdivision in the Municipality of Central Elgin. This residential Plan of Subdivision is comprised of 65 single detached lots, 1 storm water management/valley lands block, 4 walkway/servicing blocks, 1 park/trail block, 1 park block, 1 valley lands block, 5 future residential blocks, and

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3 reserve blocks. The original Draft Plan Approval for this subdivision was given by Elgin County Council on September 24, 2018.

Elgincntives Program Review

The General Manager of Economic Development provided Council with an overview of the process that will be used to evaluate the Elgincntives Community Improvement Plan.

In 2015, each of Elgin's Local Municipal Partners adopted an Elgincntives Community Improvement Plan (CIP) as a component of a strategic County-wide framework for community improvement planning that is administered and funded by Elgin County. In 2015, \$1 million was allocated to the Elgincntives program to support the local business community. In 2018, the tax vacancy rebate of \$80,000 per year was added to the original program amount giving a total of \$1.24 million to be allocated over the six-year time period of the program.

Economic Development staff will undertake an analysis of the program's success over the past six (6) years to assist Council in determining whether they wish to continue the program past 2020. This analysis will evaluate program statistics to determine to what extent the program achieved the following three (3) goals:

1. To stimulate economic growth and diversification
2. To enhance the quality of place for residents and visitors
3. To improve the sustainability and stability of the tax base

Economic Development staff will be assisted in this analysis by the Elgincntives Coordinating Committee comprised primarily of the Chief Administrative Officers of Elgin County's Local Municipal Partners. Past applicants will also be asked to complete surveys about their experiences with the program.

A full description of the proposed evaluation process can be found in the September 8, 2020 Elgin County Council Agenda Package.

Provincial Funding Allocations

On August 11, 2020, the County of Elgin received correspondence from Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health confirming that the Ministry will be funding Land Ambulance Services in the amount of \$5,100,079 which is an increase of \$72,184 over last year's funding of \$5,027,895. This additional funding will become part of base funding.

The County of Elgin received additional correspondence from Minister Elliott, indicating that one-time funding in the amount of \$420,000 would be provided to support the temporary pandemic pay initiative for Land Ambulance Services. Elgin's service provider, Medavie EMS, will be distributing these funds to its employees as outlined by the Provincial guidelines.

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) announced the total 2020 per diem funding changes for base level of care and project

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funding. The impact of the Long-Term Care changes in per diem and project funding is a gain of \$119,820 for the 2020 budget year and a gain of \$221,265 for the full year impact.

July 2020 Financial Update

The budget comparison for the County shows unfavourable performance of \$39,000 for the month of July, primarily the result of COVID-19 costs, bringing year-to-date (YTD) favourable performance to \$302,000.

The "June 2020 Financial Update" presented to Council discussed assuming \$12 million of debt in 2020, as part of the \$35 million of debt previously planned as part of the 2020 ten-year plan, to take advantage of the favourable rates. Council enacted a borrowing by-law in order to submit a long-term financing application with Ontario Infrastructure and Lands Corporation (OILC) for \$12 million.

Engineering Services Update

Administration Accessibility Elevator Addition

The County of Elgin has identified the need to upgrade its current original 1960's vintage elevator systems at the Administration Building and address accessibility deficiencies on the main level, between the outer and center blocks of the building so as to maintain compliance with the Province's Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act requirement and significantly improve barrier-free circulation on this level. Council voted to re-engage the services of L360 Architecture to prepare construction and building permit application design drawings, tender documentation and provide contract administration services associated with the project.

Port Bruce Bridge Replacement

Additional archaeological assessment requirements and ongoing delays associated with material delivery as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in an increase to the scope of the engineering services required for the Port Bruce Bridge Replacement. Council increased the amount of engineering services previously awarded to K. Smart Associates Limited Consulting Engineers and Planners by \$119,585.77 to accommodate this increased scope. The project remains on schedule to be completed by the end of 2020.

Committee Appointments

At its August 11, 2020 meeting County Council appointed three individuals to the newly formed Connectivity Committee. At its meeting held on September 8, 2020 Council appointed an additional applicant to the Committee.

The County of Elgin also appointed six (6) individuals as members of its newly formed Environmental Advisory Committee. These individuals are passionate about finding solutions for environmental challenges, come

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from diverse employment backgrounds and have a unique set of relevant expertise and technical knowledge.

Full applications can be viewed as part of the September 8, 2020 Elgin County Council Agenda Package.

Name Change at Dutton Library

Elgin County Council considered a recommendation that the name of Dutton branch of the Elgin County Library be modified from John Kenneth Galbraith Reference Library, Dutton to John Kenneth Galbraith Library, Dutton.

The Dutton branch of the Elgin County Library was previously named in honour of John Kenneth Galbraith to recognize his impressive accomplishments as an international statesman and economist. Dr. Galbraith was raised in the former Township of Dunwich and maintained an intimate connection to the library throughout his life, including the donation of funds to support the construction of a larger library in the early 1990s and supporting community fundraising efforts. It is appropriate that his name continue to be associated with the library.

“Reference” was originally included in the title because the library serves as the reference library for Elgin County’s western library branches. Aylmer Library serves as the reference library for branches in the east; however, “Reference” is not included in its name. For the sake of consistency and shortening the title on signage and marketing materials Council voted to remove the word “Reference” from the title.

Bill 197, COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, 2020

Bill 197, the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, 2020 received Royal Assent on July 21 and is now in force. This Bill made changes to many different pieces of legislation governing municipal operations including amendments to the Municipal Act, 2001. Council considered the merits of incorporating these changes into its Procedural By-law.

The Municipal Emergencies Act passed in March allowed for municipalities to amend their procedural by-laws to allow Municipal Councillors to participate electronically in Council and Committee meetings, be counted towards quorum, and have their votes counted in open and closed session meetings. This only applied during a state of emergency. Bill 197 will now allow Municipal Councils to amend their procedural by-laws to allow for electronic voting after the state of emergency is lifted. Council directed staff to bring forward an amendment to the Elgin County Procedural By-law to allow for ongoing electronic participation.

Bill 197 further amended the Municipal Act by adding Section 243.1 (1), permitting municipalities to amend their procedural by-laws to include a provision for proxy voting. Through this provision a member of Council would be permitted, in accordance with a process established by the Clerk, to appoint another member of Council as a proxy to act in their place when they are absent. County Council did not consider it

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necessary to amend the Procedural By-Law to include proxy voting given the ability to participate electronically and the existing provision to appoint alternates.

County Renews Contract with Independent Resolutions Inc.

Elgin County Council passed By-Law 20-45 extending the appointment of Independent Resolutions Inc. as Integrity Commissioner, Closed Meeting Investigator and Ombudsman for Elgin County for an additional two years starting on January 1, 2021.

The original contract with Independent Resolutions Inc. was approved in 2018 and had an option to renew for an additional two years. In April Council passed a resolution to renew with Independent Resolutions Inc. and directed staff to determine whether Elgin's Local Municipal Partners would continue their use of Independent Resolutions Inc.

Six (6) of Elgin's seven (7) Local Municipal Partners have indicated through Council resolution that they intend to extend their contracts with Independent Resolutions Inc. The Town of Aylmer has separate arrangements for Integrity Commissioner, Closed Meeting Investigator and Ombudsman services and will continue with these arrangements.

County Raises Childhood Awareness Cancer Flag



*Jack Hildebrand, raises
Childhood Cancer Awareness
Flag assisted by Elgin County
Staff Cole Aicken.*

At its meeting held on September 8th, County Council made a proclamation declaring September to be Childhood Cancer Awareness Month in Elgin County. After the meeting Childhood Cancer Survivor Jack Hildebrand of Belmont raised the Childhood Cancer Flag in front of the Elgin County Heritage Centre. Representatives from Childcan, childhood cancer survivors and their families were in attendance.

Warden Mennill, The Honourable Jeff Yurek, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and Jill Ferguson, a representative from MP Karen Vecchio's office, provided remarks.

The County of Elgin is honoured to work together with organizations, such as Childcan, who support families dealing with childhood cancer to raise awareness of the disease and its devastating effects. Awareness and funds raised by these

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organizations help families and children faced with childhood cancer to deal with the emotional and financial tolls associated with this disease.



"The County of Elgin stands with these families and brave children in their fight to overcome childhood cancer," said Warden Dave Mennill. "It is a privilege to have the opportunity to hear the stories of these courageous individuals and we proudly raise the Childhood Cancer Flag to draw attention to this important and worthy cause."

Paramedics Memorial Bell Ceremony



On September 8, 2020 The Warden was invited to bring greetings on behalf of Elgin County Council at a Ceremony honouring paramedics who have died or been injured in the line of duty.

Each year a ceremony takes place in Ottawa

where paramedics from across the province travel to see the Memorial Bell and pay their respects to fallen colleagues. As a result of COVID-19, the large annual ceremony in Ottawa was cancelled and instead the Memorial Bell has travelled across the Province for a series of smaller ceremonies. This has presented a rare opportunity for paramedics in Elgin County and across the Province to see the Memorial Bell and participate in ceremonies in the very communities that they serve.

It also brings a wider awareness to the challenges and risks faced by paramedics as they perform their daily duties.

"Today as we honour paramedics who have died in the line of duty or are suffering from injuries sustained on the job, we also recognize the significant contribution and sacrifices that all paramedics and their families make to ensure our communities are kept safe, said Warden Mennill. "Paramedics are the first call when Elgin County residents are sick or injured and they can always be counted on in our times of need. Thank you to paramedics in Elgin County and across Province for your continued service and dedication."

The complete September 8, 2020 County Council Agenda package can be found [here](#).