

**THE CORPORATION OF THE
TOWNSHIP OF BONNECHERE VALLEY
MINUTES
COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday March 24, 2026, 1:30 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, MUNICIPAL BUILDING AND VIA ZOOM
CONFERENCING**

PRESENT

Mayor Jennifer Murphy
Deputy Mayor Tracey Sanderson
Councillor Merv Buckwald
Councillor John Epps
CAO/Clerk Annette Gilchrist
Treasurer/Deputy CAO Sandra Barr

REGRETS

Councillor Meredith Caplan Jamieson

GALLERY **1**

CALL TO ORDER **COMMITTEE MEETING**

Chair, John Epps called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

MOVED BY **Tracey Sanderson**

THAT: The agenda be accepted, as presented.

Carried

PECUNIARY INTEREST OR GENERAL NATURE THEREOF

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED BY **Merv Buckwald**

THAT: The Minutes of the Committee Meeting on March 10, 2026, be accepted as presented.

Carried

DELEGATIONS **None**

REPORTS

Water & Sewer Department

Daryl Verch, Water & Sewer Manager, was present and gave his report.

- a) Committee recommends that the Eganville Sewage System Performance and Monitoring Report 2025 be accepted as presented;
- b) Committee recommends that the Eganville Drinking Water System Summary and Monitoring Report 2025 be accepted as presented.
Water & Sewer Report Received.

Recreation & Culture

Kevin McGrath, Manager of Recreation and Culture, was present and gave his report.

- a) The last day of ice is Sunday, March 29th. Staff will be taking the ice out the following week;
- b) The Lisa Sharpe Tournament is March 22;
- c) Figure skating is holding their Year End show on March 29;
- d) EDPS had a Teachers vs Students game on Thursday March 12;
- e) There was Public Skating throughout the week of March Break and there was a great turnout of 45 plus each day;
- f) Summer Student interviews will be held after March 28;
- g) The EHL is down to the finals, with Pembroke playing off against Killaloe;
- h) We installed a new deep fryer in the Canteen;

- i) Eagle's Nest - There are lots of hall bookings for different events:
 - o March 06 - Breakfast 8am – 10am for International Women's Day
 - o March 10 - Library Budget Meeting on March 10th
 - o March 13 - Renfrew Hospital Team Building Meeting
 - o March 17-19 - Barn Quilt Workshop
 - o March 20 - Job Fair
 - o March 29 - Figure Skating
 - o EHL every Friday and Sunday
- j) Centennial Park - The outdoor rink is closed for the season;
- k) Village - On March the 4th, staff took down the lights on the Bridge, as well as the Bonnechere Cup banner with help from the Roads Department.
Recreation Report Received.

Finance

Sandra Barr, Treasurer/Deputy CAO, was present and gave her report.

- a) The auditors were on site at the municipal office on February 19 & 20 working on the 2025 year end audit. They continue to request various documents be sent to them by email as they complete their audit process;
- b) Staff have been working on the draft 2026 budget preparing for the Budget Meeting that was held on Monday March 23, 2026;
- c) The February Income Statement was provided to Committee which compared February 2025 to February 2026 revenue and expenses;
- d) On February 19, 2026 we received \$836,353.50 from the Province for reimbursement for half of the Connecting Link Project;
- e) On February 27, 2026 Sandra attended the virtual Municipal Finance Officer Association discussion forum online;
- f) The 2026 interim tax billing was calculated and printed on March 2nd, 2026 and the bills were taken down to the Eganville Post Office on Tuesday March 3, 2026. A total of 3,307 tax bills were issued, representing a combined amount of \$3,831,052.11;
- g) On Monday March 2nd, 2026 Sandra virtually attended the Tax Policy Working Group meeting at the County of Renfrew;
- h) On March 18th, and March 20th Sandra attended a free 7.0 hour virtual webinar titled "2026 Annual Reporting Compliance Workshop". The workshop supports staff in preparing for their first and subsequent annual review of the asset management plan providing practical guidance on assessment and reporting;
- i) Provincial Regulation (O.Reg. 588/17 – Asset Management Planning for Municipal Infrastructure) required the Township of Bonnechere Valley to prepare, and Council to approve a Strategic Asset Management Policy that was adopted in 2019 under the *Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2015, S.O. 2015, c. 15*. The Township is also required to review this policy every five years thereafter. A draft updated policy has been included in your package for review. If approved, staff will bring forward a by-law for Council's consideration at the next meeting scheduled for April 7, 2026.

Finance Report Received

Administration

Annette Gilchrist, CAO/Clerk, was present and gave her report.

- a) Staff have been busy with interviews for Community Development and Admin Assistant, as well as budget finalization and the focus is now turning to the Election this Fall;
- b) Buy Ontario Act - Annette attended an AMO webinar on the Buy Ontario Act. The policy recommendations that AMO provided to the province following that webinar were provided to Committee. The main ask of municipalities was for guideline documents and resources, moving the effective date to 2027 to give everyone time to adjust their procurement procedures, flexibility in application of regulation and exemption especially for small, northern and rural municipalities where options and resources may be more limited;

- c) Assessment at Risk - The Township recently received notice of an application by the Ontario Aboriginal Housing Support Services Corporation for an exemption from property taxes from January 1, 2025, onward. This impacts 51 properties Countywide and \$36,000 in taxation for the upper tier and 15 properties and \$18,000 in taxation for Bonnechere Valley. Annette contacted Municipal Tax Equity (MTE) who did the County of Renfrew's Assessment review in 2022, and they are going to set up a municipal call after March Break. MPAC and many municipalities including the City of London and the City of Orillia have already filed a notice to appear and will be making a formal response to the application. Bonnechere Valley could file a notice of appearance and engage MTE to represent us and make a formal response to challenge the exemption application, or we could simply file a notice of appearance to ensure we receive updates but take no formal position or we could opt not to participate or respond and simply comply with the court's determination. Staff will bring back more information once we meet with MTE and other municipalities. We can also always ask MPAC for future updates;
- d) Water Reserves - The 2025 Budget included a transfer from Reserves for Water and Sewer in the amount of \$230,000 and a Loan in the amount of \$160,000.00 for capital expenditures. Expenses totalled \$296,311.64 therefore staff did not move forward with the loan of \$160,000 however we need to transfer an additional \$66,311.64 to cover the water capital expenses from the water reserve. Committee agreed to transfer of an additional \$66,311.64 out of water reserve in 2025 to cover capital expenses;
- e) The March Break Madness Calendar has been advertised;
- f) We had 1,180 plastic eggs to hide, and 99 baggies of chocolate eggs to hand out at the Easter Egg Hunt. They met at the Geo Trail entrance and walk over the McCrear Park for the hunt;
- g) Summer Job Fair - Opeongo High School assisted us with spreading the word to local high school students. They had 11 local organizations/businesses at the Job Fair.
- a. Bonnechere Caves
 - b. Bonnechere Union Public Library
 - c. Bonnechere Valley Fire Rescue
 - d. County of Renfrew
 - e. Eganville & District Seniors
 - f. Enterprise Renfrew County
 - g. Opeongo Mountain Resort
 - h. Rio Tap & Grill
 - i. The Granary Restaurant
 - j. Township of Bonnechere Valley
 - k. Whitetail Golf Club
- h) 25th Amalgamation Committee - The 25th button is now on the Township's website home page. Staff continue to advertise the monthly events;
- i) Eganville and Area Community Development Group has started selling tickets for the 2026 Duck Race;
- j) Newsletters - The March/April newsletters have been distributed to residents.
Administrative Report Received.

CORRESPONDENCE

(A) Correspondence "A"

1. AMO Watchfile March 12
2. AMO Watchfile March 19
3. AMO Policy March 11
4. FCM Communique March 17
5. EORN Renfrew County February 2026
6. Algonquin Forest Annual Work Schedule

7. Ottawa Valley Forest Annual Work Schedule
8. Integrity Commissioners Annual Report

(B) Correspondence "B"

1. Support for Bill 21 Protect our Food Act 2025
2. Supporting Avon Maitland District School Board
3. Restricting Public Consumption of Illegal Substances Act
4. Rideau Lakes Concerns re Alto High Speed Rail Project
5. Request for a Comprehensive Review of the Provincial-Municipal Fiscal Framework
6. Reduced Rate Distribution of Library Resources
7. Support Request from AORS

B.1 Committee agreed to support the resolution for Bill 21 Protect our Food Act 2025 and directed staff to bring a support resolution to the April 7 meeting of Council.

(C) Correspondence "C"

NEW/UNFINISHED BUSINESS

ESTABLISH NEXT MEETING DATE

The next Committee Meeting will be held on Tuesday April 7, 2026.

MEDIA SESSION

CLOSED SESSION

MOVED BY Tracey Sanderson

THAT: Committee proceed in Closed Session in accordance with the Municipal Act 2001, section 239.2 to deal with the matters as indicated below:
(b) Personal matters about an identifiable individual

Carried

MOVED BY Merv Buckwald

THAT: Committee moves out of Closed Session at 2:59 p.m. to rise and report that Committee met to receive information and give staff direction regarding the Senior of the Year Nominations and approved minutes from March 10, 2026.

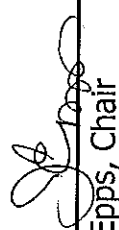
Carried

CONCLUSION

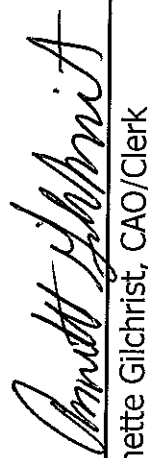
MOVED BY Tracey Sanderson

THAT: the meeting adjourns at 3:01 p.m.

Carried



John Epps, Chair



Annette Gilchrist, CAO/Clerk