

**THE CORPORATION OF THE
TOWNSHIP OF BONNECHERE VALLEY
MINUTES
COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY FEBRUARY 4, 2025 1:30 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, MUNICIPAL BUILDING AND VIA ZOOM
CONFERRING**

PRESENT

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

REGRETS

Councillor Tracey Sanderson

GALLERY

None

CALL TO ORDER COMMITTEE MEETING

Chair, Jennifer Murphy called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

MOVED BY Merv Buckwald

THAT: The agenda be accepted as presented.

Carried

PECUNIARY INTEREST OR GENERAL NATURE THEREOF

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED BY Brent Patrick

That: The Minutes of the Committee Meeting on January 14, 2025 be accepted as presented.

Carried

DELEGATIONS

REPORTS

Water & Sewer Department

Daryl Verch, Water & Sewer Manager was not present. Report submitted.

- a) The Eganville Drinking Water System continues to operate in full compliance with all requirements;
- b) The coating contractor was on site to do some measuring for his dust containment equipment and he said he will begin work the last week of February;
- c) The annual compliance report for the Water Treatment Plant is approximately 75% complete;
- d) The yearly schedule 23 & 24 along with the HAA's, THM's, Nitrites Nitrates Sodium and samples were all collected and delivered to the Caduceon Laboratory in Ottawa;
- e) The Eganville Sewage System continues to operate in full compliance according to the Provincial Guidelines that are set out in the Certificate of Approval;
- f) The annual compliance report for the Wastewater Plant is approximately 75% complete.

Water & Sewer Report Received.

Works & Waste Department

Jason Zohr, Works Superintendent was present and gave his report.

- a) Circular Materials Ontario Municipal Working Group Meeting - Dana Barkley participated in the Zoom Meeting. The meeting provided general transition

updates for the 2025 transitioning communities and did a recap of 2026 planning;

- b) Share, Reuse, Repair Hub Information Session for Municipalities - Dana Barkley participated in the zoom session by Circular Innovation Council which presented on the "Share, Reuse, Repair Hub". The Share, Reuse, Repair hub aims to generate interest in local Canadian businesses and events and empowers residents to fix what they own; swap, share and borrow instead of buy; purchase secondhand good; and learn new skills that make life more affordable. The hub educates communities about the circular economy to build resilient and prosperous communities. <https://shareuserepairhub.ca>
- c) County of Renfrew Transportation Master Plan - Jason Zohr participated in the call concerning the County of Renfrew's Transportation Master Plan. The process was done in collaboration with the Town of Arnprior, Township of Horton, Township of Whitewater Region and the Township of Bonnechere Valley. The plan looks at the landscape of transportation infrastructure within the local municipalities within the County and looks at the future.
- d) Sand Road Waste Site - The Sand Road Waste Site will be closed on Monday, February 17, 2024 in recognition of the Family Day holiday;
- e) 2024 Summary of Vehicle Counts - The table below is the stats for the year 2024 for all our waste sites and the tallies are based on vehicle counts from the waste site attendants

Location	# of Vehicle s	# of Household Bags	Glass/ Cans	Paper/ Cardboa rd	Brush/ Clean Lumbe r	Applic s	Organic s	Propan e Tanks	Scrap Meta l	Tire s	WE E
Sand Road	13,280	15,621	7,542	7,464	1,823	193	434	30	1113	0	610
Lake Clear	3,492	4,353	3,424	3,275	248	8	426	0	175	0	23
McGrath	2,153	2,714	1,985	1,990	0	0	136	0	0	0	0
Hwy 41	2,427	3,143	2,238	2,218	0	0	142	0	0	0	0
Ruby Road	3,506	2,376	2,044	1,959	427	15	770	218	811	170	0
Totals	24,858	28,207	17,233	16,906	2,498	216	1908	248	2099	170	633

Summary of Sno Drifters Traffic 2024

Date	Vehicle Count	C&D/ Shingles	WEE	Bulky Item	Tires	Metal	FREE Passes	Complaints	Weight KG's
Sno Drifters	1,312	1,279	5	323	1,143	152	580	0	673,078

Works Department Report Received.

Building & Fire Department

Darryl Wagner, CBO & Fire Chief was present and gave his report.

- a) The Department had three calls for service in January 2025;
- b) Fire fighter recruitment is ongoing;
- c) Lights in hall are being replaced with more efficient and brighter led lights, the lights were donated;
- d) Due to its success, we are looking to add a second night for junior fire fighters. We have had bunker gear donated from our neighbors so the juniors will not need to share;
- e) Staff are looking to have a 20' shipping container brought down from the Foymount Hall and placed next to the propane tank and will not impede if tank ever needs replacing. There are training aids and other various items in the hall that are utilized but minimally. Committee supports moving of the shipping container. They have a gear dryer coming soon which will be a permanent fixture.

Fire Department & Building Report Received.

CORRESPONDENCE

(A) Correspondence "A"

1. AMO Policy 2025 Pre Budget Submission
2. AMO Policy Jan 19, 2025
3. 2025-01-28 MOH Report
4. County of Renfrew 2025 ROMA

(B) Correspondence "B"

1. Safer Municipalities Act
2. Legion Service Recognition Book
3. Letter of Support Children's Aid Society
4. Library Events for 2025 - Request to waive fees for Eagles Nest
5. Ontario Filmmaker Directory Request
6. Renfrew County Veterinary Services
7. Sovereignty of Canada
8. Sunshine Coach Request for Support

(C) Correspondence "C"

1. Count of Renfrew Road Rehabilitation Assessment
2. Resolution regarding TAPMO Letter regarding Pre-Budget Announcement

B.2 Committee supports the advertisement in the Legion Service Recognition Book;

B.4 Committee supports the waiver of the fees for the Eagle's Nest for the Library's 2025 events;

B.6 Committee supports the Renfrew County Veterinary Services and direct staff to pay the \$280 fee;

B.8 Committee supports the request from the Sunshine Coach Request for Support.

NEW/UNFINISHED BUSINESS

(1) Councillor Patrick 2025-2026 Council Initiatives – Councillor Patrick provided his proposals and priorities for 2025 and 2026 to committee;

(2) Mayor's Report – Since her last report, the Mayor has attended 31 meetings and several events. Some of the highlights are as follows;

County Council met on January 15th and 29th. The Mayor reported that their new meeting model seems to be working but does make for very full days.

The advocacy efforts at the ROMA Conference have already started to pay off as the County of Renfrew has benefited from several funding announcements. This includes funding for a Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hub, a roundabout at the intersection of two County Roads in the Town of Petawawa, and additional funding to tackle homelessness.

Each Committee had an opportunity to review departmental budgets, highlighted by business plans from the Directors, and financial implications moderated by Treasurer Daniel Burke. A Special Meeting of County Council will be held on February 6th to further discuss the 2025 County of Renfrew Budget.

Of note, the following County of Renfrew capital projects will be completed in Bonnechere Valley in 2025:

- **County Road 64 (Opeongo Road)** from County Road 512 (Foymount Rd.) to Wieland Shore Road - Length: 10.95 km with a budget of \$3,677,520

- **County Road 70 (Ruby Road)** from Gorman Road to Wolfe Road -Length: 3.2 km with a budget of \$1,007,836
- **County Road 512 (Foymount Road)** from County Road 515 (Quadeville Rd.) to McCauley Mountain Road - Length: 4.27 km with a budget of \$1,957,720
- **County Road 512 (Foymount Road)** from Silver Lake Road to Highway 41 - Length: 7.65 km with a budget of \$2,816,110

These projects represent an investment of almost 9.5 million dollars in our township.

ROMA - The ROMA Board of Directors met on November 15th, 2024 virtually.

The meeting included policy updates from AMO for our priorities, but focused mostly on homelessness and housing with emphasis on:

- The Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund
- MMAH Housing Forum
- AMO policy update calling for provincial action, federal encampments funding, AMO Knowledge Exchange on Community and Supportive Housing, AMO's Helpseeker homelessness data

The Board also spent quite a bit of time getting ready for the upcoming ROMA conference, which, even at that time was evident that it was going to be a very large event.

Once again, Minister Calandra of Municipal Affairs and Housing, gave us an hour of his time we were able to have a back and forth frank conversation about Rural Ontario. One frustration is that he would not engage in a conversation about a Social and Economic prosperity review which AMO and ROMA have asked for.

The ROMA Board of Directors also met on December 20th, 2024 virtually.

Kevin Holland, MPP for Thunder Bay-Atikokan, And the associate minister for Forestry and forestry products, met with us as a follow up to our trip to Thunder Bay. MPP Holland is very interested in what the Roma Board's priorities are, especially how they align with needs in the North.

Judy Diesel from LAS gave an update on One Investment small municipalities. Across Ontario. This was a very interesting presentation and Mayor Murphy indicated she would be pleased to share the slide deck with anybody that thinks that One Investment could help with investing prudently for the future.

The remainder of our December meeting was preparing for the January ROMA conference.

EORN - The Cell Gap Project continues to make remarkable strides, and Jennifer is pleased to report that the team has achieved some key milestones. They have successfully completed construction of 100 new towers that are now in service, as well as the completion of construction on 60 colocations. The final tower upgrade to the 311 existing Rogers towers in our regions with 5G was completed in December of 2024, further propelling us toward our goal of completing the project by 2026. These efforts are instrumental in helping us meet our ambitious service targets of 99% voice services, 95% Standard Definition coverage, and 85% high-definition coverage.

In addition to the Cell Gap Project, EORN remains committed to supporting municipalities across eastern Ontario, particularly through our partnership with Rural Impact Canada. In 2024, EORN assisted in creating Rural Impact Canada's mission to help small and rural municipalities address the complex challenges they face in development of affordable housing and other initiatives which promote growth and stability for municipalities. Rural Impact Canada through the CMHC Housing Supply Challenge has been awarded phase one and two funding which aims to tackle barriers to growth in communities. Work is being completed

on third and final application for phase three funding now.

EORN was proud to release our 5-year strategic plan in 2024 which will be a comprehensive roadmap that includes expanding our non-profit status to offer a broader range of services. In addition to broadband and cellular services, our updated letter of patent now allows us to provide project management services, infrastructure project support, technology service support, and municipal support.

RCDHU - The Health Unit Board met on December 19th, January 7th and January 28th. The main topic of these meetings was budget and discussion of other health unit mergers. Dr. Morganstern's report is in our Correspondence.

Other Items - LAS has asked Mayor Murphy to sit on a panel to investigate Water and Wastewater solutions for rural Ontario. The Terms of Reference and a Resolution of this Council are included in the Council package.

Closing out 2024 - Bonnechere Valley remains committed to our mission of creating an affordable, efficient community where people choose to live, work, and thrive while embracing a rural lifestyle and fostering communication, personal growth, and commerce. In 2024, the Township took significant steps to advance this vision, with measurable progress across key areas.

Key Accomplishments in 2024

1. Community Engagement and Communication

- **Youth Summit:** Hosted the "Uplift Youth" summit, aligning with AMO's "Healthy Democracy" initiative, promoting civility and youth participation.
- **Community Activities:**
 - Public skating events.
 - Junior Firefighters program to inspire the next generation.
 - Fundraisers, including the Beer and Wine Fest, raising funds for playground equipment at Legion Field.
- **Upcoming Initiatives:** Launching a Career Fair in 2025.

2. Infrastructure and Asset Management

- Participated in all applicable government grant programs, including the Housing Enabling Fund.
- Completed essential projects like Zadow Road improvements and ditching work, ensuring our infrastructure meets the needs of residents.

3. Responsible Growth and Heritage Preservation

- **Development Growth:** Focused on sustainable development while maintaining fiscal responsibility.
- **Heritage Projects:** Completed a museum mural project celebrating our rural heritage and character.

4. Modernized Service Delivery

- **Budget Management:** Maintained a competitive 4.95% tax increase despite economic challenges, ensuring fiscal responsibility and efficient service delivery.
- **Technology Upgrades:** Introduced "File Hold" document management software for streamlined operations.
- **Flex Hours:** Piloted a summer flex-hour program to improve work-life balance for staff.

5. Supporting a Thriving Business Community

- Implemented a Community Improvement Plan and launched Shop Local campaigns to support businesses and stimulate local commerce.

Advocacy Efforts

- **Engaged Provincial Ministries:** Advocated for equitable treatment and funding for small municipalities, including discussions with:
 - Solicitor General (fire apparatus governance).
 - Ministry of Transportation (snowplow driver exemptions).
 - Ministry of Energy (Small Hydro Program extension).
- **Successes:**
 - Joint delegation approval for hydro program extension with Renfrew and Mississippi Mills.
 - Secured an OMPF increase of \$100 million over two years.
- **Shared Services and Sustainability**
 - Partnered with neighboring townships on shared services, including asset management and waste reduction programs.
 - Collaborated on initiatives like the Rural Transit Solutions Fund (rideshare) and a swim program with NAW.
 - Transitioned to the Blue Box program and continued hazardous waste management.

Enhancing the Bonnechere Valley Brand

- Adjusted our website for waste site accessibility and developed plans for a newcomer welcome package.
- Continued to engage residents through a well-received municipal newsletter.

Other Milestones

- Introduced new property standards and clean yard by-laws.
- Supported the community with essential services like the paramedic base.
- Lobbied Province for additional funding for OPP increases.

In 2024, Bonnechere Valley demonstrated that even as a small rural municipality, we can achieve big things. From strengthening community ties to advancing infrastructure and advocating for fair treatment, we've laid a strong foundation for an even more successful 2025. Our mission and vision continue to guide every decision we make, ensuring we remain a place where people choose to live, work, and thrive.

Looking Ahead to 2025 -

Budget Challenges and Fiscal Responsibility

We anticipate a challenging Budget Workshop in 2025, with a strong focus on balancing service levels and fiscal restraints across all sectors. This process will require a collaborative approach from staff and council.

Community Engagement and Youth Initiatives

- **Youth Summit 2025:** Building on the success of the 2024 Youth Summit, we plan to:
 - Establish a Youth Council involving both local schools.
 - Organize engaging community events such as:
 - A dog show.
 - Increased use of the canteen facilities.
 - An "Adults vs. Kids" hockey game to foster intergenerational connections.
 - Continue engaging with schools by attending Grade 5 civics classes and Grade 10 sessions at Opeongo High School.
- **Advocacy Priorities for 2025**

We remain committed to advocating for the needs of our municipality, focusing on:

 - Water and wastewater infrastructure improvements.
 - Fair treatment for fire training and apparatus requirements.
 - Addressing CVOR rules for plow operators.

- Securing an annual increase in the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund (OMPF).
- Enhancing the Provincial Gas Tax allocation.

Honoring Veterans and Enhancing Community Spaces

Legion Field:

- Install a new sign and explore creating a walkway dedicated to veterans.
- Plant additional trees to enhance the space and honor those who served.

Gerald Tracey Park: Continue development and enhancement of this key community space

2025 will be a year of collaboration, innovation, and perseverance as we navigate fiscal challenges while continuing to build a stronger, more vibrant Bonnechere Valley. From fostering youth engagement to enhancing our public spaces and advocating for fair policies, we remain dedicated to our mission of making our municipality an exceptional place to live, work, and thrive.

Events - On January 9th and 10th, the Mayor brought greetings to the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus in Kingston as the Chair of EORN. Congratulations to the new caucus Chair, Bonnie Clark, and Vice-Chair, Steve Ferguson.

Due to illness, Jennifer was unable to attend a euchre tournament on January 25th dedicated to Guy Jamieson in support of Music in the Park. Jennifer has been advised that this event was a huge success. On January 27th and 28th, Jennifer attended the funding announcements for the County. On February 2nd, Jennifer attended the 49th Annual Snowmobile races and brought greetings and thanks on behalf of our community.

ROMA Conference - At last count there were 1946 delegates at the conference and the tradeshow floor was sold out. On Saturday, January 18th, the ROMA board met for two purposes. The first of which was to have a meeting with their media consultants, Redbrick, to ensure that they were ready for inquiries by the press. With the looming inauguration, the resignation of the Prime Minister, and the question of provincial election, it was important that they were prepared.

On Saturday, they also met to finalize all details of the conference and understand our roles for the next few days. We reviewed our schedules for Zone meet-ups and our concurrent sessions/learning lunches.

They also reviewed the policy highlights including ROMA and AMO uniting on a pre-budget and pre-election priority and advocacy plan, seeking practical solutions for homelessness, Provincial for support for housing enabling infrastructure, advocacy for rural access to Primary healthcare, continued work on broadband connectivity, and support in energy procurements.

On Sunday, January 19th, Mayor Murphy hosted the Zone 6 meet up. These meetups are so important to have meaningful dialogue with the delegates.

On Sunday, Jennifer opened up a concurrent session response to mental health and addictions, which included our own, Mike Nolan, Director of Emergency Services and Chief Paramedic to speak to unique considerations around mental health and addictions in rural communities, as well as featuring successful rural responses to this crisis. Unfortunately, Jennifer had another meeting to get to very quickly, so the Warden took over chairing the remainder of this session.

On Sunday, the ROMA Board had a multi-ministerial meeting with Minister Paul Calandra, Minister Sylvia Jones and Minister Lisa Thompson to Homelessness, Health and Infrastructure. Each of our leads did an exemplary job of presenting the issues, and then included another board member to share a story from their municipality.

Mayor Murphy led the infrastructure conversation and was able to include statistics from Bonnechere Valley and then had another Board member speak to the amount of eroding bridges they have. We had already had the “knock on the door” when we started with infrastructure, so they did give us a lot more time which we were very thankful for.

Of note is a Provincial initiative called “Practice Ready Ontario” that was announced in 2023, which was to bring 50 immigrant doctors and accelerate their licensing process in 2024. In fact, in 2024 they were able to recruit 28 new doctors. In 2025, they are trying to recruit 100 new Doctors for rural and remote Ontario through this accelerated licensing process.

On Monday, January 20th, Mayor Murphy attended the plenary program which included remarks from ROMA Chair, Christa Lowry, Premier Ford and Minister Rob Flack, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agri-business.

On Monday, January 20th, Annette and Mayor Murphy met with Parliamentary Assistant, Zee Hamid, Ministry of Finance, to discuss other revenue tools. These proposed funding sources include the 1% local share on the HST, the upload of the School Boards and the removal of the 1.76% HST that we do not retain. PA Hamid was very interested in the 1.76% HST and was going to debrief with Minister Bethlanfalvy after our delegation.

On Monday, January 20th, Jennifer met with Parliamentary Assistant, Ric Bresee, Ministry of Transportation to discuss the exemption of Plow Truck Operators from CVOR rules around hours of operation. PA Bresee included the Assistant Deputy Minister, who indicated that it would be very difficult to achieve this however if our Roads’ Superintendents could arrive at a possible solution, they would meet with us again.

The following was provided by Lee Perkins, Director of Operations at the County of Renfrew: During our staff meeting on January 9th, 2025, two MTO officers attended to discuss the County’s CVOR requirements. It is important to note that the MTO and the Ministry of Labour have different regulations regarding hours of work. The two officers, Mr. Darren Martin and Mr. Marty Recoskie, provided valuable insights. Jennifer strongly recommends arranging a meeting between them and Jason Zohr.

On Monday, January 20th, Jennifer attended the plenary session which included speakers NDP Leader and official opposition leader, Marit Stiles, President of AMO, Robin Jones, and Minister Paul Calandra, MMAH.

On Monday, January 20th, Jennifer attended the Ministers’ Forum, where we once again urged the Province to complete a Social and Economic Prosperity Review.

On Tuesday, January 21st, Jennifer attended the plenary session which included remarks from the Leader of the Liberal Party, Bonnie Crombie, and Leader of the Green Party, Mike Schreiner.

During the conference, Mayor Mu also had the opportunity to speak with Minister of Finance, Peter Bethlanfalvy, Minister of Forestry, Graydon Smith, Attorney General, Doug Downy, MPP Laurie Scott, Minister of Rural Affairs, Lisa Thompson, Minister of Health, Sylvia Jones, Minister of Infrastructure, Kinga Surma, and Minister of Women’s Affairs, Charmaine Williams.

(3) LAS Water and Wastewater Committee Report – Committee received the Water and Wastewater Utility Business Case Development. Committee recommends that Mayor Jennifer Murphy be nominated to participate in the Municipal

Committee being created by LAS to develop a business case for potentially creating a joint municipal services corporation for water and wastewater

ESTABLISH NEXT MEETING DATE

The next Meeting will be held on Tuesday February 18, 2025.

MEDIA SESSION

CONCLUSION

MOVED BY John Epps

THAT: the meeting adjourns at 3:14 p.m.

Carried

Jennifer Murphy

Jennifer Murphy, Chair

Annette Gilchrist

for Annette Gilchrist, CAO/Clerk