

**THE CORPORATION OF THE  
TOWNSHIP OF BONNECHERE VALLEY  
MINUTES  
COMMITTEE MEETING  
TUESDAY DECEMBER 16, 2025, 1:30 P.M.  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, MUNICIPAL BUILDING AND VIA ZOOM  
CONFERENCING**

**PRESENT**

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

**REGRETS** None

**GALLERY** 1

**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** Tracey Sanderson

**THAT:** The Minutes of the Committee Meeting on December 2, 2025, be accepted as presented.

Carried

**DELEGATIONS**

**REPORTS**

**Water & Sewer Department**

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

a) 2026 Budget – Committee discussed the budget. The budget represents approximately a 3% increase in the water and sewer rates.

*Water & Sewer Budget Report Received.*

**Recreation & Culture**

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

a) The Christmas parade was December 14<sup>th</sup> at 1pm;

b) The Christmas party was very well attended, and there were many compliments about the dinner;

c) Private daytime ice rentals are filling up over the Christmas break;

d) Parent/Tot and Senior Skates happen every Monday afternoon and have good attendance;

e) Figure Skating is hosting a Christmas show on December 21st, starting at 5:30pm;

f) Public skating has been well attended, with 50+ people. We have had as many as 70 people participating;

- g) Adam Bernard is renting ice every Wednesday morning as a training camp in January;
  - h) The arena is closed December 24, 25, 26, 31 and January 1;
  - i) Eagles Nest hall has five private rentals this month;
  - j) Gerald Tracey Park – Staff started the outdoor rink the second week of December;
  - k) Village - There was a great turn out for the tree lighting at the tourist booth and the lighting of the bridge on November 28th. Christmas songs were sung, and hot chocolate was served. The tree has grown 8 inches since last year.
- Recreation Report Received.*

### **Finance**

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

- a) The November 12, 2025 Provisional Budget Report and the Balance Sheet as of October 31, 2025 were provided to Committee;
- b) Calculated and billed out property tax Write Off's in the amount of \$1,382.05;
- c) Transferred \$58,240.29 in water and sewer arrears over to the property tax accounts as per Section 398(2) of the Municipal Act, R.S.O.2001, as amended;
- d) On November 24, 2025 we received our second and final CCBF payment in the amount of \$63,829.99;
- e) Processed the final volunteer Fire Fighter payroll for fifteen volunteer firefighters for 2025 in the amount of \$30,099.67;
- f) Received our 2026 OPP Annual Billing Statement total cost is \$855,923 which is an 11% increase over 2025. (The amount of our costs uncapped would have been \$991,397). Included in your package is a copy of the 2026 Annual Billing Statement;
- g) Township was notified by the Ministry of Finance that the "Property Tax Reassessment Planning for the next reassessment requires a balanced and thoughtful approach to ensure substantial market shifts do not create unmanageable impacts on taxpayers. With tariff impacts and the on-going trade threats, it is also important that Ontario maintains property assessment certainty. Therefore, the government will continue to hold property assessment values stable across the province and continue to defer the province-wide property tax reassessment for the 2026 taxation year.";
- h) Reconciled the accounts and issued the final installments to the four local school boards and the County of Renfrew for their respective shares of the taxes collected on their behalf. The total payment of \$866,092.40 is due on December 15, 2025;
- i) Collaborating with the CAO and other staff on the transition of our Asset Management and Maintenance software to Citywide;
- j) The financial statements for 2024 were reported to the Province in May 2025 upon completion of the audit. The Province reviewed our financial data and issued a *Financial Indicator Review* for 2024, a copy of which was included in your package. This review provides an assessment of the Township's financial health; however, it represents only a snapshot at a single point in time and should not be interpreted in isolation. The Province also compares our financial indicators to those of other municipalities of similar size.

### **Financial Indicator Review**

- **Taxes Receivables:** Our risk is has increased from Low to Moderate at 11.1% (we tend to fluctuate between 8 & 10%) This indicates that for the most part our rate payers are able to pay their taxes, however compared to similar municipalities our tax arrears are slightly higher.
- **Net Financial Assets or Net Debt as a % of Own Source Revenues:** Our debt risk is Low, however our debt level is higher compared to similar municipalities. The increase from 2022 to 2023 was the amount of borrowing that the Township did in 2023.

*The Net Financial Assets or Net Debt as a % of Own Source Revenues indicator is a measure of how much tax and fee revenue exists in relation to debt. A positive amount indicates that resources may be available for future needs. A negative amount provides a measure of the future revenue that may be required to pay for past spending decisions. If the percentage is moving from negative to positive, then the municipal debt is becoming less of a "burden" on a municipality's own source revenues. Conversely, if the percentage is increasing to a larger negative amount, debt is increasing at a rate that may be unsustainable.*

- **Total reserves and Discretionary Reserves as a % of Municipal**

**Expenses:** We are at 50.4% as our reserves are holding due to our AMP and Reserve Policy. Based on the average Risk is low which is good. However, we are lower than the average which is 82.6%.

*The Total Reserves and Discretionary Reserves as a % of Municipal Expenses indicator looks at how much money is set aside for future needs and contingencies. A high risk in this category could indicate that the municipality has limited flexibility to offset non-budgeted revenue losses, emergency expenses and future capital replacement / upgrades. Reserve levels decreasing over time could indicate a municipality is depleting its reserves.*

- **Cash Ratio:** which represents our cash flow – our Risk is low – this is due to the reserves.

- **Flexibility Indicators**

- **Debt Servicing Cost as a % of Total Revenues:** - we are at 8.2% - our risk is moderate.

*The Debt Servicing Cost as a % of Total Revenues indicator looks at how much of each dollar raised in revenue is spent paying down existing debt. This indicator illustrates the extent to which past borrowing decisions present a constraint on your municipality's ability to meet current commitments. Specifically, the more current revenues a municipality uses to meet the costs of past borrowing, the less money will be available for program spending. A high risk for this indicator suggests that the municipality's debt may represent fiscal pressures, unless sufficient additional revenue is raised to cover the debt repayments. An increasing indicator could indicate that the municipality has taken on additional debt. It may also indicate that debt repayment has been accelerated or that a balloon payment has been made. Alternatively, it may show that total revenues have decreased.*

- Closing Amort Balance is at 55.6% – is also rated a Moderate level of risk. As far as the Province is concerned we are in a good position. But we are consuming our assets faster than we are replacing them. We are using Debt to service our assets. (we are borrowing to fix / or replace assets). However the average is 48.8% so we are not far off the average.
- Annual Surplus at -3.9% is Moderate, compared to the average which is 12.9%

#### *Finance Report Received*

#### **Administration**

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

- a) The 2026 Annual AMO Conference will be in Ottawa from August 16 – 19, 2026. As you are busy preparing for the holidays make sure you mark your calendars for January 6, 2026 at 10:00 A.M. EST, as hotel bookings for the conference open. Please let us know if you wish to attend as we do not have another meeting until after January 6<sup>th</sup>;
- b) Results are in for those who filled out the anonymous survey regarding my performance and between 89% and 100% agree or strongly agree with the statements below.
- Manages all aspects of the Corporation's operations in an effective manner.

- Plans well in advance but is able to adjust quickly and effectively to changing circumstances and priorities.
  - Represents the organization in a positive and professional manner and effectively utilizes available communication channels.
  - Interacts with staff and with external stakeholders in a positive and professional manner.
  - Participates in professional activities and encourages continuing development for all Bonnechere Valley Staff.
  - Engages in honest, open, concerned and congenial relations with staff including open communication and respectful problem solving.
  - Demonstrates an ability to think strategically and possess clear vision.
  - Encourages and rewards initiative. Believes and demonstrates employee empowerment.
  - Motivates and develops others through clear direction and goal setting.
  - Leads by example and exhibits integrity and humility.
  - Areas for improvement were employee empowerment and goal setting. I will set up conversations in the new year with staff to see how I can support them better in this regard;
- c) Work continues for the software transition and staff have some large projects coming up in 2026. Between capital projects for the Arena, water, sewer, storm and road investments, the ride share program, recycling transition, 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of amalgamation and the election staff are at capacity for 2026 initiatives and very grateful for funding opportunities and Council's support for continued investment in capital and new initiatives for Bonnechere Valley;
- d) The inaugural meeting of County Council was held on December 10<sup>th</sup> with Mayor Murphy being elected Warden;
- e) Meetings continue with AMO and LAS on water and wastewater as well as utility leadership and service excellence. Annette has been asked to join an MPAC municipal liaison group along with the City of Kingston and City of Ottawa. The Mayor, Treasurer and Annette will be meeting with BMO on December 15<sup>th</sup> in follow up to our December 10<sup>th</sup> meeting;
- f) We are commencing our second cohort for the municipal administration program in collaboration with the Renfrew County Clerks and Treasurers Association and Association of Municipal Managers Clerks and Treasurers and with support from the County of Renfrew. I have reached out to the local treasurers to confirm their 2026 OPP Costs and update the spreadsheet from 2025 for our delegation with the Solicitor General. I am looking forward to our training session on December 18<sup>th</sup> with Council and Department Heads and strengthening the team for 2026;
- g) Health and Safety Policy – Committee was provided a copy of the health and safety policy, which must be reviewed and reconfirmed by Council on an annual basis;
- h) Recycling - Transition Changes to take effect in January 2026 are as follows:  
Depots - Circular Materials has agreed to service all our depots. The Township signed an agreement and will receive payment for maintenance of these depots. There are very little non eligible source materials coming to our depots. We will provide bins for non-eligibles along with Millers Waste the provincial contractor for residential sources. Millers will pick up once a week similar to what Barrons Disposal does now however, there will be no cost to the Township for hauling or processing residential recycling as these are paid by the province. We have asked Barrons Disposal to continue to assist us with hauling waste from the Depots weekly and hauling non-eligibles to Emterra on a monthly basis for Sand and Ruby and on-call for the other 3 sites. This will result in savings as we currently have Barrons hauling recycling weekly from all sites. We will review at year end to determine if additional savings can be found. There will be no change to service for our residents using the Depots.
- Village Collection - Millers subcontracted BV staff for residential collection. This revenue will cover all of our expenses including our garbage truck loan

payments. This will reduce the amount currently funded through property taxes. There will be no change in service for our residential properties. For non-eligibles Millers will pick up for our 51 non eligible sites as part of the Renfrew County Recycling Group until March 2027. An agreement will come forward to Council in January. As we are part of the larger Renfrew County Group there will be a change for our businesses. The change will be communicated through the newsletter, social media, the website, a letter to each business and the newspaper. The pick up for non eligibles will now be Friday instead of Tuesday and the materials will have to be brought out to the curb. The curb requirement will impact 3 businesses which currently receive pick up from the back of their properties and we will reach out to them individually to ensure they are aware. The Renfrew County Recycling Group has been meeting regularly to ensure we are all prepared for the January 1<sup>st</sup> transition. Jason, Dana and Annette met with Millers to finalize the details on non eligible sources. The regulation states that the municipality is not responsible for collecting recycling or waste from commercial sites. The processing facilities are also not responsible for these materials. We want to continue to offer this service and working as a group in Renfrew County provides us with purchasing power to ensure we have somewhere to take it that is not our landfill at a reasonable price. This and the fact that we are having staffing challenges for our sanitation collection in the village and adding another day and service at this time would be difficult is the reason we are moving forward with Millers for non eligible collection. We will review at the end of 2026. The contract is until March 2027;

- i) 2026 Election - Staff continue training for the upcoming election. Annette contacted Andrew Poiley, Brian Weckwerth and Brenda Pilatzke and all have agreed to continue on as our Compliance Audit Committee members for the next term of Council. A by-law will come forward to a future meeting. We also received our contract for mail in ballots and we continue to work with elections Ontario on the electors list;
- j) Official Plan Amendment Appeal - The official plan amendment for Lake Clear has been appealed. Annette will speak to our lawyer to get an estimate on our legal fees for budget deliberations. There is no action required at this time but this does put our amendment on hold;
- k) Proposed Site Plan – Committee was provided with a copy of a proposed site plan agreement reviewed by our Solicitor. The only comments back were that it should be registered on title which is part of the conditions of approval so does not need to be added to the agreement specifically and the there is no text in the agreement obligating the owners to implement the hydrogeological recommendations so we should add a clause specifically stating that. If there are no further comments or concerns staff can make this change and bring forward with a by-law for at our January meeting;
- l) Transfer from Reserves Resolution for Council - Committee directed staff to allocate \$47,347 from reserves to the purchase and implementation of this software;
- m) Surplus Equipment Resolution for Council - the following equipment is hereby declared surplus: a 2007 Sterling Tandem Garbage Truck with McNielus Compactor, Model LT7501, 197,000 km and a 2009 Chevrolet Extended Cab 4x4 Truck with 423,000 km;
- n) Year End Provincial Reports Due - The Accessibility and Information Reports are due by December 31. 2025, Annette will provide a copy in January Report;
- o) Church Book - As requested by Council, Sarah has taken photos of the following churches:
  - a. St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church – 109 Victoria St.
  - b. St. Clements Anglican Church – 3603 Opeongo Rd.
  - c. Eganville Baptist Church – 326 Bonnechere St. W.
  - d. Sebastopol Baptist Church – 374 Baptist Church Rd.
  - e. Grace Lutheran Church – 14 Bonnechere St. W.
  - f. St. John’s Lutheran Church – 5186 Opeongo Rd.

- g. St. Luke's Lutheran Church – 77 Hartwig St.
- h. Zion Lutheran Church – 1251 Augsburg Rd.
- i. St. John's Lutheran Church – 799 Silver Lake Rd.
- j. St. James Catholic Church – 70 Wellington St.
- k. St. Ann's Catholic Church – 50 McCauley Mountain Rd.
- l. St. Joseph's Catholic Church – 2720 Opeongo Rd.
- m. Salem Evangelical Missionary Church – 7 Crimson Maple Rd;  
Once Complete they will be uploaded to the website;
- p) Games at the Eagle's Nest Staff have sent out the call for volunteers. So far, only one response received from one individual. Staff will continue posting. It is also on the website and will be in the next edition of the newsletter;
- q) 25<sup>th</sup> Amalgamation Committee - The call for volunteers will be going out on social media and website this week. Staff have emailed the local community groups to see if they are interested, as well as requesting any events that can be used as part of the combined advertising. This will also be going in the next edition of the newsletter;
- r) Canada Day 2026 - Staff have reached out to a local artist, who did a shadow puppet show for Golden Lake's Tree Lighting, to see if this were something we would like to explore for Canada Day. She works in a community arts model. This engages community members in developing the storyline, creating the puppets and performing together. Staff have requested an estimate cost.

*Administrative Report Received.*

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

### **(A) Correspondence "A"**

- 1. AMO Dec 5
- 2. AMO Dec 11
- 3. AMO Policy Nov 28
- 4. AMO Policy Dec 3
- 5. AMO Policy Dec 5
- 6. County Construction Update December 2025
- 7. EOWC Dec 12
- 8. FCM Dec 2
- 9. FCM Dec 12
- 10. Renfrew County November 2025.

### **(B) Correspondence "B"**

- 1. Site Ready Funding Criteria
- 2. Notification Letter - Streamlined EA Municipal Infrastructure
- 3. OPA Appeal Acknowledgement Letter
- 4. Ontario Pre Budget Consultation
- 5. Professional Activity (P.A) Day on Municipal Election Day School
- 6. Resolution 2025-382 regarding Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund

### **(C) Correspondence "C"**

- 1. Opposition to the Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act 2025
- B.6 Committee supports the resolution regarding the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund and directed staff to bring the resolution to the January 13, 2026 meeting of Council.

## **NEW/UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**(1)** Mayor's Report – Committee agreed to move the Council and Committee meeting from February 17<sup>th</sup> to February 18<sup>th</sup>

Mayor Murphy updated Committee on the meeting she and CAO/Clerk Annette Gilchrist had with BMO Bank of Montreal Vice Presidents. BMO Bank of Montreal will get back to Mayor Murphy the first week of January.

As we come to the close of 2025, Mayor Murphy wanted to take a moment to pause and reflect on what we have accomplished together, and where we are headed next. First and foremost, she wanted to thank Council and staff for the dedication and care you bring to this Township every single day. Municipal work is not always visible, and it is rarely easy, but it is essential. The work you do touches people's lives in very real ways, and that matters. This past year reminded us, once again, that local government sits on the front line. We are where big challenges land first, whether it's infrastructure pressures, affordability, changing legislation, or simply residents looking for help navigating a complex world. And through all of that, you showed up.

She thanked Council for their thoughtful debate, their willingness to listen, and their shared commitment to serving the whole community, even when decisions are difficult. Council does not always agree on every issue, but they remain united by a common goal: doing what is best for Bonnechere Valley.

To the staff, and she emphasized that she cannot say this strongly enough, but they are the backbone of this organization. Their expertise, their problem-solving, and their calm under pressure keep this Township moving forward. They adapt to new requirements, tight timelines, and changing expectations with professionalism and good humour, and the Mayor is deeply grateful for that.

This year, we continued to make progress on the fundamentals: maintaining and improving our roads and infrastructure, supporting community organizations and volunteers, strengthening relationships with our County partners, and advocating, loudly and consistently, for rural communities at every level of government. These are not flashy wins, but they are the building blocks of a strong and resilient municipality.

As we look ahead to 2026, Mayor Murphy wanted to be clear-eyed and honest: it will not be an easy year. Municipalities across Ontario are facing growing pressures, financial, legislative, and operational, often without the tools or funding to match. But Mayor Murphy also believes we are well positioned to meet those challenges.

We will continue to advocate for fair, sustainable funding that recognizes the realities of rural Ontario. We will keep looking for smarter ways to deliver services, share resources, and plan for the future. And we will continue to lead with collaboration, with our County partners, neighbouring municipalities, community organizations, and residents.

Most importantly, we will continue to lead with respect, for each other, for the work we do, and for the community we serve.

Bonnechere Valley is a special place, not because it is perfect, but because of the people who care enough to make it better. Mayor Murphy is proud to serve alongside this Council and this staff team, and she is confident that together, we will continue to move this Township forward in 2026 and beyond.

As we look ahead to 2026, there is also a great deal to be excited about. We are moving forward on several important projects that will have a lasting impact on our community, including the addition of EV charging infrastructure and ride share program, new arena funding which will take us closer to net zero, the 25 events to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of amalgamation and other funding opportunities that are currently in development. While not everything can be

announced just yet, she can say that significant work is happening behind the scenes, with staff and Council actively pursuing opportunities that support sustainability, recreation, economic vitality, and long-term community resilience. These projects reflect both careful planning and strong advocacy, and she looks forward to sharing more as details are finalized in the year ahead.

Mayor Murphy also want to sincerely thank Council and staff for the support you have shown as she prepare to serve as Warden in the coming year. That confidence means a great deal to her. The role of Warden is an opportunity to strengthen relationships, to collaborate across all of our municipalities, and to advocate clearly and consistently for the needs of Renfrew County, particularly for rural communities like ours. Mayor Murphy is proud to represent Bonnechere Valley at the County table, and she commits to carrying forward our shared priorities, building strong partnerships with my County colleagues, staff, and provincial partners, and ensuring our Township's voice continues to be heard and respected.

Mayor Murphy wished all the families a safe, restful, and well-deserved holiday season — and she looks forward to working with everyone in the year ahead.

**ESTABLISH NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next Meeting will be held on Tuesday January 13, 2026.

**MEDIA SESSION**

**CLOSED SESSION**

**MOVED BY** **Meredith Caplan Jamieson**

**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, including municipal employees
- (f) Advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege, including communications necessary for that purpose

Carried

**MOVED BY** **Tracey Sanderson**

**THAT:** Committee moves out of Closed Session at 4:08 p.m. to rise and report that Committee met to receive information and give staff direction regarding the request to revoke a building permit and complaint regarding information timelines and approved minutes from November 18, 2025.

Carried

**CONCLUSION**

**MOVED BY** **Merv Buckwald**

**THAT:** the meeting adjourns at 4:08 p.m.

Carried



Jennifer Murphy, Chair



Annette Gilchrist, CAO/Clerk