

**THE CORPORATION OF
THE TOWNSHIP OF BONNECHERE VALLEY
MINUTES
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
VIA ZOOM CONFERENCING
TUESDAY FEBRUARY 25, 2022 3:00 P.M.**

PRESENT Mayor Jennifer Murphy
Deputy Mayor Brent Patrick
Councillor Merv Buckwald
Councillor Jack Roesner
Councillor Tim Schison
CAO Annette Gilchrist
Deputy CAO Sandra Barr

REGRETS None

GALLERY 4 (live watching)

CALL TO ORDER – Mayor Jennifer Murphy called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

ADDITIONS/CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA: The agenda be accepted as presented.

22.020 MOVED BY Tim Schison
SECONDED BY Jack Roesner

THAT: the agenda be accepted as amended/presented.

Carried

PECUNIARY INTEREST OR GENERAL NATURE THEREOF

BUSINESS ARISING FROM COMMITTEE

1. Resolution – Fire Fighter Certification

22.021 MOVED BY Tim Schison
SECONDED BY Merv Buckwald

WHEREAS Municipal governments are supportive of efforts to modernize and enhance the professionalism of the fire services that serve Ontario communities, the additional training measures and certification must not serve as an added impediment for those who wish to volunteer as firefighters.

AND WHEREAS the Legacy provisions are very important to ensure that municipalities are not burdened with unnecessary costs for retraining firefighters who have been adequately trained to the level of service set by Council.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the proposed Ontario regulation to be made under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997 regarding Firefighter Certification has raised the following concerns for the Township of Bonnechere Valley and many other rural and small urban fire departments:

1. Firefighter recruitment and retention is already extremely challenging without placing additional demands on the time commitment
2. Budget/financial implications. An increase of 100% Mandatory training of 3 hours per week versus 6 hours per week
3. Regulation confusing with mixed messaging
4. Unreasonable Timelines due to part-time nature of service
5. Lack of resources to administer the training and certification
6. Lack of access to training/testing and regional training centers

AND FURTHER THAT we respectfully request that the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Office of the Fire Marshall acknowledge that the implementation of Firefighter Certification will have anticipated consequences on volunteer firefighter recruitment and retention in small, rural and northern municipalities with volunteer-based fire departments and:

1. Defer the implementation of volunteer firefighters to conduct a complete gap analysis and engage in comprehensive consultation on the potential impacts of this regulation with municipalities that have volunteer-based fire departments.
2. Enact legislation providing provincial liability indemnification for all municipal governments who certify their volunteer firefighters to the new standards through the grandfathering provisions and ensure this is done at least 12 months before the regulation takes effect. Similarly, the regulatory in-force date (currently July 1, 2022), must be moved well into 2023 or 2024 to fully prevent any in-year municipal budget hits and allow for good financial planning.
3. Establish a provincial funding stream that covers the actual costs associated with tuition, travel, accommodations, and volunteer firefighter compensation for lost wages due to the additional time requirements that result from implementation of the regulation, thereby ensuring the municipalities are not left with an unfunded mandate. The level of support necessary should be based on evidence from fire chiefs and should include the submission of detailed training needs and expected impacts. To that end, we urge fire chiefs to be provided with a sufficient period of time to submit detailed fiscal and training impacts to the Ministry and their councils.
4. Commence a much more thorough engagement with the municipal sector which is necessary for the Ministry to fully appreciate the effects such regulations will have on municipalities and fire services in order to develop measures which assist and support volunteer recruitment and composite fire services.

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this resolution will be sent to the Premier of Ontario, Ministry of the Solicitor General, Office of the Fire Marshall, John Yakabuski MPP Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, Ontario's Regulatory Registry, AMO and all municipalities in Renfrew County.

Carried, unanimously

BYLAWS

22.022 MOVED BY Brent Patrick
SECONDED BY Merv Buckwald

THAT:

(1) By-Law 2022-013 Being a By-Law to confirm the proceedings of Council.

BE READ A FIRST TIME, BE DEEMED READ A SECOND TIME, BE DEEMED READ A THIRD TIME AND PASSED.

Carried

ADJOURNMENT

22.023 MOVED BY Tim Schison
SECONDED BY Brent Patrick

THAT: This Council meeting be adjourned at 4:11 p.m.

Carried

Mayor Jennifer Murphy

CAO Annette Gilchrist