



Council News & Notes

From Tuesday, November 28, 2023

Upcoming Meetings

Council Meeting
December 12

9 am

Regular
Council Meeting

Budget Meeting
December 18

9 am

Regular
Council Meeting

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Mayors' Message

On November 15th I, Deputy Mayor DeMarsh, and staff participated in a half day joint Emergency Management Planning Meeting with our neighbour Stirling-Rawdon. The meeting set the stage for a potential disaster in our communities and then had us identify what we would do to address the disaster. We received top marks from the presenter/evaluator on our joint efforts. A great big thank you to our staff!

On November 16th Councillor Valiquette and I attended a Zoom session hosted by Quinte Conservation on "Best Practices for Source Water Protection".

On November 17th I attended an open house hosted by MPP Ric Bresee in support of the Tim Hortons Smile Campaign and their designation of funds to the Heart of Hastings Hospice.

On the 21st I Chaired the Hastings County Planning & Development Committee which was immediately followed by the County Finance, Property & Personnel meeting.

On the 22nd Council had their third budget meeting. Council is committed to ongoing dialogue and action and has agreed to convene again on December 18th when we will explore avenues for further reducing the tax burden on our ratepayers. Our dedication to financial prudence and responsible governance remains steadfast as we navigate the dynamic challenges posed by many mitigating impediments: multifaceted impact of Covid, staggering and lingering inflation, non-existent federal and provincial government funding, increased demand for services, depleted reserves, high interest rates and historically low tax increases. Furthermore, Council is actively engaging in lobbying efforts directed at both provincial and federal governments. Our objective is to secure sustainable funding sources that can fortify municipal budgets like ours, fostering long-term stability.

It is my hope that the federal and provincial governments have not lost sight of the need for financial supports for small rural communities. On that note I say congratulations to Belleville and Toronto. The Belleville YMCA Centre for Life where the feds kicked in \$9

million and the province \$7.5 million. In Toronto the province is stepping forward to help with \$1.2 billion in provincial operating supports over three years and assuming responsibility for the Don Valley Parkway and the Gardiner Expressway representing billions of dollars in maintenance costs which could save Toronto \$6.5 billion over 10 years. That is wonderful support for a city that is facing a 2024 \$1.5 billion shortfall. I share this because we do not stand alone. Municipalities across this great country are facing extreme financial stress and we all need help. MPP Ric Bresee and I had a call this afternoon. He is aware of our financial predicament. He will do his best to get us our audience with Minister Surma, Minister of Infrastructure, in our efforts to be a delegation at the January Rural Ontario Municipal Conference. I will also be reaching out to MP Shelby Kramp-Neuman. Both of these representatives have been great allies.

The evening of the 22nd I attended the turkey dinner hosted by the San Damiano Foundation in Centre Hastings.

On the 23rd, as Chair of the Hastings County Small Business Facilitator Program, I attended the one year anniversary celebration of Nine Hand Hill Farm, a small home-based business that specializes in prepared meals and catering events. Later that day I attended the Belleville General Hospital Foundation meeting.

On the 27th, Deputy Mayor DeMarsh and I attended the Joint Fire Service Board meeting.

I want to thank Council for their role as representatives on the various regional committees on which this Municipality sits. In particular I would like to thank Councillor Flieler for attending the last two Quinte Waste Solutions meetings on behalf of Deputy Mayor DeMarsh who couldn't attend due to scheduling conflicts. These meetings were intense as they focused on Quinte Waste's 2024 Budget.

Council extends our congratulations to local Trustee Shannon Binder on her re-election as Chair of the Hastings & Prince Edward District School Board as well as Chair of their Governance and Policy Committee.

I look forward to seeing everyone at this year's Festival of Trees which opens Thursday, the Santa Claus Parade which starts at 12:30 on Saturday, and at all the other wonderful events happening in and around the municipality that day.