

Here are the highlights from the regular Lanark County Council meeting held Wednesday, Dec. 16.

- **Upgrade to Fire Communications Infrastructure:** Council has authorized staff to proceed with upgrades to the fire communications system following concerns raised by Lanark County fire chiefs. The county has an agreement with Smiths Falls to provide fire communication services until 2017, with an option for an additional five years. In 2010, consultants Christie & Walther engineered a system to provide the fire services with an improved method of communications that took several recommendations from the chiefs into account. The system features strong, dependable radio communications and was an improvement over the previous system. Recently, however, concerns were raised about use of an additional tactical frequency that is used by departments during incidents because it lacks the ability to communicate with the dispatch centre in Smiths Falls. It is intended to be used to avoid tying up the main frequency, but the number of incidents requiring it has increased, with multiple emergency responses occurring at the same time. The inability to communicate with the dispatch centre raises the possibility of confusion during multiple incidents. The Chiefs asked that the tactical frequency be upgraded to have the same capabilities as the main frequency, which would allow dispatch to monitor it as well. Christie & Walther will complete the work for an estimated \$125,000. For more information, contact Leslie Drynan, Deputy Clerk, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1502.

- **Roadside Weed Spraying Program to Continue:** Council passed a motion to continue a roadside weed spraying program in 2016 for all county roads for two consecutive years, and then to proceed with biannual spraying of 50 per cent of the road system starting in year three. The decision follows a report from the public works department about the results of the 2015 trial program. The program was initiated as a strategy to combat wild parsnip, which is a noxious, invasive plant that is becoming increasingly common in the county. In 2015, the public works department received many calls from the public expressing concern about the weed and about the health hazards associated with it. In the first year, controlled herbicide spraying by a qualified, licenced contractor was completed along 80 km of county roads using Clearview, which selectively kills broadleaf weeds but not grasses. Notification of the spraying was advertised through various means, and the county received no requests for “no spraying” signs. The effects of spraying were monitored and an 80- to 90-per cent effectiveness rate was observed, with no indication of wild parsnip regrowth one month after it was completed. A weed audit completed on the entire county road system showed about 95 per cent of the road sections contained wild parsnip or other noxious weeds within the road allowance, and concern about safety of volunteers due to health hazards associated with wild parsnip led to the cancellation of the fall Adopt-a-Road program. “Controlling wild parsnip would contribute to the safety of public works personnel and the general public,” says Terry McCann, Director of Public Works. Many residents have asked for greater controls of wild parsnip. Ongoing monitoring of the effectiveness will be undertaken, along with continuous liaising with industry experts and adjacent counties. For more information, contact Terry McCann, Director of Public Works, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 3190.

- **Upcoming Meetings: County Council, Wednesday, Jan. 13, 5 p.m.;** Community Services, Jan. 13 (following County Council); Corporate Services, Jan. 13 (following Community Services). **County Council, Wednesday, Jan. 27, 5 p.m.;** Economic Development, Jan. 27 (following County Council); Public Works, Jan. 27 (following Economic Development). For more information, contact 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1502. Like "LanarkCounty1" on Facebook and follow "@LanarkCounty1" on Twitter!

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