

Here are the highlights from the regular Lanark County Council meeting held Wednesday, Aug. 29.

- **FASD Awareness Day Proclaimed:** Warden John Fenik (Perth Mayor) has declared Sept. 9 as “Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Awareness Day” within Lanark County. The proclamation notes FASD is “a lifelong neurological, whole-body disorder” that has 428 co-occurring conditions and is the leading cause of developmental disabilities. The leading preventable cause of birth defects and developmental disorders in North America is alcohol consumption during pregnancy. “The ninth day of the ninth month is recognized annually around the world as FASD Awareness Day to symbolize the nine months a mother should refrain from consuming alcohol while pregnant,” the proclamation states. “As a socially responsible community, we realize a need to increase support and awareness for alcohol-free pregnancies and inclusion for people with FASD,” Warden Fenik said. For more information, contact Leslie Drynan, Clerk, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1502.
  
- **Portable Housing Benefit Pilot Program to Proceed:** Council has approved a two-year Portable Housing Benefit (PHB) pilot program starting Jan. 1. Social Housing Manager Sandy Grey outlined the program at the community services committee meeting earlier this month. The program will have a target of 15 units and will prioritize tenants who have accessibility needs that cannot be accommodated in the current rent-g geared-to-income (RGI)/rent supplement units in the order of their placement on the current wait list. Ms. Grey explained recent amendments to the Housing Services Act allow for PHB as an alternate form of financial assistance for the county as a service manager to meet its required service level standards. It allows the county to help households on the wait list with housing costs, while modernizing the housing system and increasing flexibility for households in need. PHB is a new concept that provides greater flexibility to clients in terms of allowing them to use a housing benefit anywhere they choose instead of specific units, which allows for more mixed communities. Several municipalities in the county currently have no social housing units, and PHB would provide an opportunity for clients to live where they choose and select the size and type of unity they prefer, including those modified to meet accessibility needs. Such units are very limited in the county’s current stock. Ms. Grey said. The two-year pilot program will allow the county to evaluate advantages and disadvantages of PHB over other assistance, including an analysis of cost savings and determining whether households prefer the freedom and independence a PHB would allow prior to implementing the program system wide. The project will also bring the county closer to meeting its service-level target of 771 RGI/rent supplement units, particularly in light of the closure of the Joseph/Edward/Pattie development in Carleton Place. Ms. Grey noted PHB will reduce the municipal cost of providing housing for social assistance recipients due to the formula, which allows them to maximize their shelter benefit. Financing for the PHB will come from savings realized through the reduction in the number of rent supplement or physical units. For more information, contact Nancy Green, Director of Social Services, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 2101, or Sandy Grey, Social Housing Manager, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 2401.
  
- **Housing Corporation Governance Changes Approved:** Council has approved changes to governance of the Lanark County Housing Corporation (LCHC) shell as of Sept. 1, subject to review in six months. Housing Renewal Coordinator Emily Hollington made the recommendations at the community services committee meeting earlier this month. In May, council approved for Lanark County Social Services to assume the management and administration of the corporation. All LCHC employees have been offered employment with the county and the transition is effective Sept. 1. Ms. Hollington explained LCHC remains a shell corporation, with ownership of the properties and

associated liabilities remaining in its name. Management and administration will be the county's responsibility as part of the newly integrated Lanark County Housing Services department. The transition, she explained, will help eliminate confusion around who is responsible for housing in the county. "While the LCHC Board of Directors has done extraordinary work over the years, the time has come to explore other options that will lead to simplified processes, improved customer service and integrated approaches." The community services committee will be appointed as the board of directors for the shell corporation, with all reports for housing services presented there and then brought forward to council for approval. Council can still form committees with public consultation as needed to deal with issues such as redevelopment. For more information, contact Nancy Green, Director of Social Services, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 2101, or Emily Hollington, Housing Renewal Coordinator, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1505.

- **Community Safety Plan Approved in Principle:** Council has approved in principle a Community Plan for Safety and Well-being for Lanark County and Smiths Falls. This follows a presentation at the community services committee meeting earlier this month by Lanark County Situation Table Coordinator Stephanie Gray, who coordinated the plan. She explained it has been developed over a year and a half by a steering committee consisting of 15 representatives from a wide variety of sectors, and was drafted following research, consultations, focus groups, a survey and interviews. "This is a community-driven plan that was undertaken prior to it being required by the new Safer Ontario Act, which was passed in March 2018," she said. "We have taken a regional approach to the plan, which identifies existing assets and aims to build on them, while recognizing issues that need to be addressed." As required in the legislation, the plan has identified 12 priority risk areas, including such things as mental health, substance use, youth and families, seniors, Indigenous health and well-being, domestic violence and more. Issues and strategies to address them were examined, and outcomes, measurables and potential working group team members were identified. "This is a living document that will evolve with progress reports, and it will be revisited in three years," she said. Ms. Gray added the legislation currently requires local municipalities to have a community plan for safety and well-being in place two years from Jan. 1, 2019, but reporting requirements have not yet been established in regulations. Council passed a motion to forward the plan to local municipalities in January for their review and to consideration for endorsement. For more information, contact Leslie Drynan, Clerk, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1502.
- **Upcoming Meetings: County Council, Wednesday, Sept. 5, 5 p.m.;** Community Services, Sept. 5 (following County Council); Corporate Services, Sept. 5 (following Community Services). **County Council, Wednesday, Sept. 26, 5 p.m.;** Public Works, Sept. 26 (following County Council); Economic Development, Sept. 26 (following Public Works). All meetings are in Council Chambers unless otherwise noted. For more information, contact 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1502. Like "LanarkCounty1" on Facebook and follow "@LanarkCounty1" on Twitter!