

## MEDIA RELEASE

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*For immediate release*

*Jan. 25, 2023*

Here are the highlights from the Lanark County Council meeting held Jan. 25, 2023.

**Ontario Works Program Overview Received:** Council accepted an update on the Ontario Works program, presented at the community services committee meeting earlier this month by Ontario Works Manager Buffy Armour.

Armour explained the program is intended to help people in temporary financial need to find sustainable employment and achieve self-reliance through the provision of effective, integrated employment services and financial assistance. It is administered by the county, but benefits are funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) and legislated through the Ontario Works Act. Program administration is funded 50/50 between the province and the county.

“Reliance on assistance is often a result of long-standing and complex barriers to employment,” Armour said. “The most significant barriers clients face are mental health, physical health, abuse, trauma, substance dependency and homelessness.” Issues include lack of access to services, chronic conditions, poverty and food insecurity.

Armour provided an overview of eligibility requirements and expectations of clients. She outlined the types of assistance available, including emergency financial assistance for households in a crisis. “In May 2022, following the significant windstorm, 29 applications for emergency assistance were completed, supporting 60 people.” She said there has been a significant increase over the last year due to such pressures as inflation, weather events and Ukrainian migrants.

“Caseworkers work closely with their clients, establishing relationships, setting long-term goals and identifying manageable steps to reach independency while ensuring eligibility and entitlement,” Armour said, adding the county works with several partners to help support clients.

Armour said MCCSS has noted there is currently a heavy administrative burden for both caseworkers and clients, and clients must navigate a complex web of processes for help. Other issues include a lack of stability for clients, high rates of recidivism when there is not early intervention, a lack of support for those not on assistance, and incompatible technology platforms across programs. Ontario Works is undergoing a realignment that will shift service delivery between the province and municipalities, with an emphasis on local casework to prioritize outcomes of employment and achieve stability. For more information, contact Buffy Armour, Ontario Works Manager, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 2102.

**Additional Long-Term Care Funding Approved:** Council has authorized the director of long-term care to implement additional social support and Behavioural Supports Ontario (BSO) services at Lanark Lodge with funds provided by the Ministry of Long-Term Care and Ontario Health.

In a report to the community services committee, Director of Long-Term Care Carey Duncan said the



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provincial funding aims to increase direct care hours for residents. It is part of a new Resident Health and Well-being (RHWB) program from the Ministry of Long-Term Care and will support homes in providing social support services by registered social workers, social service workers and other allied health professionals.

The funding will facilitate an in-house BSO lead for Lanark Lodge and allow the home to further enhance care and services currently provided. For more information, contact Carey Duncan, Director of Long-Term Care, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 7101.

**Lanark County Paramedic Services Accreditation and Update Received:** Council received an update and overview of the Lanark County Paramedic Service (LCPS) and the ambulance service review accreditation. The report was presented to the corporate services committee earlier this month by Mary Wilson Trider, President and CEO of Almonte General Hospital and Carleton Place District Memorial Hospital.

LCPS resulted from an amalgamation of four services in 2000 and is operated by Almonte General Hospital on behalf of the county. County council approves the annual budget, collective bargaining mandate, response time plan and service enhancements that fall outside of the budget cycle. Council also receives regular volume and activity updates. There are bases in Almonte, Perth, Lanark, Carleton Place and Montague, which is the headquarters.

Wilson Trider outlined the number of vehicles, mileage and replacement intervals, as well as crew complements and equipment found in the vehicles. Total patient carrying calls were 15,914, with the highest volume from the Perth base at 5,029. She said the service is currently staffed by a chief, deputy chief, commander, four superintendents, two administrative support staff, 51 full-time paramedics (advanced care and primary care) and 53 part-time paramedics. She detailed the requirements for becoming a paramedic and the differences between primary care and advanced care. Advanced care paramedics are able to administer an increased number of medications and provide more procedures and controlled medical acts. "Paramedics perform more delegated medical acts than any other health-care professionals, other than a physician," she said.

Wilson Trider highlighted the community paramedicine program, which is "an evolving a flexible health-care model that allows paramedics to operate in expanded rolls outside of traditional 911 response." Community paramedics focus on connecting patients to primary care, completing post-hospital follow-up care, integrating with public health and home health agencies, education and health promotion clinics, diverting unnecessary 911 use and emergency department visits, and providing services not available elsewhere in the community. In 2022, 371 new patients were enrolled and 3,553 visits completed. The program currently has short-term provincial funding.

Council also learned the results of a successful ambulance service review, which is conducted every three years to ensure the paramedic service is meeting or exceeding Ministry of Health requirements. "It requires a score of 90 per cent to be successful," Wilson Trider said, noting LCPS scored 99.19 per cent. The review was altered in this cycle due to COVID restrictions and had a greater focus on documents as evidence. The review focused on administration, quality assurance and patient care. For more information, contact Kurt Greaves, CAO, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1101.

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**Integrated Pest Management Vegetation Management By-law Adopted:** Council passed a by-law to adopt the updated Integrated Pest Management Vegetation Management Plan in January. This follows a public works committee update in December along with a two-month public review period.

The original plan was adopted in 2016 as a long-term, multi-faceted approach to managing vegetation in order to maintain safe roadsides. It aimed to reduce reliance on mowing, brushing and spraying, while restoring pollinator habitat.

Updates to the plan reflect the county's integrated practices for controlling wild parsnip, the long-term goal to establish diverse roadsides with abundant pollinator habitat, and current vegetation management practices. Changes include:

- A statement outlining the county's long-term goals for pollinator habitat and information on how roadsides are restored
- Highlights on how control is easier when weeds are present at low levels
- Emphasis on the importance of plantings and naturalization to increase diversity of flowering species along roadsides (density of vegetation for biological weed control and natural competition)
- Increased detail on the process of wild parsnip control
- Updated maps and seed mix information

The updated plan can be found at <https://www.lanarkcounty.ca/en/roads-trails-and-transit/resources/Lanark-IPM-Revised-Program-2022-Final.pdf>. For more information, contact Michelle Rabbetts, Climate Environmental Coordinator, at 1-888-9- LANARK, ext. 3114.

**Committee Appointments Approved:** Council adopted the striking committee report, with the following appointments:

- Climate Action Working Group: Councillor Rob Rainer (Tay Valley Reeve), Councillor Judy Brown (Perth Mayor), Councillor Rickey Minnille (Mississippi Mills Deputy Mayor) and Toby Randell (Carleton Place Mayor).

In addition, Councillor Brian Dowdall (Beckwith Deputy Reeve) was replaced by Councillor Randell on the Community Forest Sub-committee, and Councillor Andrew Tennant (Carleton Place Deputy Mayor) replaced Councillor Randell on the Awards of Excellence Committee. For more information, contact Jasmin Ralph, Clerk, at 1-888-9- LANARK, ext. 1502.

**Upcoming Meetings: County Council, Wednesday, Feb. 8, 5 p.m.;** Community Services, Feb. 8 (following County Council); Corporate Services, Feb. 8 (following Community Services). **County Council, Wednesday, Feb. 22, 5 p.m.;** Public Works, Feb. 22 (following County Council); Economic Development, Feb. 22 (following Public Works). Watch for details about public access to meetings on agendas and through online notifications. For more information, contact 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1502. Like "LanarkCounty1" on Facebook and follow "@LanarkCounty1" on Twitter!