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# HALDIMAND COUNTY

## Report PD-42-2018 Long Point Region Conservation Authority Levy – 2019 For Consideration by Council in Committee on December 11, 2018

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### OBJECTIVE:

To advise Council of the upcoming budget meeting to approve the 2019 levy of the Long Point Region Conservation Authority, requiring funding from Haldimand County.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Report PD-42-2018 Long Point Region Conservation Authority Levy – 2019, be received as information.

**Prepared by:** Mike Evers, MCIP, RPP, BES, Director of Planning & Development

**Respectfully submitted:** Craig Manley, MCIP, RPP, General Manager of Community & Development Services

**Approved:** Donald G. Boyle, Chief Administrative Officer

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Haldimand County has been provided with information outlining a proposed 2019 levy of \$281,697 for the Long Point Region Conservation Authority, an increase of 4.42% over last year's levy representing an \$11,930 increase to Haldimand. The Authority's meeting to approve this proposed budget is scheduled for January 9, 2019.

Information from the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) and Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) regarding Haldimand's share of their proposed 2019 levies have not yet been received and will be subject of a further report in early 2019.

A protocol developed many years ago between Conservation Ontario and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario gives municipalities control over only the amount of non-matching conservation authority levies to be set annually. These levies are set by the Authority Board and are allocated to member municipalities based on their share of assessment in the watershed. Appointees to each Authority are expected to vote on proposed Conservation Authority levies based on the direction of their respective Municipal Council. Given the small magnitude of change, staff have not recommended that any specific direction be given to this municipality's appointees regarding the general levies proposed by the Long Point Region Conservation Authority for 2019.

### BACKGROUND:

Haldimand County funds three Conservation Authorities whose watersheds fall within this municipality's boundaries. The general levy for each Conservation Authority is apportioned to its watershed municipalities on the basis of a "modified current value assessment" model as set out in Ontario Regulation 670/2000.

The *Conservation Authorities Act* (the “Act”) requires Conservation Authorities to provide notice to their member municipalities regarding the coming year’s levies. Ontario Regulations 139/96 and 106/98 both state that 30 days notice must be provided to the municipality of a meeting being held by the Conservation Authority to approve the non-matching levy. As well, this notice is to include the amount of the non-matching levy to be voted on.

The non-matching levy is for Conservation Authority programs that do not qualify for provincial subsidies. The non-matching portion is the discretionary part of the levy which municipalities, through their appointees, will vote on. The final non-matching levy for a given year is decided by the “weighted majority” of the member municipalities, with the weighting determined by the percentage of “modified” current value assessment for each municipality.

In past years’ reports on this matter, Haldimand Council members have questioned their authority and role in regards to the approval of the annual levies of Conservation Authorities. Such information is available through Report CS-GM-07-2010 if any Member wishes to review it again. The *Conservation Authorities Act* (the Act) states that appointed members are to “generally act on behalf of their respective municipalities”, recognizing that the Authority members and their Executive have a responsibility to the Authority as a whole, as well as to their local municipality.

The Long Point Region Conservation Authority (LPRCA) has provided information regarding their 2019 Municipal Levies (Attachment 1). LPRCA has requested input from its member municipalities by December 21, 2018, with a vote on their 2019 Budget scheduled for January 9, 2019.

As the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) and Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) were not in a position to present their proposed budgets at the same time as LPRCA, a separate report focusing on the NPCA and GRCA budgets will be presented in early 2019.

## ANALYSIS:

The County’s share of the total **general** municipal levy for 2019 for the LPRCA is 14%. As reflected by these percentages, Haldimand County does not comprise the weighted majority membership of this Conservation Authority. Any proposed special levies are subject to the approval of only the benefiting municipality. That means that Haldimand County Council has direct approval authority over any of the proposed 2019 special levy projects to be funded by this municipality.

The proposed Long Point Region Conservation Authority (LPRCA) 2019 budget reflects an overall municipal levy increase of 3.79%, comprised of a 3.46% increase in the operating levy and a 5.18% increase in the capital levy. The 2019 draft consolidated budget summary, provided by the LPRCA, indicates that the budgeted operating expenditures have increased by 2.7%, and budgeted capital expenditures have increased by 27%. There is no Special Benefitting Levy to Haldimand County for 2019. Haldimand County has been allocated 14% of the proposed 2019 LPRCA General Levy of \$1,995,102, equating to the following:

Operating Levy	\$226,963
Capital Levy (several projects)	\$54,734
<b>Total General Levy</b>	<b>\$281,697</b>

Haldimand’s allocation represents an increase of 4.42% or \$11,930 over our contribution of \$269,767 towards the LPRCA’s 2018 General Levy.

## **FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Haldimand County's share of the projected 2019 levy of the Long Point Region Conservation Authority totals \$281,697. This represents an overall increase of 4.42% or \$11,930 compared to the 2018 levy for the LPRCA. In addition, Council approved a capital project in the 2017 budget for a special benefitting levy of \$45,000 in both 2017 and 2018, related to a Shoreline Flood and Erosion Hazard Study. This project will be completed in 2019, and will be shown as a Council Approved carry over in the 2019 Tax Supported Operating Budget, with associated funding of this one-time cost from the Capital Replacement Reserve-General.

In the past, Haldimand County Council chose to allow each of its Board appointees to "vote their conscience" at the budget approval meetings. If the current Council supports the same approach, this report need only be received as information. Otherwise, specific direction by resolution should be given to the County's appointees as to how they should vote on the upcoming Long Point Region Conservation Authority 2019 Budget.

## **STAKEHOLDER IMPACTS:**

Not applicable.

## **REPORT IMPACTS:**

Agreement: No

By-law: No

Budget Amendment: No

Policy: No

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Letter from Long Point Region Conservation Authority, dated November 14, 2018, re: 30-Day Notice to Affected Municipalities-2019 Draft LPRCA Budget.