
HALDIMAND COUNTY

Report PDD-45-2019 Long Point Region Conservation Authority Levy 2020

For Consideration by Council in Committee on December 10, 2019



OBJECTIVE:

To advise Council of the upcoming budget meeting to approve the 2020 levy for the Long Point Region Conservation Authority, requiring funding from Haldimand County.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Report PDD-45-2019 Long Point Region Conservation Authority Levy 2020, be received as information.

Prepared by: Shannon VanDalen, MCIP, RPP, CMMI, Manager of Planning and Development

Respectfully submitted: Mike Evers, MCIP, RPP, BES, General Manager of Community & Development Services

Approved: Craig Manley, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Haldimand County has been provided with information outlining a proposed 2020 levy of \$287,231 for the Long Point Region Conservation Authority, an increase of 1.96% over last year's levy representing a \$5,534 increase to Haldimand. The Authority's meeting to approve this proposed budget is scheduled for January 8, 2020.

Preliminary information from the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) and Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) regarding Haldimand's share of their proposed 2020 levies have been received, however, formal notice has not yet been provided. As such, these will be subject of a further report in early 2020.

A protocol developed many years ago between Conservation Ontario and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario gives municipalities control over only the amount of discretionary 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 are not recommending any specific direction be given to this municipality's appointees regarding the general levies proposed by the Long Point Region Conservation Authority for 2020.

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 2020 Municipal Levies (Attachment 1). LPRCA has requested input from its member municipalities by Friday December 20, 2019, with a vote on the Budget scheduled for January 8, 2020.

As formal notice of budget considerations has not yet been received from the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) and Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA), information to Council on their levy details is anticipated to be provided sometime in early 2020.

ANALYSIS:

The County’s share of the total general municipal levy for 2020 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 2020 special levy projects to be funded by this municipality.

The proposed Long Point Region Conservation Authority (LPRCA) 2020 budget reflects an overall municipal levy increase of 1.81%, comprised of a 2.33% increase in the operating levy and a decrease in the capital levy of -0.34%. There is no Special Benefitting Levy to Haldimand County for 2020. Haldimand County has been allocated 14% of the proposed 2020 LPRCA General Levy of \$2,031,310, equating to the following:

Operating Levy \$232,601

Capital Levy (several projects) \$54,631

Total General Levy \$287,231

Haldimand’s allocation represents an increase of 1.96% or \$5,534 towards the LPRCA’s 2020 General Levy.

FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Haldimand County’s share of the projected 2020 levy of the Long Point Region Conservation Authority totals \$287,231. This represents an overall increase of 1.96% or \$5,534 compared to the 2019 levy for the LPRCA.

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 2020 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, 2019 RE: 30-Day Notice to Affected Municipalities – 2020 Draft LPRCA Budget.