
HALDIMAND COUNTY

Report PDD-50-2022 Long Point Region Conservation Authority – 2023 Levy For Consideration by Council in Committee on December 6, 2022



OBJECTIVE:

To advise Council of the upcoming Long Point Region Conservation Authority (LPRCA) 2023 levy budget, which requires funding from Haldimand County.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Report PDD-50-2022 Long Point Region Conservation Authority - 2023 Levy be received.

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Haldimand County has been provided with information outlining the proposed 2023 municipal levy for the Long Point Region Conservation Authority (LPRCA), an increase of 8.23% over last years' levy and representing a \$24,646.00 increase. Notice from Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) and the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA)—the second and third of the three Conservation Authorities covering the County—has yet to be received and is anticipated early in the new year.

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 nonmatching 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. 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 2023.

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. The LPRCA Board of Directors intends to

vote on the Final 2023 budget at its January 11, 2023 meeting, and request any comments regarding the draft budget by December 13th, 2022. Following Council's consideration of this report, the resolution will be shared with the LPRCA.

The County's share of the total general municipal levy for 2023 for the LPRCA is 14.42%, and as reflected in this percentage, Haldimand County does not comprise the weighted majority membership in the Conservation Authority. As a result, there may be little control or influence that the County's appointees can exert on the decisions of the authorities in setting their 2023 budget for the general levy component. Any proposed special levies are subject to the approval of only the benefiting municipality (Note: there are no special levies in 2023 for Haldimand County).

The table below shows the total impact of the municipal levy:

	2022 Levy	2023 Levy	Increase (\$)	Increase (%)
LPRCA	\$299,638	\$324,284	\$24,646	8.23%

The increase is generally seen across all municipal levies from an Operation Levy perspective, with the largest increase for Haldimand County relating to a project in the Haldimand Conservation Park for water system upgrades. Additionally, the overall increase relates to rising inflation; a decrease of federal funding; and higher operation costs.

Generally, appointees to each Conservation Authority are to vote on the proposed levy apportionment based on the direction of their respective Municipal Councils. Given the overall minor impact in costs to the County, staff have not recommended that any specific direction be given to Haldimand's appointees regarding the 2023 levy proposed by the Long Point Region Conservation Authority. If Council supports this approach, this report need only be received as information; otherwise, specific direction by resolution should be given to the County's appointees.

The Province has recently proposed additional legislation changes through Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022, that could see significant changes to the *Conservation Authorities Act* including:

- Exemptions to transfer conservation authority regulatory responsibilities to municipalities;
- Proposed legislation that would prohibit CAs from entering into Memorandums of Understanding with municipalities for other services;
- Freezing of CA fees; and
- Development opportunities on sensitive natural areas and Wetland Offsetting policies.

At the time of preparation of this report, Bill 23 is in its second reading before the legislature, with the comment period to be closed on November 24, 2022. These changes could have potential impacts on the municipal levy, however, details are currently not available. Staff will follow up regarding outcomes and report to Council when information is available or via the annual levy report.

FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

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 2023 Budget.

STAKEHOLDER IMPACTS:

Not applicable.

REPORT IMPACTS:

Agreement: No

By-law: No

Budget Amendment: No

Policy: No

REFERENCES:

None.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 2023 Draft LPRCA Budget.