

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF JOCELYN

Minutes of the Special Council Meeting-

November 30, 2022

6:00 p.m.

TOWN HALL – HILTON VILLAGE

Present:

Reeve: Mark Henderson
Councillors: Janet Callahan, Faye Stevens
Clerk Treasurer: Janet Boucher Deputy Clerk: Myra Eddy
Fire Dept. Rep: David Malar

Absent:

Councillors: Albert Crowder, Greg Gilbertson

This Special Meeting was called to address the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act requirement for annual training for members of a Municipal Emergency Control Group (MECG). The meeting was held in the Village of Hilton Beach Community Hall and attended by all four Island Councils, Clerks, Deputy Clerks, Road Superintendents and Fire Chiefs or delegate.

The meeting was chaired by Jeff Edwards, the new CEMC for all St. Joseph Island communities. Mr. Edwards advised he has been involved with emergency management for over 20 years. He was employed by Emergency Management Ontario for 13 years and then created his own emergency consultation business in 2015. He currently serves as CEMC for a number of area municipalities.

In addition to the MECG (Municipal Emergency Control Group) holding an annual mock-emergency training session, municipalities are also required to annually review their HIRA (Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment), CI (Critical Infrastructure) and ERP (Emergency Response Plan). Mr. Edwards had reviewed some of the ERPs recently submitted by the Clerks and noted the format of some were more complex than necessary and simplifying the document would make it more 'user-friendly'. It was also recommended that the HIRAs be modified to mainly address the weather events that will happen in our area rather than all the hazards currently listed with their accompanying 'low' risk assessment. The Critical Infrastructure segment should also be amended to only include the infrastructure within our community although the Bernt Gilbertson Bridge should be included in all four Plans.

It was noted that while only the Reeve/Mayor (or previously appointed alternate) can declare an emergency, either the Reeve/Mayor or a quorum of Council may terminate the emergency.

The importance of note taking was stressed during an emergency. There are courses offered that identify the requirements to ensuring such notes will stand up in any subsequent court cases. All members of the MECG should have a proper log book and take their own notes which should not be shared with others. Digital notes are not considered acceptable as they could be altered. It was stressed to keep the notes factual in nature. The type of notebook was elaborated on – it must be a book that cannot have pages easily removed (ie a bound book and not be in a ringed binder format)

When discussing Evacuation Centres, it was noted that Health Canada Standards require 35 sq ft per person plus a specific number of toilets/sinks per person.

The Reeve/Mayor decides on the messages to go out as media releases. It is up to the EIO (Emergency Information Officer) to liase with the media and post messages online to ensure the public stays informed.

Councils were cautioned they should not be using volunteers unless they can confirm they are self-insured. If Councils accept the services of volunteers they also accept the liability of any possible injuries/resulting problems; they must make sure volunteers are properly trained and supervised. It was noted that people will automatically step in to help their neighbours and that is acceptable provided they are not registered as Municipal Volunteers.

All four Councils broke into individual groups and were presented with sample emergency situations applicable to their community. Jocelyn Township was provided a scenario of a tornado force wind completely demolishing the municipal office and accompanying structures (roads garage and main firehall) as well as neighbouring homes. In addition, power was out in this area and sump pumps not working which had resulted in flooded basements. The scenario presented assumed all affected residents had already been reached and any injuries already addressed.

The group was to address the recovery stage of the emergency. Determining who was in need and locations of possible short term accommodation was considered. Facilities not considered municipal structures were options, not to mention family and friends that would possibly be able to accommodate individuals in need. If all Island accommodation resources were exhausted, using facilities on the North Shore was considered, including, Johnson Township (CASS), Tarbutt, and Laird. It was noted that the municipality has been emphasizing the need for residents to be self sufficient (for a minimum of 72 hours).

The communication problems, including cell phone coverage was noted given the effect of the winds on power and communication lines. HAM operators in the Township would be contacted to see if they could provide assistance. It was noted that some satellite phones work in such situations and that with StarLink there might still be internet availability. In addition, some texting may still work with minimal or no signal.

When asked how much help EMO (Emergency Management Ontario) might provide, it was noted EMO will first need to confirm the municipality has exhausted all of its own resources.

When discussing the debris that would need to be discarded at the dump from the flooded basements (furniture/freezers/etc), it was noted that with significantly impacted areas, the disposal of such items could actually remove years from a landfill's life expectancy.

Mr. Edwards advised he would submit the required documentation to EMO in the coming days to confirm each municipality's training compliance for the 2022 year and would work with the Clerks/Councils over the coming year to make the recommended changes to our current emergency plans.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm with thanks given to all for attending.

Reeve

Clerk Treasurer