



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WEST LINCOLN
COUNCIL MINUTES

MEETING NO. SIX

March 25, 2024, 6:30 p.m.

Township Administration Building
318 Canborough Street, Smithville, Ontario

Council: Mayor Cheryl Ganann
Councillor Shelley Bradaric
Councillor Joann Chechalk
Councillor William Reilly
Councillor Jason Trombetta

Absent: Councillor Terry Bell (Notification provided with regrets)
Councillor Mike Rehner (Notification provided with regrets)

Staff: Mike DiPaola, Acting Chief Administrative Officer
Nancy Fiorentino, Interim Director of Legislative Services/Clerk
Cindy Weir, Chief Executive Officer, Library
Kevin Geoghegan, IT Help Desk Analyst

Attendees: Regional Councillor Albert Witteveen
Jason Snyder, Crime Stoppers*

*Part-Time Attendee

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- 1. **SINGING OF "O CANADA" - Cairn Christian School**
 - 2. **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT**

The Township of West Lincoln, being part of Niagara Region is situated on treaty land. This land is steeped in the rich history of the First Nations such as the Hatiwendaronk, the Haudenosaunee, and the Anishinaabe, including the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. There are many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people from across Turtle Island that live and work in Niagara today. The Township of West Lincoln, as part of the Regional Municipality of Niagara, stands with all Indigenous people, past and present, in promoting the wise stewardship of the lands on which we live.

3. OPENING PETITION - Councillor Shelley Bradaric

Councillor Bradaric read the opening petition.

4. CHANGE IN ORDER OF ITEMS ON AGENDA

There were no changes in order of items on the agenda.

5. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST AND/OR CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest and/or conflicts of interest.

6. REQUEST TO ADDRESS ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no requests to address items on the agenda.

7. APPOINTMENTS/PRESENTATIONS

7.1 Jason Snyder and Mike Britton, Crime Stoppers

Re: An Overview of the Crime Stoppers Organization and community partnerships

Jason Snyder, representing Crime Stoppers, appeared before Council and provided a PowerPoint Presentation (attached as Schedule "A") regarding Crime Stoppers.

In response to questions from Council, Mr. Snyder noted the following:

- A caller's identity always remains anonymous. Crime Stoppers does not collect personal information.
- Any reward provided to an anonymous caller is provided in cash at the bank using a reference number that is automatically generated to maintain the anonymity of the process.
- Interested persons who wish to volunteer for Crime Stoppers can do so by requesting to volunteer via their website: <https://crimestoppersniagara.ca/contact-us-3/>.

Moved By Councillor Joann Chechalk

Seconded By Councillor Jason Trombetta

1. That the Director of Public Works be requested to work with Crime Stoppers respecting the placement of Crime Stoppers signage on select roadways and to report back to a future Public Works meeting; and

2. That the Director of Legislative Services be requested to review placing a link to the Crime Stoppers website on the Townships' "Report a Concern" page on the website.

Carried

8. REGIONAL COUNCILLOR'S REMARKS

Regional Councillor Albert Witteveen read from a prepared statement (attached as Schedule "B").

9. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

9.1 Council Minutes

Re: Minutes - February 26, 2024

Confidential Minutes Under Separate Cover

Moved By Councillor Joann Chechalk

Seconded By Councillor Shelley Bradaric

1. That the minutes of the open session portion of the February 26, 2024 regular Council Meeting, and the recommendations contained therein, be accepted; and
2. That the confidential minutes relating to the closed session portion of the February 26, 2024 regular Council Meeting be accepted; and that the minutes remain confidential and restricted from public disclosure in accordance with exemptions provided in Section 239 of the *Municipal Act*.

Carried

9.2 Special Council Minutes

Re: Minutes - March 19, 2024

Confidential Minutes Under Separate Cover

Moved By Councillor Shelley Bradaric

Seconded By Councillor Jason Trombetta

1. That the minutes of the March 19, 2024 Special Council Meeting, and the recommendations contained therein, be accepted; and,
2. That the confidential minutes relating to the closed session portion of the March 19, 2024 Special Council Meeting be accepted; and that the minutes remain confidential and restricted from public

disclosure in accordance with exemptions provided in Section 239 of the *Municipal Act*.

Carried

10. COMMUNICATIONS

10.1 Mayor Cheryl Ganann

Re: Support of resolution from the Town of Lincoln in regards to calling for a comprehensive review and overhaul of the emergency management and Civil Protection Act, 1990

Moved By Mayor Cheryl Ganann

Seconded By Councillor Shelley Bradaric

That, the correspondence received from Julie Kirkelos, Town Clerk of the Town of Lincoln , dated December 14, 2023, be received and supported.

Carried

11. MAYOR'S REMARKS

Mayor Ganann read from a prepared statement.

This statement has been attached to the minutes as Schedule "C".

12. REPORT OF COMMITTEE

12.1 Planning/Building/Environmental Committee

Re: Minutes - March 4, 2024

Confidential Minutes Under Separate Cover

Moved By Councillor William Reilly

Seconded By Councillor Joann Chechalk

1. That the minutes of the March 4, 2024 Planning/Building/Environmental Committee Meeting, and the recommendations contained therein, be accepted; and
2. That the confidential minutes relating to the closed session portion of the March 4, 2024 Planning/Building/Environmental Committee meeting be accepted; and that the minutes remain confidential and restricted from public disclosure in accordance with Section 239 of the *Municipal Act*.

Carried

12.2 Administration/Finance/Fire Committee

Re: Minutes - March 19, 2024

Moved By Councillor Jason Trombetta

Seconded By Councillor Shelley Bradaric

That the minutes of the March 19, 2024 Administration/Finance/Fire Committee Meeting, and the recommendations contained therein, be accepted.

Carried

12.3 Public Works & Recreation Committee

Re: Minutes - March 19, 2024

Moved By Councillor Jason Trombetta

Seconded By Councillor William Reilly

That the minutes of the March 19, 2024 Public Works & Recreation Committee Meeting, and the recommendations contained therein, be accepted.

Carried

13. RECONSIDERATION

There were no motions introduced to reconsider action taken at this Council meeting or the previous regular Council meeting.

14. NOTICE OF MOTION TO RESCIND

No notices of intent to introduce a motion to rescind action taken previously by Council were brought forward by any Council members.

15. OTHER BUSINESS

15.1 Members of Council

Re: Council Remarks

Members of Council wished the public a Happy Easter and noted the Easter events being hosted by the Township.

Councillor Reilly added that the next Planning, Building and Environmental Committee meeting has been moved from Monday April 8, 2024 to Tuesday April 9, 2024, due to the Total Solar Eclipse.

16. NEW ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no motions to introduce new items of business.

17. BY-LAWS

Moved By Councillor Shelley Bradaric

Seconded By Councillor Joann Chechalk

1. That leave be granted to introduce By-laws 2024-16, 2024-17, 2024-18, 2024-19 and 2024-20 that the same shall be considered to have been read a first, second, and third time with one reading, and are hereby adopted; and,
2. That the Mayor and Clerk be and are hereby authorized to sign and affix the Corporate Seal thereto, any rule of this Council to the contrary notwithstanding.

Carried

17.1 BY-LAW 2024-16

A By-law to authorize a financial agreement with R.V.L Contracting Inc. for the construction of street and sidewalk improvements on Spring Creek Road.

17.2 BY-LAW 2024-17

A By-law to appoint a Building Inspector, Municipal By-law Enforcement Officer, and property Standards Officer (Tafadzwa Tsuru).

17.3 BY-LAW 2024-18

A By-law to provide for the regulation of traffic on a public highway (speed reduction in front of 1794 Caistor Centre Road).

17.4 BY-LAW 2024-19

A By-law to authorize an agreement between the Corporation of the Township of West Lincoln and Urban & Environmental Management Inc. for the St. Anns Road Reconstruction Project.

17.5 BY-LAW 2024-20

A By-law to adopt, confirm and ratify matters dealt with by Council Resolution.

18. CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS

There were no confidential matters.

19. ADJOURNMENT

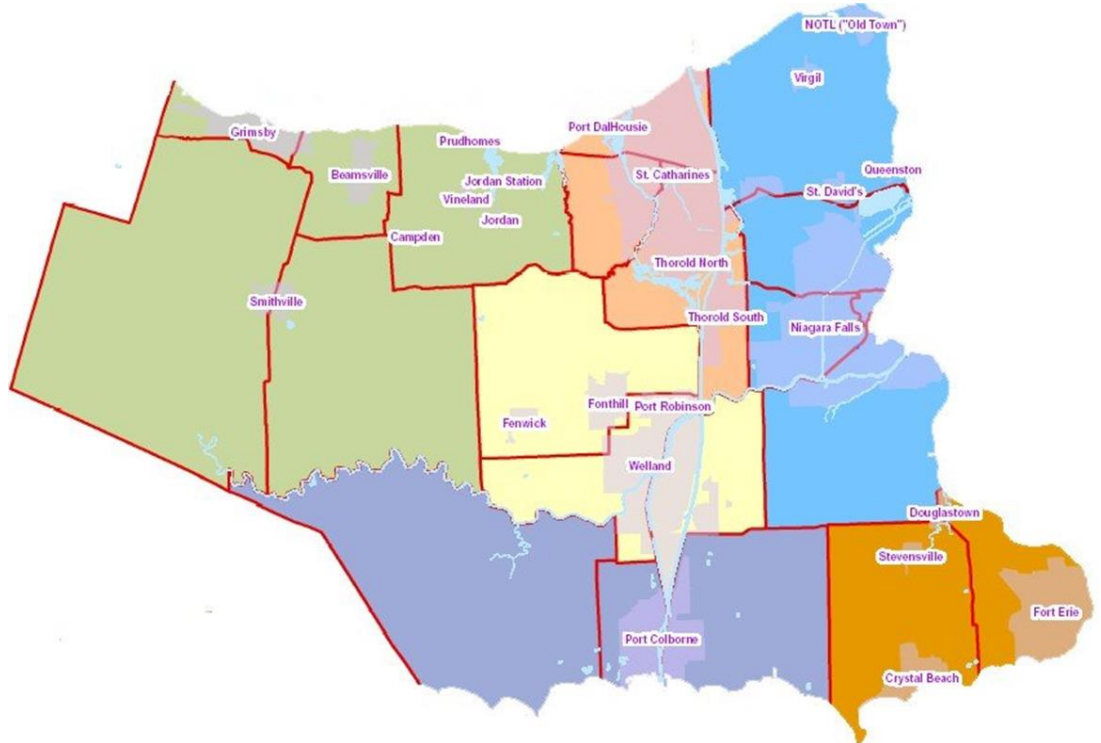
The Mayor declared this meeting adjourned at the hour of 7:45 p.m.

NANCY FIORENTINO, CLERK

MAYOR CHERYL GANANN



The purpose of Crime Stoppers is to overcome fear of reprisal and encourage the public to anonymously become involved in assisting law enforcement agencies in the apprehension and conviction of criminals.



Total fundraising, Sponsorship, and Donations yielded a \$3.74 return on investment for our local community.
374%

Each Category below far outstrips what Crimestoppers took in.

Crime doesn't pay, Crimestoppers does.

How has Niagara Regions investment helped our Regions community and residence?

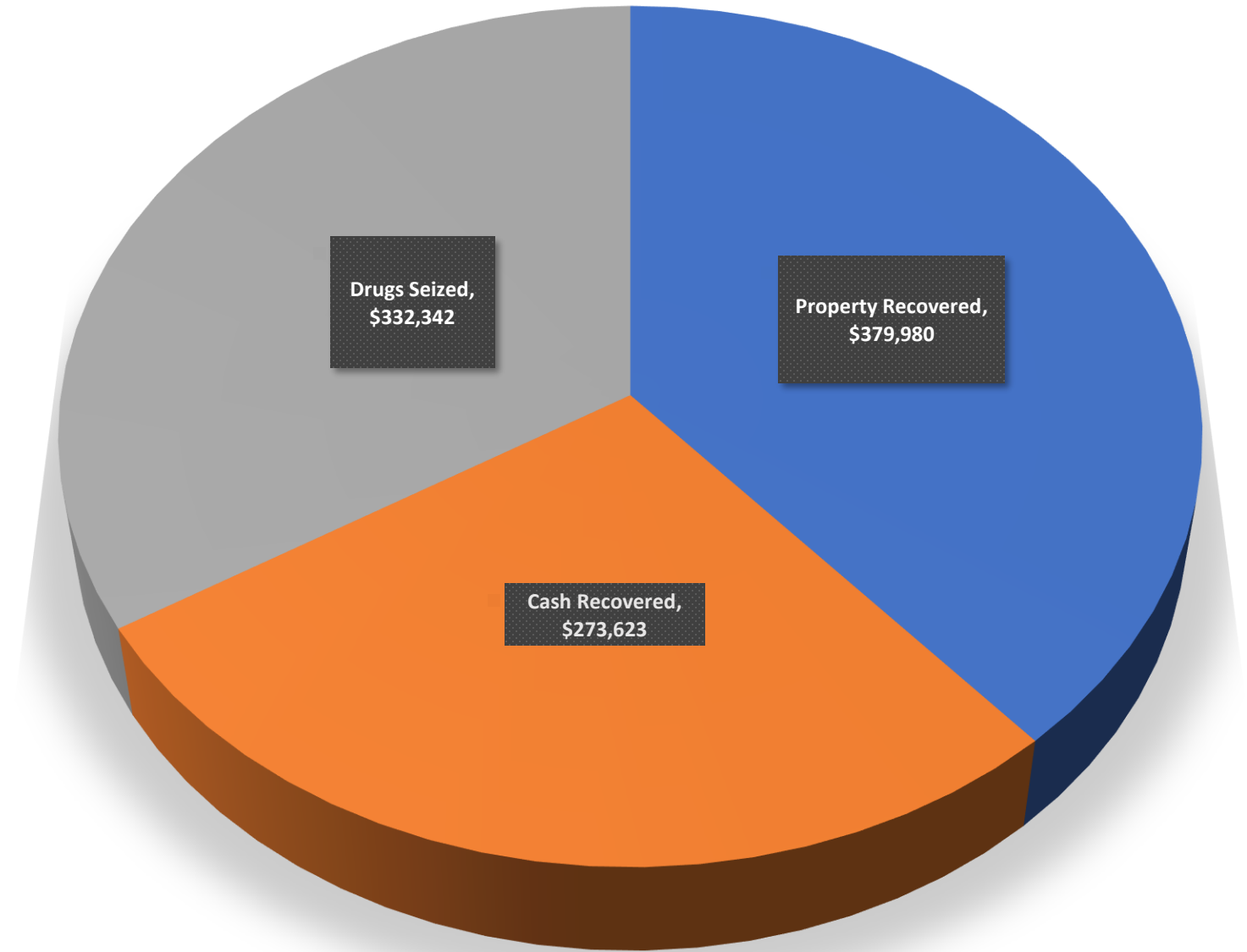
Drugs Seized: \$332,342

Property Recovered: \$379,980

Cash Recovered \$273,623



Total seizure & recovery of \$985,945



That's a return of \$3.74 on every dollar our community invested!

How has Niagara Regions investment helped our Regions community and residence?

Drugs Seized: \$332,342
Property Recovered: \$379,980
Cash Recovered \$273,623
\$3.74 return on every dollar



What I can measure.
5057 tips received(Rewards Wanted)
- Average of 4.6 tips every day
- Average of 32 Tips per week



Our tips generated
- 125 Arrests
- 289 Charges laid



These arrests and charges allowed our police to clear 84 cases off their workload.



6 Guns off the streets of our community

What I can't measure

How many would report without guaranteed anonymity?

- How many of these would still be under investigation?
- How many of these would even be known?
- How much investigation time was saved?
- How many future crimes were prevented?

- How many officers were freed up to work on other cases?
- How long would have these 84 cases taken to close w/out tips?
- Would all of them even get closed?

- Were lives saved?
- Were police saved form an armed standoff?
- Was an officer saved from having to shoot someone?

Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts. – William Bruce Cameron

How has Niagara Regions investment helped our Regions community and residence?

- Drugs Seized: \$332,342
- Property Recovered: \$379,980
- Cash Recovered \$273,623
- **\$3.74 return on every dollar**
- 5057 Anonymous tips received
- 125 Arrests
- 289 Charges Laid
- 84 Cases cleared
- 6 Guns off our streets

Crime Stoppers Niagara has become an essential tool to media and police when calling for information from the public.

Members of the public who wish to provide information anonymously can contact Crime Stoppers of Niagara online or by calling 1-800-222-8477. Crime Stoppers offers cash rewards to persons who contact the program with information that leads to an arrest.

"The homicide investigation of Raymond Riley had gone cold and no new information was coming into investigators. A media release was put out to the public with photographs and video of the suspects involved, in an effort to learn the identity of these individuals. Through response from CS's assisted investigators, through continued investigative means, in solidifying the identity of the individuals responsible, and eventually arrested and put before the courts to answer the charge of first degree murder."

Case Closed

Detective Sergeant David Pierini

Niagara Regional Police Service

David.Pierini@niagarapolice.ca

5700 Valley Way, Niagara Falls, Ontario L2E 1X8

(905) 688-4111 Ext 1009134

UNITY | LOYALTY | RESPONSIBILITY



Rose said police continue to investigate the murder, and — as is the case in most active investigations — know there are witnesses out there who have yet to come forward. That is the reality of any investigation, and is why Crime Stoppers has become a “valuable” partner for police, giving those scared for their safety, or who may fear repercussions, an anonymous option. – Excerpt from stcatharinestandard.ca

“This partnership is invaluable in empowering our community to take an active role in crime prevention and offering the ability to anonymously report information they may have to aid our investigators in their efforts to bring individuals to justice.” said Niagara Regional Police Chief Bryan MacCulloch.

The investigation remains ongoing and Niagara police are asking anyone with information to contact Det. Sergeant Andrew Knevel at (905) 688-4111, dial option 3, and extension 1009104. The public can also call Crime Stoppers anonymously at 1-800-222-8477.

The investigation remains ongoing and Niagara police are asking anyone with information to contact Det. Sergeant Andrew Knevel at (905) 688-4111, dial option 3, and extension 1009104. The public can also call Crime Stoppers anonymously at 1-800-222-8477.



Niagara Regional Police Service
Homicide Unit
905-688-4111
Extension # 4406

or

Crimestoppers
1-800-222-8477 (TIPS)
www.niagaratips.ca



CRIME STOPPERS
OF NIAGARA

AMBER ALERT

Layla SABRY

- Female, 9 years old
- 4'2", thin build
- Brown hair
- Brown eyes



LAST SEEN: December 1st around 6pm with her mother, Allana HAIST, in the King Street area of Welland, ON.

If you have any information regarding this female please contact 911 immediately.

[@AMBERAlertONT](https://twitter.com/AMBERAlertONT)

1-800-222-TIPS
www.tips.ca

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- Guns off our streets
- Essential tool for Police and Media



Education & Awareness.

Be Aware Take Care Program.

In partnership with the Niagara Elder abuse prevention network have put together a seminar on several aspects of targeted crime that uniquely victimize Niagara Region elder population.

Topics Covered:

- Targeted Scams
- Targeted fraud
- Personal Safety
- Home Security
- Crime Prevention Etc.

Crimestoppers has put on

- 32 Presentations
- 641 individuals educated

Niagara Elder Abuse Prevention Network
in partnership with Crime Stoppers of Niagara presents

BE AWARE... TAKE CARE

A Safety Guide for our Community

If you are interested in receiving a presentation to:

- Learn about Frauds & Scams and how to protect yourself
- Explore Powers of Attorneys
- Gain a better understanding of Elder Abuse
- How to receive a free copy of the Be Aware...Take Care booklet

Upcoming Presentation:
To: Probus Social Club in St. Catharines
Date: Tuesday, October 10th, 2023
Time: 10:00am
Where: Lions Hall
732 Niagara Street
St. Catharines, Ontario L2M 7W7

Please contact for more information:
Brooklyn Mercer
Administrative Coordinator, Elder Abuse Program
Crime Stoppers of Niagara
(905) 324 8522
brooklyn@niagaratips.com
crimestoppersniagara.ca



Apart from taking tips on unsolved crimes, Crime Stoppers of Niagara has worked to increase the awareness of concerns in the region, including illegal dumping, elder abuse, improving the safety and security of students, guarding against human trafficking and combating illegal drugs.

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- Education & Engagement



Community engagement and public campaigns.

- Elder Abuse Awareness
- Human Trafficking Awareness
- Illegal Dumping Awareness
- Fight for Youth campaign
- Online Shopping campaign
- Be Aware take care booklet campaign
 - 1700 Booklets sent out in relation.



Crime Stoppers of Niagara

- May 9 media event showcased the official partnership, garnered substantial media coverage
- Ontario chapter of Crime Stoppers encouraging other municipalities to follow
- Increase in exposure, media outlets and community awareness



Crime Stoppers of Niagara vice-chair Sandie Bellows speaks at Tuesday's event about how the funds from Fight for Youth will help make life safer for Niagara kids. With her are Ernie Sibbet and Barry Diamond. - Paul Forsyth/Metroland

Niagara Elder Abuse Prevention Network
in partnership with Crime Stoppers of Niagara presents

BE AWARE... TAKE CARE

A Safety Guide for our Community



What are our plans this coming year to try and help our community more?

Educating Vulnerable populations with specific and unique programs targeted directly at those specifically affected is the best way we know to get the message out.

We have developed our programs for the elderly and their specific concerns, Now we need to do it for the young.

Human Trafficking awareness campaign and education.



“If you think education is expensive, try ignorance.” – Jeff Rich

SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE

If you answered **yes** to any of the above questions, then you may be a victim of human trafficking.

Here's what you can do:

- △ Contact police or emergency services by calling 911
- △ Call the Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-833-900-1010
- △ Submit an **anonymous tip** to Crime Stoppers



CRIME STOPPERS
1-800-222-TIPS

EndS

Do you think **SOMEONE YOU KNOW** may be a victim?

General warning signs

Are they...

- △ Being controlled by others, driven to and from locations, and/or escorted at all times?
- △ Being controlled and watched by others or having someone speak for them in public?
- △ In possession of their passport or other identification?
- △ In possession of hotel keys?
- △ In control of their own money or cellphone, or do they have more than one cellphone in their possession?
- △ Unfamiliar with the neighborhood they live or work in?
- △ Moving frequently or claiming to be "new" or "just visiting"?
- △ Allowed to contact family or friends?
- △ Lying about their age or other personal information?
- △ Providing scripted or rehearsed answers to casual questions?

Physical appearance

Do they...

- △ Dress in clothing that is inappropriate for the year or context?
- △ Suddenly have expensive hair, or nails?
- △ Have branding with tattoos or symbols?
- △ Have bruises or other signs of physical abuse, including malnourishment?
- △ Lack basic medical services?
- △ Show signs of being physically abused or tortured?

For Your Consideration

- Free up time from fundraising
- Allow for some semblance of a budget to be created.
- Bring further awareness to the program.
- Bring further awareness to the tip line.





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- Guns off our streets
- Essential tool for Police and Media
- Education & Engagement
- Community Engagement
- Public Campaigns

Thank you for your ongoing support

We depend on the regions continued support

Please help us continue to support our community.

Ernie Sibbet

Board Chairman

Chair - Elder Abuse Program

Chair - Fundraising Committee

Jason Snyder

Vice Chair

Ana Cabansay

Treasurer

Jake Orr

Board Member

Brooklyn Mercer

Elder Abuse Program

Coordinator

Ziad Hajifazul

Board Member

Mike Britton

Board Member

Peter Holman.

Board Member

Joey Burke

Board Member

Mark Stevens

Board Member

Tom Easnor

Board Member

Derrick Tomlinson

Board Member

Regional Councillors Report for March 25, 2024

Good evening Mayor, councillors, staff and members of the public. I would like to start this evening on recognizing Justin Paylove and staff for sending out the weekly correspondence which has assisted me in having councillors informed of local and provincial concerns on a weekly basis.

So I wanted to cover some Regional updates this evening on some events that will be taking place within our Region. First the Mayor and myself will be attending the Niagara week at Queen's Park, this will begin on May 13 and run to May 17th. The kick off will be on May 13th and a number of issues and concerns will be brought forward on behalf of the Region.

Highlighted topics will be, construction of the new South Niagara Wastewater plant, consolidation of the Housing Master Plan, Shared services, sustainable funding for provincially funded mandated programs.

Secondly we have the World Rowing event coming on August 19-25 this 8 day event will be hosted at the Henley Rowing centre in Port Dalhousie.

And we all have heard and are preparing for the solar eclipse happening on April 8th.

An update on the every other week collection for the Region, we now have 3 years of data collected and a summary goes like this. In 2019 before the changes we collected 72,500 tonnes of household garbage, 32,226 of

organics and 37,369 of curbside recyclables. No moving year end 2023 we have collected 56,535 tonnes of household garbage and 39,024 of organic and 36,786 of curbside recyclables. This reflects a 22% reduction to our landfill site with an increase collection and processing of organics by 21%. These numbers are worth celebrating as this will add life to our current landfilling capacity while alternative systems are investigated.

On another Public Works note plans are in the works to expand the volume of treated water at the Grimsby water treatment plant this year to meet new and anticipated residential growth today and into the future. So our Regional tax dollars are being spent to provide reliable infrastructure to our residences.

I also wanted to touch on a report on Physician recruitment review that we were presented last month. So some Niagara statistics goes like this, we have 265 family physicians with 236 who are associated with a MOHLTC enrolment model, we have 15% of the 265 that are over 65 years of age, Niagara has a physician capacity of 69% which enrolls 329,910 residences and lastly our population has increased to 477,000 so we should have 346 family doctors in total so we are short 81 doctors here in Niagara. This leaves 111,780 residence with out a family doctor. (ratio is 1380 patients to one doctor). So the challenges are the supply of doctors

coming from Canadian programs is 400 every year which is a significant short fall that is needed. Also fewer medical students are choosing family medicine and as you can imagine there is plenty of competition across the region/province/country.

Many strategies are being explored in trying to solve this challenge, increase additional residency spots, to qualifying new Canadians with past education from abroad on writing the Qualified exams, these are but a few initiatives that are being explored.

On the Child care and Early Years direction was given to the Regional Chairs office to request additional funding for the program in transitional grant to support the additional responsibilities of the service system manager as per the program to 2.2 million. This was to reflect the administrative funding cap to be maintained to 10% instead of 5%.

On March 4th Public Health and Community services we had two presentations sharing with us our community Health Status assessment. What was identified was conditions and diseases that burdened Niagara residences based from 11 categories. The top health conditions were 1 Heart disease, 2 accidental falls, 3 chronic lower respiratory diseases, 4 diabetes, and 5 cerebrovascular disease - strokes. Chronic lower respiratory disease, accidental poisonings, dementia and alzheimer's

all saw increases from the assessment. Self rated Mental health status of Niagara individuals 12 and older rated their mental health as very good or excellent 62.2% felt this way. Identified by the community health and quality of life themes were access to health care, addictions, food security, homelessness, mental health and poverty. This type of assessment is good for health care providers to assist in the focus of care towards our Niagara residences.

Our second presentation that day was to give an overview of the Poverty reduction strategy for 2024-2028 working within councils priorities under Equitable region. To list the items on How to create change fall into categories as access to services, leveraging voices of lived expertise, diversity, equity and inclusion. Changing mindsets advocacy and funding. The strategy identified areas of focus being indigenous well being, food security, housing, income, early child development, employment, mental health and addiction and transportation. Obviously poverty is unique to each person, it is complex with no single solution, but it is a human right issue. Staff will continue to engage with local municipalities on recommendations on each communities input and best practises. To note it is complex but a well laid out strategy is important for successful outcomes.

Again thank-you for allowing me to report on what the Niagara Region is working for all our residences here in Niagara.

If any councillors have any questions on my report I will be happy to answer them to the best of my abilities.

Albert W

Council Meeting, March 25/24 Mayor's Remarks

It has been another busy time period since I last reported at our Council meeting on February 26.

During the afternoon of February 27, Team West Lincoln took part in the Big Brother/Big Sisters Bowling for Kids' Sake Corporate Challenge. Our team, consisting of 3 staff members- Barb Hutchinson, Noah Nickel and Beth Audet along with Councillors Chechalk and Reilly and myself collectively helped to raise just over \$1000 towards this worthwhile cause. Thanks to our bowlers and our sponsors for your support.

On the morning of February 28th, I had a meeting with Dr. Lesley Rigg, President and Vice-Chancellor of Brock University accompanied by 2 of her senior staff members visited West Lincoln to discuss possible current and future collaboration opportunities between the university and our Township. Some of this discussion was focused on the potential placement of Co-op students in our various departments.

That same evening, I attended the Public Information Centre organized by our staff for the residents of Killins, Barbara and Brooks Circle to learn about the upcoming water/wastewater and road work in their neighbourhood. This was a well-attended session that was greatly appreciated by the residents involved. Thank you to the Public Works staff for organizing and running this public event.

The entire morning of February 29th was taken up by a meeting of the Niagara Older Adults Association in Thorold. It was the first time that this Niagara-wide organization of Age-Friendly Advisory Committees has joined together for an in person meeting, since before Covid, although there have been several virtual meetings. It was a great opportunity to share ideas and/or concerns and to hear about upcoming events throughout the Region. I am very pleased that our staff member, Brianne Parsons was able to attend this meeting and that we now have a staff person attached to such meetings representing West Lincoln. The ability for her to network with her counterparts in the other Niagara municipalities will help to enhance future programming in West Lincoln as these Region-wide staff members also share their expertise in planning events and programmes for the older adult population.

On March 5th, I spent the entire day, from 9:00 am until 3:00 pm at the Cairn Christian School Heritage Fair. As one of several judges, it was my responsibility to review the Grade 8 Student booklets, discuss with each student their visual and oral presentations, engage in dialogue as they answer my questions about their work and then eventually judge each of their projects. It was a long day but provided a very enjoyable opportunity to once again interact with elementary school students.

Early in the morning of March 6th, I had the pleasure of attending, along with Councillor Chechalk and Region Councillor Witteveen, the Chamber of Commerce event held at, and featuring, Big Country Raw. Geraldine Brouwer is a great speaker who competently relayed the story of their successful growth from their early modest beginnings to becoming one of the fastest growing companies in Canada in only a few years. We are very fortunate to have them situated in West Lincoln where their story first began.

Also on March 6th, I was in attendance at the West Lincoln Community Care Annual General Meeting Luncheon held at Smithville United Church at which a great many longtime volunteers were recognized for their valuable service to this organization and our community in general. More than 70 people were in attendance, 64 of whom are regular volunteers at either the Thrift Store or the Food Bank. Our community is very generous with both their time and their resources.

On Friday, March 8th, Councillor Chechalk and I attended the International Women's Day celebration held at the Sheraton Fallsview Hotel and Conference Centre in Niagara Falls.

This huge event, attended by men and women alike, honoured the many women who widely contribute to the well-being of local businesses, not-for-profits and municipalities throughout the Region and beyond.

March Break for me, provided an opportunity for a warm-weather, family vacation with my daughter and son-in-law and 2 of our granddaughters. I must say however that it was a bit shocking to return to the cold, wintery weather of last week.

Especially bone-chilling was the morning of March 20, when we raised the flag for Meals on Wheels in the strong cold wind! The sun did come out a little later that morning as I did my "Ride Along" with the Meals on Wheels volunteer, Bonnie. Her sunny spirit and kind manner warmed us up as we delivered some warm and some frozen meals to several West Lincoln residents. It was apparent just how much people looked forward to her delivery and her short visit with each of them. I was honoured to take part in those visits with residents most of whom either live alone or are shut in due to health constraints.

Finally, since we have made several delegations during the past years to both the Ministry of Transportation and the Ministry of Infrastructure regarding a new Niagara Escarpment Crossing, members of Council will, I hope, be pleased to hear an update on this situation. This afternoon, Acting CAO Mike DiPaola and I attended a meeting at Regional Headquarters called by Regional Public Works Commissioner Terry Ricketts. A potential plan leading to the submission of the Terms of Reference and the accompanying Individual Environmental Assessment for a new Niagara Escarpment Crossing was outlined to West Niagara Mayors and CAOs and additionally the CAO and Deputy CAO of the Region. Our input was solicited before the Regional Team working on this project presented it to the Regional Council Public Works Committee in April or May, after which they will then present it to each of our 3 Councils: Grimsby, Lincoln and West Lincoln. A Public Information Centre will also be held before going on to the Province for their approval of the Terms of Reference. This is a large step in the progress toward a potential new Niagara Escarpment Crossing which could be of huge benefit to the future safety, well-being and prosperity of each of our communities.