

Meeting Date: June 20, 2023
Submitted by: Cathy Burghardt-Jesson, Warden
Subject: Middlesex County Warden's Activity Report

BACKGROUND:

The Municipal Act, 2001, generally outlines the role of Warden to:

- Act as chief executive officer of the municipality;
- Preside over council meetings;
- Provide leadership to the council;
- Represent the municipality at official functions; and,
- Carry out the duties of the head of council under this or any other Act.

The purpose of the Warden's Activity Report is to formally provide an overview of the Warden's government and community relations activities, achievements, projects and engagements on behalf of Middlesex County.

During this reporting period, Middlesex County has made substantial strides in government relations and advocacy through meetings, conferences and delegations. Advocacy efforts have involved various ministries and officials, emphasizing important community issues such as affordable housing, child care, and infrastructure.

- Discussions with the Hon. Michael Parsa, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, provided an invaluable platform to discuss the County's concerns about the lack of affordable housing and rental properties. This dialogue also gave us an opportunity to express the effectiveness of the Interim Accommodation Pilot Project, which partners with the Canadian Mental Health Association Thames Valley Addiction and Mental Health Services. We took this opportunity to express the need for the continuation of Social Service Relief Funding or its replacement with a permanent stream and direct allocation to Middlesex County.
- Meeting with Hon. Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, was crucial to discuss the challenges created by the existing land ambulance dispatch system and the importance of continued investment in Community Paramedicine. Our advocacy efforts were directed towards garnering support for the proposal to transfer the responsibility and operation of land ambulance dispatch to MLPS.

- Our conversation with Patrice Barnes, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Education, focused on EarlyON funding disparities and the shortage of Registered Early Childhood Educators in our community. This discussion allowed us to advocate for an updated funding formula and stress the growing needs of rural municipalities.
- During our meeting with Hon. Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development, we stressed the importance of ensuring the continuation of the Interim Accommodation Pilot Project. In addition to this, we emphasized the necessity for a special supplement of \$500,000 to address funding gaps within our EarlyON services. When compared to neighboring counties, our residents are not being treated equitably and do not have access to a proportional amount of EarlyON programming. This situation underlines the need for additional funding to ensure that our community's children are given the best start in life. Minister McNaughton also offered support for the transfer of the land ambulance dispatch from the Ministry of Health to MLPS. This transfer will significantly improve the triage of calls, ensuring that the right patient receives the right care without delay. We stressed the need for sustainable, long-term funding for community paramedicine, which will provide proactive and preventative care, reduce unnecessary ambulance calls, emergency department visits, and lower healthcare costs. We also brought to the Minister's attention the necessity for the modernization of the Authorized Requester Information Services (ARIS) system. Modernizing this system will enable us to access collision data more efficiently, a critical component of improving road safety. Coupled with the introduction of new infrastructure funding programs and the maintenance of existing levels of provincial infrastructure funding, these measures are integral to the County's ability to better address future infrastructure needs.
- During the meeting with MP Peter Fragiskatos, discussions were held on various challenges and opportunities for collaboration in Middlesex County. Firstly, the housing and homelessness issue was addressed, emphasizing the success of the Interim Accommodation Pilot Project while highlighting funding challenges, the scarcity of affordable and rental housing in the County, and the need for federal funding to address homelessness. Secondly, the success of EarlyON programming was acknowledged, along with funding challenges and gaps compared to neighboring communities, and the shortage of Registered Early Childcare Educators in rural areas. Lastly, gratitude was expressed for sustainable funding through the Canada Community-Building Fund, while drawing attention to the future infrastructure needs, particularly the replacement of bridges and culverts, and the potential impact of transitioning to electric vehicles on tax revenue and current federal funding sustainability.

These key advocacy efforts have created new and sustained existing robust ties with government officials and ministries, paving the way for future collaborations that will directly benefit the Middlesex County community. The County remains committed to maintaining these vital dialogues to improve services and address the unique needs of our residents.

ANALYSIS:

The activities of the Warden are conducted in accordance with the broad direction of Council and in alignment with the Middlesex County Strategic Plan and its Guiding Principles:

- Balancing the rural-urban qualities of the County
- Building relationships and working in a collaborative and supportive way
- Leading through innovation, evaluation, and continuous improvement
- Recognizing the uniqueness of our local municipal partners
- Maintaining financial sustainability
- Focusing on diversity and inclusion
- Being flexible and responsive

Date	Activity
January	
January 4, 2023	County Building meeting with staff
January 6, 2023	Meeting with County Councillor
January 12-13, 2023	Western Ontario Warden's Caucus
January 17, 2023	London Chamber of Commerce Mayor's Breakfast
January 17, 2023	London City Council presentation MLPS
January 18, 2023	Provincial Budget Input Discussions, w/ Minister Peter Bethlenfalvy, St. Thomas
January 20, 2023	Premier of Ontario visit to MLPS
January 22-24, 2023	ROMA Conference & Delegations
January 27, 2023	Meeting with County Councillor
January 30, 2023	Meeting with Ontario Hydro

Date	Activity
February	
February 1-4, 2023	Ontario Library Association Conference
February 8, 2023	Economic Development Video/High School Trade Show Parkhill
February 9, 2023	County Budget Meeting
February 10, 2023	Meeting with County Councillor
February 13, 2023	County Budget Meeting
February 15, 2023	County Budget Meeting
February 16, 2023	County Budget Meeting
February 16, 2023	Western Fair Meeting
February 23, 2023	County Budget Meeting
February 25, 2023	Glencoe Library Celebrations
February 25, 2023	Strathroy-Caradoc Coldest Night of the Year
February 27, 2023	Meeting with County Councillor
February 27, 2023	Meeting with MLHU
February 28, 2023	Community Economic Development 101

Date	Activity
March	
March 1, 2023	Meeting with MP Peter Fragiskotas
March 1, 2023	Western Fair Grove Meeting
March 2, 2023	TVDSB Capital Plan Meeting
March 3, 2023	County Budget Meeting
March 5, 2023	Battle of Longwoods
March 9, 2023	Media Training
March 10, 2023	Western Ontario Warden's Caucus
March 13, 2023	Middlesex Accessibility Advisory Committee
March 15, 2023	Hon. Minister Monte McNaughton Announcement & Private Delegation
March 16, 2023	Duncan McPhail Visitation to represent Middlesex County
March 17, 2023	Irish Benevolent Society St. Patrick's Day
March 21, 2023	All Are Welcome Event, Islamic Centre
March 28, 2023	Middlesex County Library Board
March 31, 2023	County Building , meeting with staff

Date	Activity
April	
April 1, 2023	Middlesex Centre Archives Celebration, Delaware
April 6, 2023	MLHU Public Health Week Celebrations
April 14, 2023	Western Ontario Warden's Caucus Zoom presentation to MP's/MPP's
April 16-19, 2023	Ontario Good Roads Association Conference & Delegations
April 20, 2023	County Building meeting with staff
April 21, 2023	Western Ontario Warden's Caucus
April 24, 2023	Middlesex County CEMC Meeting
April 25, 2023	London City Hall, Provincial Announcement Ministers Clarke & McNaughton, MPP Flack, Mayor Morgan
April 26, 2023	Strathroy Caradoc Chamber of Commerce
April 26-28, 2023	Ontario Small Urban Municipalities Conference





Date	Activity
May	
May 2, 2023	Middlesex Municipal Day
May 3-4, 2023	AMO Homelessness Symposium
May 4, 2023	Middlesex Warden's Association General Meeting
May 9, 2023	St. Joseph's Health Foundation Breakfast of Champions
May 9, 2023	Middlesex County – Local Council Day
May 10, 2023	Visit Middlesex Tourism Symposium
May 11, 2023	Western Fair Grove Meeting
May 12, 2023	Strathmere Lodge, Celebration for Nurses Week
May 18, 2023	Western Fair Programming Council
May 19, 2023	MLPS Survivor Day
May 23, 2023	Middlesex County Library Board
May 24, 2023	London City Hall, Middlesex/London MOC

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC FOCUS:

This report aligns with the following Strategic Focus, Goals, or Objectives:

Strategic Focus	Goals	Objectives
Cultivating Community Vitality 	Advance a diverse, healthy, and engaged community across Middlesex County	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote and support community wellness• Innovate social and community services• Attract, retain, and engage youth in our community• Champion and encourage active transportation and public transit opportunities
Connecting Through Infrastructure 	Ensure communities are built on a sustainable foundation that is connected and thriving	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage and advocate, through partnerships, the construction of scalable, equitable broadband infrastructure, recognizing our unserved and underserved areas• Commit to a sound asset management strategy to maintain and fund critical infrastructure• Use County infrastructure in an innovative way to provide a seamless service experience for residents
Strengthening Our Economy 	Encourage a diverse and robust economic base throughout the county	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support opportunities to create a stronger and sustainable agricultural sector• Create an environment that enables the attraction and retention of businesses, talent, and investments• Attract visitors to Middlesex County• Support the development and prosperity of downtown core areas in Middlesex County
Promoting Service Excellence 	Innovate and transform municipal service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anticipate and align municipal service delivery to emerging needs and expectations• Engage, educate and inform residents, businesses, and visitors of county services and community activities• Strengthen our advocacy and lobbying efforts with other government bodies• Collaborate with strategic partners to leverage available resources and opportunities• Build organizational capacity and capabilities

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Middlesex County Warden's Activity Report be received for information.