

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

from Mayor, Council, Committees and Staff

In order to better communicate the workings of our Township, and our many volunteer committees with the residents of Laird Township, the Township of Laird Council has proposed the initiation of an annual report which summarizes the actions and activities of Council, Staff and the various committees and sub-committees.

In order to properly manage the Township, meet our legislative and legal requirements, maintain our road network and our community facilities there are over 60 scheduled meetings per year. These include Council, Recreation, Recreations sub-committees, the Police Board, the Planning Board and the Cemetery Board, with at least one member of council attending, and often chairing, each of these meetings. Staff are also heavily involved in nearly all these meetings, as are the many, many volunteers. Even though most of these meetings have formal minutes which are posted on the Laird Township website for those interested in the details, actions, and recommendations of these committees and boards, not everyone has the time for this.

On behalf of Council, Staff and the Committee volunteers of the Township of Laird we would like to provide some highlights of our activities during the past year, 2023, which we hope communicates the efforts, outcomes, and achievements of the 40 plus individuals that work cooperatively to keep the Township of Laird functioning effectively.

## **Council and Staff:**

Over the past year many by-laws and policies have been adopted by Council for the Township of Laird, some are completely new and others have been revised. All of these by-laws and policies can be viewed at the Township municipal office or on the website at [www.lairdtownship.ca](http://www.lairdtownship.ca).

### By-laws and Policies:

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|---|--|
| i. Recreation Committee Terms of Reference    | vii. Investment Policy                       |
| ii. Designate a Head of MFIPPA                | viii. Transparency and Accountability Policy |
| iii. HR Standing Committee Terms of Reference | ix. Health and Safety Policy (revised)       |
| iv. Procedural By-law (revised)               | x. Budget Policy                             |
| v. Reserve and Reserve Fund Policy            | xi. Complaint Policy                         |
| vi. Violence and Harassment Policy            | xii. Tax Collection Policy                   |
|   | xiii. Yard Maintenance By-law                |

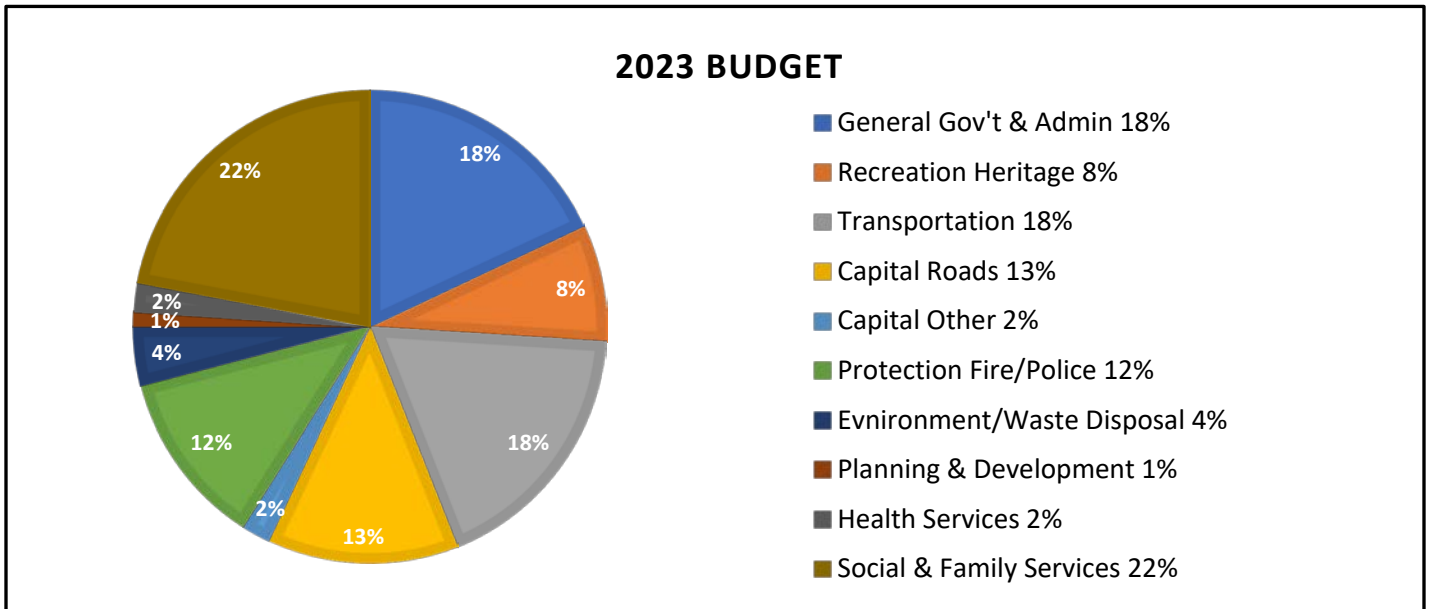
### Building Permits

The total number of Building Permits issued for 2023 is 46, this number includes 6 new single-family residences, 11 new sheds & garages, 12 additions/renovations, 2 demolitions, 3 gazebo/bunkie/pavilion and 12 permits for windows/siding/shingles.

### Budget

The 2023 Budget was passed at the April 13, 2023 Council meeting, approving a 3% increase, see pie chart on page 2 outlining where the money was allocated. The Treasurer is responsible for administrating the Township's budgetary process and reporting annually on the Township's financial activity and health. Council implemented a new Budget Policy that requires the Treasurer to report to

Council all Budget variances and any recommendations for the remaining Budget amounts. This information is included in council meeting agendas and minutes for transparency.



### Road work Completed in 2023

- 1) **Surface treatment:** Maclennan Road received 1,400 m of new surface treatment and Government Road received 1,800 m of resurfacing.
- 2) **Ditching:** Lake George had 1,450 m, Cloudy Lake Road had 267 m, and Riverside Drive had 700 m of ditching work conducted.
- 3) **Surface Treatment Prep:** Maclennan Road had 1,400 m and Porchuck Road had 1,600 m of surface treatment preparations for future surface treatment in 2024.
- 4) **Brushing:** Approximately 20 kms of roadside brushing was self-performed by Roads Department staff.
- 5) **New plow truck:** The Township purchased a new 2024 Western Star that was modified into a plow truck. Over the next few months, you may see the new blue truck out plowing the roads.
- 6) **Tree Trimming:** Trimming of large overhanging branches took place on Lakeview Road South and Porchuck Road.
- 7) **Roadside Cutting:** Approximately 400 kms of roadside grass cutting was conducted throughout the Township.
- 8) **Surface Treatment Patching:** Majority of the surface treatment patching took place on Government Road, Bar River Road, and Nebbish Road, along with maintenance patching throughout the Township.
- 9) **Culvert Replacement:** A large cross culvert was replaced on Government Road.



2024 Western Star Plow Truck

## Recreation Committee

As you may or may not know, seven of our volunteer committees report to the Laird Recreation Committee. These seven Recreation Sub-Committees include the Bar River Community Center, G.W. Evoy Memorial Rink, Laird Fairgrounds, Laird Hall, Pumpkin Point Park, Finns' Bay Wharf, and Laird Heritage.

Council and Recreation have encouraged the revitalization of many sub-committees, as some had unfortunately gone virtually dormant during the COVID crisis. This revitalization effort has been



Giant Pumpkins – Grand Champion weighing in at 187 pounds.

especially true for our Laird Hall, Finns' Bay Wharf and Laird Fairgrounds sub-committees which are now particularly active and have many new volunteers added to the rolls.

The Recreation Committee has re-established the Bar River Winter Carnival which was a great success and the Recreation Committee's 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Pumpkin Fest grew exponentially this year and was very well attended by the public. Donations were collected for the local food bank.

### Bar River Community Centre (Hall)

The Bar River Community Centre received a substantial provincial grant for rehabilitation of the existing structure and as a result, the Hall has been closed for much of the past year while engineering, design, and construction contract awards have been conducted. The first phase of this work has recently begun, with the lifting of the entire structure and replacement of many structural members was needed, this was followed by the installation of new concrete footings and foundation wall and the building has been lowered.

The architectural work has begun. This will include new windows and doors, new main entrance and wheelchair access, new insulation and siding, new side entry, existing washroom repairs, new interior finishes, new kitchen cabinets, etc.

It is expected that this work will be completed by the end of 2024.

### G.W. Evoy Memorial Rink

The G.W. Evoy Memorial Rink saw continued use of its new rink boards and base in 2023. Both the base and boards as well as some rink shack improvements were recently completed with the assistance of a provincial grant. The new works were very well received and widely used by the public last winter and is expected to serve the community for many decades to come.

### Laird Fairgrounds

The Laird Fairgrounds Gazebo received a \$150k facelift, funded entirely by a provincial grant. This includes the Gazebo foundation replacement, new Gazebo concrete slab, new plumbing, new

lighting, new bar area, new doors and windows in the kitchen, and a start on rehabilitation of the kitchen area.

The Laird Fairgrounds sub-committee purchased a new (used) tractor and finishing mower in order to reduce labour costs for grass cutting. Capital refurbishment and repairs were completed on the south washroom facilities and pump station, as well as leveling the structure.

The use of the fairgrounds and facilities were quite active as well and included the following:

- Laird International Raceway (LIR)
- Laird Fair
- Horse shows
- Pumpkinfest
- Weddings
- Overwinter storage

### **Laird Hall**

Laird Hall has benefitted from an invigorated committee with many new members from the public.

They have during the last year:

- Addressed some Hall safety concerns raised by independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party review.
- Commenced deliberations on a 5-year plan requested by Council.
- Conducted a pre-budget assessment and reviewed storage requirements.
- Completed repairs to the handicap washroom and washroom doors.
- Supported the reestablishment of floor curling for seniors.
- Supported the annual Sylvan Circle and held a "Sylvan Circle Coffee Break" at Laird Hall raising money for future improvements.
- Completed seasonal decorations.

### **Pumpkin Point Park**

The Pumpkin Point Park sub-committee oversees the Centennial Park located at the south end of Point Drive. The Committee is working on developing a 5-year plan. Over the past year, a lot of landscaping and tree removal were completed.

### **The Wharf**

The Finns' Bay Wharf sub-committee has been greatly expanded to include many new volunteer members in order to address the growing concerns and desires of the residents.

- A survey was sent out to all Laird ratepayers for input on the future of the Wharf located at 455 Finns' Bay Road North.
- A well-attended public meeting was held at the Wharf, where further input into the future development of the Wharf was provided by those in attendance.
- The Finns' Bay Wharf sub-committee using the input from both the survey and public meeting formulated a preliminary 5-Year Plan for the Wharf property which was presented to Council. These plans are subject to possible change and will depend on budget approval.
  - o Year 1: Signage at gate
  - o Year 2: Beach development, hiking trail
  - o Year 3: Investigate construction on a combined Accessible/Family washroom building.
  - o Year 4: Boardwalk
  - o Year 5: Concrete Pad and 24' x 36' Gazebo

A small screened-in gazebo, two picnic tables, an outhouse, and an animal-proof garbage/recycling bin on a concrete pad have been added to the Wharf property in the last year.

## **Heritage Committee**

The Laird Heritage sub-committee had a very productive year. The Township of Laird has been without a museum for the past few years, the artifacts were put in storage while the committee came up with a plan. The committee started a 5-year Plan, the first main activity for year one was to locate a site for a new museum and put in a foundation. The committee was approached by Jeff Dorvault who volunteered to develop the Laird Township Heritage Center Virtual Museum, which can be accessed at [www.lairdheritagecentre.ca](http://www.lairdheritagecentre.ca). The heritage summer student was responsible for digitizing and cataloging 800-plus items that were in storage for the website and Jeff did all of the photo editing and website design. If you haven't taken the time to go look at the website, please do, as it is a great addition to the Township of Laird to share and preserve Laird's history.

## **Police Board**

The Police board was re-established with the OPP to communicate township concerns, statistics and public safety issues.

## **Planning Board**

The Desbarats to Echo Bay Planning Board, established in 1998, makes decisions on consent applications under section 50 and section 53 of the Planning Act. In 2023 the Planning Board approved one consent for Laird Township. The Planning Board is continuing to work towards a Joint Official Plan for the four member municipalities (Johnson, Tarbutt, Laird, and Macdonald Meredith and Aberdeen Additional).

## **Cemetery Board**

The Cemetery Board is continuing to make improvements by starting to develop a 5-year plan to focus on improving plot map and layout, tree trimming to clear boundaries and open up the access road, putting in graveled walkways, leveling and topsoil, and grave marker maintenance. A tender was secured for leveling and topsoil and grave marker maintenance in 2023, however, due to an early start to winter the work will be conducted in 2024.

## **Closing Message**

In closing, it is the hope of Council, Staff and our volunteers that this report and the information presented in it help to inform the residents of Laird Township of the myriad of Township activities that have and are being performed behind the scenes to keep our Township functioning and helps to fulfill our intent to provide transparency and access to more detailed information on the Township website "transparency" tab.

We would like to thank our many active volunteers and wish everyone a happy and prosperous 2024.

Regards,

Shawn Evoy  
Mayor, Laird Township