

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024

from Mayor, Council, Committees and Staff

Last year the Township of Laird Council proposed the initiation of an annual report in order to better communicate the workings of our Township, and our many volunteer committees with the residents of Laird Township, 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, and maintain our road network and our community facilities there are over 60 scheduled meetings per year. These include Council, Recreation, Recreations sub-committees, the OPP Sault Ste. Marie Detachment 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, 2024, which we hope communicate 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.

### By-laws and Policies

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|--|--|
| i. Tree Canopy Policy                            | ix. Councillor Appointment (Brad Shewfelt) By-law            |
| ii. Council Remuneration By-law                  | x. Entering into an agreement with MFA                       |
| iii. Police Detachment Board Establishing By-law | xi. Pregnancy & Parental leave of members of Council Policy  |
| iv. Stop Sign Finns' Bay North By-law            | xii. Building Permit By-law                                  |
| v. Council Vacancy Policy                        | xiii. Trailer Permit Policy                                  |
| vi. Road Superintendent Policy                   | xiv. Enter into an Agreement with 9-1-1 PSAP Services By-law |
| vii. Cell Phone Use Policy                       |  |
| viii. Stand By Pay Policy                        |  |

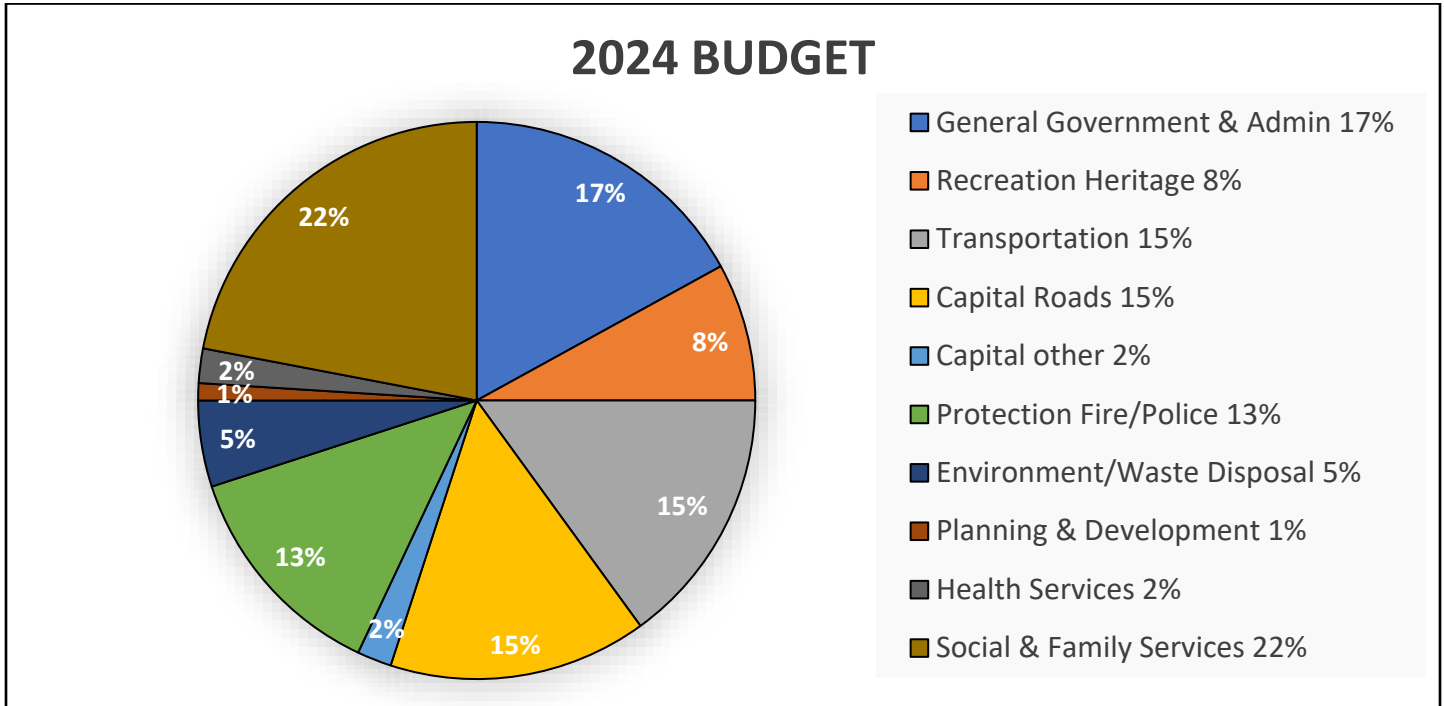
### Building Permits

The total number of Building Permits issued for 2024 was 30, this number includes 7 new single-family residences, 1 seasonal cottage, 5 new sheds & garages, 11 additions/renovations, 3 demolitions, and 3 permits for windows/siding/shingles.

### Budget

The 2024 Budget was passed at the April 18, 2024 Council meeting, approving a 3.8% 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 requires that the Treasurer 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.



### Roadwork Completed in 2024

- 1) **Surface treatment:** Porchuck Road received 1,600 meters and Government Road over the new culvert received 100 meters of new surface treatment. Reids Road received 3,200 meters and Neebish Road received 1,500 meters of resurfacing.
- 2) **Ditching:** Cemetery Road, Lake George Road East, and Riverside Drive were budgeted to be ditched for 2024, the work will be completed in 2025.
- 3) **Surface Treatment Prep:** Porchuck Road received 40 loads of gravel to prepare for new surface treatment. Lake George Road received 40 loads of gravel to prepare for future surface treatment in 2025.
- 4) **Brushing:** Approximately 120 kms of roadside brushing was self-performed by Road Department staff, targeting: Neebish Road, Finns' Bay Road, Porchuck Road, Lakeview Road, and sections of Lake George Road and Bar River Road.
- 5) **Equipment:** The Township purchased a flail mower for the backhoe for roadside grass cutting.
- 6) **Roadside Cutting:** Approximately 160 kms of roadside grass cutting was conducted throughout the Township.
- 7) **Surface Treatment Patching:** The majority of the surface treatment patching took place on Neebish Road and Reids Road along with maintenance patching throughout the Township.
- 8) **Culvert Replacement:** A cross culvert was replaced on Reids Road.

## 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 continue to encourage the revitalization of the many sub-committees. This revitalization effort has been especially true for our Laird Hall, Finns' Bay Wharf and Laird Fairgrounds, Bar River Hall Sub-committees which are now particularly active and have many new volunteers added to the rolls.



*Pumpkin Fest Ribbon Cutting Ceremony – Councillor Frolick, Clerk Errington, MPP Mike Mantha, Mayor Evoy, Friend, and Jack-o-Lantern*

Recreation Committee's 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Pumpkin Fest grew exponentially this year and was very well attended by the public. The Giant Pumpkin Grand Champion weighed in at 105 lbs. Donations were collected for the local food bank. A ribbon ceremony to acknowledge the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) took place at Pumpkin Fest. In 2022 Laird Township was awarded an OTF Grant of \$150,000 to do much-needed renovations on the Laird Fairgrounds Gazebo. The majority of the work was completed in the summer of 2023 and greatly improved our facility for adults and youth to gather and socialize.

## Laird Fairgrounds

The Laird Fairgrounds Gazebo was well-used in 2024. New stoves and re-purposed coolers replaced the old units in the Gazebo kitchen.

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

- Laird International Raceway (LIR)
- Horse shows
- Weddings
- Motorsport swap meet
- Layover for travelers with horses
- Laird Fair
- Pumpkinfest
- Overwinter storage

## Pumpkin Point Park

The Pumpkin Point Park sub-committee oversees the Centennial Park located at the south end of Point Drive. The Committee has developed a 5-year plan and improvements are planned for the coming years.



### Bar River Community Centre (Hall)

The Bar River Community Centre received a substantial NOHFC provincial grant, \$500,000, for the rehabilitation of the existing structure and as a result the Hall has been closed for the past year while engineering, design and construction contract awards have been conducted. Virtually all construction and rehabilitation work has now been completed and the Hall is scheduled for its grand re-opening on March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2025.



### G.W. Evoy Memorial Rink

The G.W. Evoy Memorial Rink saw minimal use in 2024 due to the unusually warm winter.

### Heritage Committee

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 museum foundation design has been finalized and will be constructed in 2025 along with the building shell, with other construction activities to follow.

The heritage summer student was responsible for digitizing and cataloging many of our historic Township documents such as the Council minutes and past by-laws. 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 and to share and

preserve Laird's history. The Laird Township Heritage Center Virtual Museum can be accessed at [www.lairdheritagecentre.ca](http://www.lairdheritagecentre.ca).

### **The Wharf**

The Finns' Bay Wharf sub-committee held a meet and greet event on August 11, 2024, which was a great success and widely attended.

### **Laird Hall**

Laird Hall is in need of a significant renovation and Staff and the Committee have been working on grant applications.

Hall use the last year:

- Floor curling for seniors.
- Supported the annual Sylvan Circle and held a "Sylvan Circle Coffee Break" at Laird Hall raising money for future improvements.
- Yoga classes
- Senior Exercise
- Dog training classes
- Private rentals for family gatherings, birthday parties, baby showers, and banquets

### **Police Board**

A new joint police board, OPP Sault Ste. Marie Detachment Board, was established with MacDonald Twp. and 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 2024 the Planning Board approved 1 consent for Laird Township, which created two additional building lots. 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). This is expected to be finalized in 2025.

### **Cemetery Board**

The Cemetery Board is continuing to make improvements by focussing on improving the plot map and layout. Grave marker maintenance was completed on nearly one third of the upper Cemetery. Planned marker maintenance is planned to continue in 2025 and beyond.

### **Closing Message**

In closing, it is the hope of Council, Staff and our volunteers that this report and the information presented above helps to inform the residents of Laird Township of the myriad Township activities that are being performed behind the scenes. This report intends to assist in fulfilling our commitment to provide transparency and the access to more detailed information can be found on the Township website "transparency" tab.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank our many active volunteers and all the work they put into our Committees.

Regards,

Shawn Evoy  
Mayor, Laird Township