

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

from Mayor, Council, Committees and Staff

In 2023, the Township of Laird Council proposed the initiation of an annual report in order to communicate the workings of the Township, as well as the work of our many volunteer committees, with the residents of Laird Township.

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, the Cemetery Board, and Emergency Management, 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 well as 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, 2025, 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, Council has adopted several by-laws and policies for the Township of Laird, including both new enactments and revisions to existing documents. All by-laws and policies are available for public review at the Township Municipal Office and on the Township's website at lairdtownship.ca.

Please note that a Conformity By-law is passed at the conclusion of each Council meeting to formally confirm the proceedings, as required under the *Municipal Act, 2001*. These by-laws are not listed below.

By-laws and Policies

i. Control of Dogs By-law 2040-25	v. Council Staff Relations Policy By-law 2048-25
ii. Borrowing By-law 2041-25	vi. Final Tax Rates 2025 By-law 2053-25
iii. Zoning Amendment Z-01-25 By-law 2046-25	vii. Drainage Superintendent Appointment By-law 2056-25
iv. Delegations of Powers and Duties Policy By-law 2047-25	viii. Zoning By-law Amendment Z-02-25 By-law 2064-25

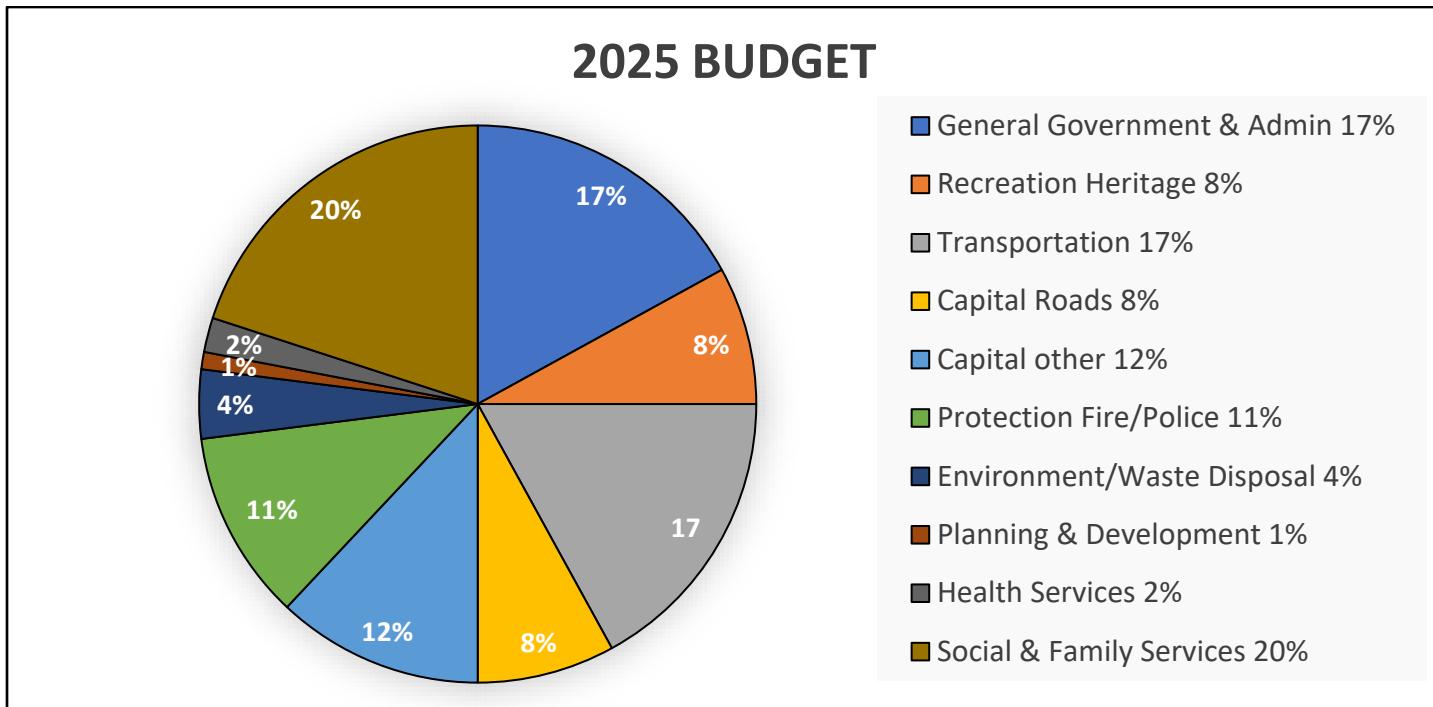
Building Permits

The total number of Building Permits issued for 2025 was 36. This number includes 5 new single-family residences, 1 seasonal cottage, 8 new sheds & garages, 7 additions/renovations, 1 demolition(barn), and 4 permits for windows/siding/shingles.

Budget

The 2025 Budget was approved at the April 20, 2025, Council meeting, with a 4.1% increase. A pie chart below shows how funds were allocated.

The Treasurer manages the Township's budget, reports annually on financial activity, and informs Council of any budget variances or recommendations. This information is included in Council meeting agendas and minutes for transparency.



Roadwork Completed in 2025

In 2025, Council shifted from subcontracting all ditching and roadside brushing to performing the work in-house. This allows better control and management of recurring costs. To support this, Council approved the purchase of a wheeled excavator and brushing equipment, and staff were reallocated to carry out the work.

1) Surface Treatment:

- **Bar River Road** (Tracks to Cemetery Road): 3,600 m
- **Calabogie Road** (Lakeview to Lakeshore): 1,000 m
- **Neebish Road** (Highway to MacDonald Drive): 1,600 m

All received **single surface treatment**.

2) Ditching:

Ditching work was completed on Cemetery Road and Riverside Drive, with Lake George Road East started and scheduled for completion in 2026.

3) Surface Treatment Prep:

Lake George Road received 40 loads of gravel in preparation for future surface treatment.

- 4) **Brushing:** Road Department staff self-performed approximately 40 km of roadside brushing, focusing on Cemetery Road and Pumpkin Point Road West.
- 5) **Equipment:** The Township purchased a wheeled excavator, brushing equipment, and disc mower for roadside cutting.
- 6) **Roadside Cutting:** Approximately 160 kms of roadside grass cutting was completed throughout the Township.
- 7) **Surface Treatment Patching:** The majority of the surface treatment patching was completed on Neebish Road, Government Road, and Bar River Road, along with maintenance patching throughout the Township.
- 8) **Culvert Replacement:** A cross culvert was replaced on Cemetery Road.

Recreation Committee

The Laird Recreation Committee oversees seven volunteer sub-committees: Bar River Community Centre, G.W. Evoy Memorial Rink, Laird Fairgrounds, Laird Hall, Pumpkin Point Park, Finns' Bay Wharf, and Laird Heritage.

In 2022, Council and the Recreation Committee encouraged the revitalization of these sub-committees, a process that continued in 2025 with many new volunteers joining. Council has also requested that each sub-committee submit a five-year plan, including suggested capital expenditures, with their annual budget requests prior to final budget deliberations.

The Recreation Committee's 4th Annual Pumpkin Fest experienced significant growth this year and was very well attended. The Giant Pumpkin Grand Champion weighed 593 lbs., and donations were collected for the local food bank.



Pumpkin Fest Giant Pumpkins – Grand Champion weighed 593 lbs.

Laird Fairgrounds

The Laird Fairgrounds Gazebo was well-used in 2025. Improvements to the electrical system and outdoor lighting were completed, along with improvements to the water system and LIR washroom so completed.

The fairgrounds and facilities remained highly active, hosting a variety of events and activities, including:

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

Pumpkin Point Park

The Pumpkin Point Park Sub-Committee oversees Centennial Park, located at the south end of Point Drive. On August 10, 2025, the Sub-Committee hosted the Pumpkin Point Park Meet and Greet, providing members of the public with an opportunity to connect with fellow residents and enjoy the Township's waterfront park.

Bar River Community Centre (Hall)

After an extensive rehabilitation, the Bar River Community Centre reopened in March 2025 with a sold-out community dinner. Pub-night returned and was well attended, and rentals for weddings, receptions, dance classes, and birthday parties remained steady. The Hall Sub-committee also hosted a fall community supper and a Christmas dance.

G.W. Evoy Memorial Rink

The G.W. Evoy Memorial Rink operated as usual, with repairs completed to the sewage lift station. In February, the Rink Sub-committee, together with the Bar River Hall Sub-committee, hosted the annual Winter Carnival, featuring a fan-favourite obstacle course.

Heritage Museum

The Township of Laird has been without a museum for several years, with artifacts in storage while the Sub-committee developed a plan. The museum foundation is now complete, and construction of the building shell is scheduled for 2026, followed by additional phases.

Over the past few years, the Heritage summer student digitized and cataloged many historic Township documents, including Council minutes and past by-laws. The Laird Township Heritage Center Virtual Museum is a valuable resource for preserving and sharing local history: www.lairdheritagecentre.ca. A new Facebook page, "Bar River and Laird History," has also been launched and currently has over 100 followers.

The Wharf

The Wharf Sub-Committee continues to work on improvements to the property, following a five-year plan to enhance amenities for the community.

Laird Hall

Laird Hall is in need of a significant renovation, and Staff and the Laird Hall Sub-committee have been actively working on grant applications to support these improvements.

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, the OPP Sault Ste. Marie Detachment Board, was established in partnership with MacDonald Meredith and Aberdeen Additional Township and the Ontario Provincial Police to facilitate communication regarding township concerns, crime statistics, and public safety matters.

Planning Board

Established in 1998, the Desbarats to Echo Bay Planning Board makes decisions on consent applications under Sections 50 and 53 of the Planning Act. In 2025, the Board approved one consent for Laird Township, creating an additional building lot, and also approved three lot additions. The Board continues to work toward a Joint Official Plan for the four member municipalities—Johnson, Tarbutt, Laird, and Macdonald, Meredith and Aberdeen Additional—which is expected to be finalized in 2026.

Cemetery Board

The Cemetery Board continues to make improvements, with a focus on updating the plot map and permanent survey markers for the layout out of existing lots. Grave marker maintenance was completed on nearly one-third of the upper cemetery, and further marker maintenance is planned to continue in 2026 and beyond. Additionally, the Township has an agreement to acquire property along the east property line to facilitate a larger access road.

Closing Message

In closing, it is the hope of Council, Staff and our volunteers that this report and the information presented above help 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 access to more detailed information, which can be found on the Township website “transparency” tab.

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

Regards,

Shawn Evoy
Mayor, Laird Township