

FEBRUARY 2026

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[Council](#) [Planning Council](#) [Committee of the Whole](#)

Emergency Response Plan

Deputy Fire Chief Chad Dowell, joined by Terry Gervais from The Loomex Group, presented Council with the Township's updated Emergency Response Plan (ERP) at February's regular meeting of Council.

The Township undertook a full review and update of the Emergency Response Plan in 2025 due to legislative updates, changes in operations, and evolving risks. The Emergency Response Plan forms the basis of an Emergency Management Program, a legislated requirement per the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act.

The updated ERP includes several key changes from the previous version, including clearer emergency activation and escalation criteria, an updated Municipal Emergency Control Group, strengthened coordination protocols with neighbouring municipalities and the District of Muskoka, and a greater emphasis on post-emergency recovery operations.

Council approved the 2025 Emergency Response Plan and adopted By-law 2026-004 establishing the updated Emergency Management Program.

Refresh MacTier

A first draft of the Refresh MacTier report was presented to Committee of the Whole, outlining the priorities identified by the community, the roughly estimated costs of those projects, and where the priorities of the community overlap with the priorities of Council.

Vanja Vukic-Doucet from Quarry Consulting presented the Committee with the draft, which outlined the feedback received through the community and stakeholder engagement.

The final report will come to Council's March 9th meeting, and will include considerations from Committee of the Whole, a Moose Deer Point First Nation survey, community consultations, and budget implications.



Newsletter Highlights

[Updated Emergency Response Plan](#)

[Municipal Grant Policy](#)

[Facility Condition Assessment](#)

[Refresh MacTier Update](#)

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Fire Chiefs

After more than four decades serving the public in the fire protection profession, including 10 years at the Township of Georgian Bay, Director of Fire and Emergency Services and Fire Chief Tony Van Dam has announced his retirement at the end of March.



Outgoing Fire Chief Tony Van Dam will retire at the end of March following more than four decades of service.

The Township announced the promotion of Deputy Fire Chief Chad Dowell to fill the role. Deputy Chief Dowell joined the Township's Fire and Emergency Services Department in 2018.

Council expressed their congratulations and gratitude to both outgoing Chief Van Dam and incoming Chief Dowell and adopted By-law 2026-002 officially appointing Dowell to the position commencing April 1st, 2026.



Deputy Fire Chief Chad Dowell has been promoted to Director of Fire and Emergency Services / Fire Chief beginning April 1, 2026.

Facility Condition Assessment

Director of Operations Mara Engel and Deputy Treasurer Candace Waslenko presented Council with the results of a recently completed Facility Condition Assessment, outlining recommendations aimed at improving facility utilization, reducing long-term capital and operating costs, and better aligning assets with community needs.

The assessment led to seven key recommendations: transferring ownership of the Bressette House to local organizations; repurposing or selling of the old Honey Harbour school, currently being used for storage purposes; increasing programming at Baxter Ward Community Centre and reallocating some underused rooms to house the Port Severn Library branch; reclaiming leased space at Honey Harbour Park Landing; undertaking community engagement and consultant-led review to determine the most appropriate direction for the MacTier Memorial Arena; implementing of a lease arrangement for Go Home Lake Pavillion; and that Council consider a single consolidated facility to serve both Fire Services and Operations in MacTier, as the two current buildings are projected to reach poor condition in 10 to 12 years.

Council passed a resolution directing staff to further investigate the recommendations contained within the Facility Condition Assessment and return to Council with full costing options for consideration.

Emergency Repairs and Maintenance

The Township completed three major emergency repairs in late 2025 and early 2026 that were not a part of the approved 2026 budget.

Director of Operations Mara Engel brought a report to Council outlining the emergency expenditures: the primary mooring docks at Port of Honey Harbour, which required repairs of \$33,500 due to failed anchors from low water levels; repairs to the sanitary line at Baxter Ward Community Center, the cost of which is up to \$10,000; and repair of the Port Severn Fire Hall Backflow Preventer, where sediment buildup caused failure, at a cost of up to \$10,000.

The emergency repairs will be funded from the Operations Capital Reserves.

Engel's report also identified required inspection programs for two industrial generators servicing the Township's Administration Building and the Port Severn Fire Hall. Council approved Engel's recommendation to enter into a 5-year preventative maintenance contract with Total Power to meet the inspection and maintenance needs.

New Cemetery Management Software

Council approved the purchase and implementation of new software for the management of MacTier Union Cemetery.

The Township's current cemetery management software is outdated and no longer supported by its developers. The money for the new software will be reallocated from cemetery projects that were carried forward from 2025.

Municipal Grant Policy Update

Council approved an update to the Municipal Grant Policy, specifically regarding the Township's Small Grants Program. The new policy implements an updated scoring model aimed at increasing transparency and simplicity while balancing fairness in the distribution of municipal grants.

Deputy Treasurer Candace Waslenko presented Council with the new Hybrid Weighted Distribution Model, which assigns each grant application a score out of 100 based on program/event length and implementation time, community impact, and financial need. The scoring template and guideline on how the template will be used can be found [here](#).

The updated policy also increases the maximum grant amount per organization from \$1,500 to \$2,500, recognizing inflation and rising costs. Grants are proportionally allocated based on the scoring system of the Hybrid Weighted Distribution Model.

The updated policy takes effect this year. Applications are open for municipal grants until March 31, 2026, and information on applying can be found on the [Township's website](#).



By-laws Enacted

2026-001 - Deputy CBO Appointment (Avery)

2026-002 - Director of Fire and Emergency Services - Fire Chief Appointment (Dowell)

2026-003 - Signing Officers

2026-004 - Emergency Management Plan

2026-005 - Restricted Acts (Lame Duck)

2026-006 - MLEO Appointment (Morgan)

2026-007 - Confirming Council February 9, 2026

2026-008 - SRA Deeming (25328 Georgian Bay Shore)

2026-009 - Confirming Planning Council February 10, 2026

Upcoming Meetings

MacTier Arena Advisory Committee

Monday, February 23 at 10:00 a.m. - MacTier Library

Council

Monday, March 9 at 9:00 a.m.

Planning Council

Tuesday, March 10 at 9:00 a.m.

Committee of the Whole

Tuesday, March 10 following Planning Council

Sustainable Communities Advisory Group

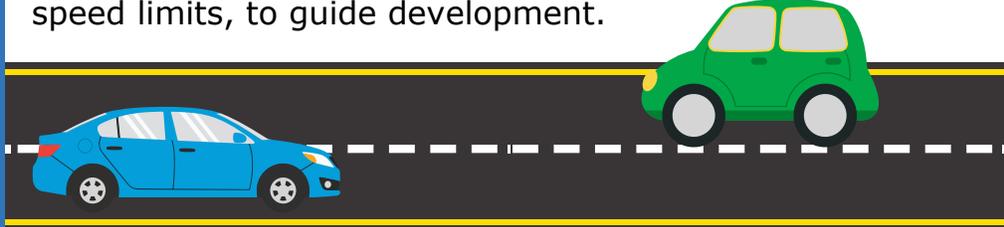
Monday, March 23 at 10:00 a.m.

Roads Needs Study and Transportation Master Plan

Council approved up to \$60,000 for a Roads Needs Study and up to \$65,000 for a Transportation Master Plan, the funding shortfall of which is to come from the approved 2026 Road Rehabilitation Capital Budget.

The two projects are the “next step to data-driven decision making,” Director of Operations Mara Engel said. In her report to Council, Engel stated the last study only looked at paved roads, meaning the Township doesn’t have a reliable inventory and condition data on all roads and other right of way infrastructure.

Engel also highlighted the lack of a Transportation Master Plan or transportation by-law in Georgian Bay, meaning there are no Council-approved roads standards, such as speed limits, to guide development.



Future Reports

The following were referred to staff to bring back to Council at a later meeting:

- Staff were directed to prepare a report detailing all Integrity Commissioner activity in the Township over the past 13 years including costs, nature of the complaints filed, the outcome of each complaint, and the Integrity Commissioner retained at the time of each investigation.
- Staff will prepare a report exploring the feasibility and potential options for managing water bubblers in the Township following safety concerns brought forward by Council regarding bubblers affecting ice safety near snowmobile trails.
- Planning Council received an update on the ongoing Six Mile Lake Dwelling Size Zoning By-law Amendment project plan. Planning staff will bring the final report to the March 10th meeting of Planning Council.