



The Corporation of the City of Stratford Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee

MINUTES

Date: November 18, 2025
Time: 4:30 P.M.
Location: Council Chamber, City Hall

Sub-committee Present: Councillor Hunter - Chair Presiding, Councillor McCabe - Vice Chair, Councillor Beatty, Councillor Burbach, Councillor Nijjar

Staff Present: André Morin - Chief Administrative Officer, Karmen Krueger - Director of Corporate Services, Michael Koktan – Manager of Financial Services, Tatiana Dafoe - City Clerk, Miranda Franken - Council Clerk Secretary

Also present: Members of the Public

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to Order.

Land Acknowledgment

Moment of Silent Reflection

Respectful Conduct Statement

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

The *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* requires any member of Council declaring a pecuniary interest and the general nature thereof, where the interest of a member of Council has not been disclosed by reason of the member's absence from the meeting, to disclose the interest at the first open meeting attended by the member of Council and otherwise comply with the *Act*.

Name, Item and General Nature of Pecuniary Interest

No disclosures of pecuniary interest were made by a Member at the November 18, 2025, Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee meeting.

3. Delegations

None scheduled.

4. Report of the Chief Administrative Officer

4.1 Procurement of Human Resources Support (FIN25-039)

Staff Recommendation: THAT Council approve an exemption from Section 11 of Purchasing Policy P.5.1 to single source the procurement of human resources consulting services for a term of January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2026;

AND THAT to Ward & Uptigrove Human Resources Solutions be retained for human resources support services between January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2026, at a cost not to exceed \$100,000, including HST.

Sub-committee Discussion: The Chief Administrative Officer provided an overview of the report. Highlights included the following:

- staff are moving forward with recruitment in Human Resources (HR) for a Manager and Coordinator;
- the intent being to build the department to full complement and retain the third-party contactor to assist in training staff;
- the intent being to slowly take the portfolio back from the third party and move it in house;
- internal procedures to be reviewed with the third-party;
- a review being planned for the third quarter in 2026 to assess successes, the long-term vision and a continued need;
- with the division in house in a circumstance requiring an internal investigation it could require putting out a Request for Proposal;
- \$100,000 having been allocated in 2026 with staff not expecting to use all these funds;
- the HR budget to return to a 2024 allocation and not be as high as in 2025; and

- staff requested an exemption to extend the current third-party contract for an additional twelve months.

Discussion occurred between Sub-committee and staff. Highlights of the discussion included the following:

- A member asked if the budgeted amount were to increase above \$100,000 if the request would return to Council;
- staff replied that if this were to occur staff would bring a report outlining the reasoning and providing plans to augment or to provide further options;

Motion by Councillor Burbach

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT Council approve an exemption from Section 11 of Purchasing Policy P.5.1 to single source the procurement of human resources consulting services for a term of January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2026;

AND THAT to Ward & Uptigrove Human Resources Solutions be retained for human resources support services between January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2026, at a cost not to exceed \$100,000, including HST.

- a member asked if the two returning positions and the third-party consultant would cost the entirety of the 2026 funds;
- staff replied there being funds enough for further allocations in HR positions;
- dependent on who is hired and in what positions, the budget being expected to cover three (3) positions;
- with a manager in place considerations regarding where and how Accessibility and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) will be dealt with;
- the third-party consultant to be in place to continue day to day operations; and
- discussion regarding a full complement is expected for a 2026 review.

The Chair called the question on the motion.

Carried

5. Report of the Director of Corporate Services

5.1 Update of Natural Gas and Electricity Procurement (FIN25-035)

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Update of Natural Gas and Electricity Procurement" (FIN25-035), dated November 18, 2025, be received for information.

Motion by Councillor Beatty

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Update of Natural Gas and Electricity Procurement" (FIN25-035), dated November 18, 2025, be received for information.

Carried

5.2 Festival Hydro Update for Q3 ending September 30, 2025 (FIN25-037)

Staff Recommendation: THAT the Festival Hydro Inc. third quarter financial results and commentary for the period ended September 30, 2025, be received for information;

AND THAT Festival Hydro Services Inc. third quarter financial results and commentary for the period ended September 30, 2025, be received for information.

Motion by Councillor Nijjar

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the Festival Hydro Inc. third quarter financial results and commentary for the period ended September 30, 2025, be received for information;

AND THAT Festival Hydro Services Inc. third quarter financial results and commentary for the period ended September 30, 2025, be received for information.

Carried

5.3 Ontario Regulation 284/09 – Excluded Expenses 2026 Budget (FIN25-037)

Staff Recommendation: THAT the Report FIN25-037 dated November 18, 2025, from the Director of Corporate Services regarding legislative requirements of Ontario Regulation 284/09, and the impact of excluded expenses from the City's 2026 budget, be received for information.

Motion by Councillor McCabe

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the Report FIN25-037 dated November 18, 2025, from the Director of Corporate Services regarding legislative requirements of Ontario Regulation 284/09, and the impact of excluded expenses from the City's 2026 budget, be received for information.

Carried

5.4 Reserve and Reserve Fund Policy Review (FIN25-040)

Staff Recommendation: THAT Council receive the Reserve and Reserve Fund Policy Review (FIN25-040) report for information;

THAT Council authorize the proposed housekeeping changes and the establishment of a new Reserve Fund for Affordable Housing;

AND THAT Council provide direction regarding the distribution of the proceeds of sale of \$3,062,481.78.

Motion by Councillor Burbach

THAT Council receive the Reserve and Reserve Fund Policy Review (FIN25-040) report for information;

THAT Council authorize the proposed housekeeping changes and the establishment of a new Reserve Fund for Affordable Housing;

AND THAT Council provide direction regarding the distribution of the proceeds of sale of \$3,062,481.78.

Sub-committee Discussion: Sub-committee and Staff held a discussion regarding the motion. Highlights included the following:

- a Member asked what the Strategic Community Development Fund is intended for;
- staff replied the broad description of the fund being for strategic community development initiatives;
- the fund receiving 8% of funds from the sale of industrial lands with the intent likely to have been to ensure revenues from industrial lands had a strategic purpose with the remaining 92% being used to services industrial lands;

- a Member asked if this intent overlaps with reserves for the Grand Trunk and Affordable Housing projects with these being strategic community development;
- staff confirmed this observation being correct with some reserves being more specific and some broader with the intent of each reserve being contributed to priorities at the time of establishment;
- the Grand Trunk Reserve proceeds being from the sale of the Fair Grounds and the Tom Patterson site with the intent being those monies would not get absorbed into another purpose;
- staff noted they could return with information for future revisions to consolidate some reserves;
- consideration would be necessary to ensure the original intent in the establishment is not lost;
- a Member asked if the new Affordable Housing Initiatives overlap with the City Owned Housing Capital, this previously being the Britannia Street Capital Reserve Funds, now being general for affordable housing;
- staff replied a couple reserves having housing components;
- the Social Services Reserve being more intended towards shared service;
- the City Owned Housing Capital fund being for city owned properties that have future capital needs separate from shared services;
- the Affordable Housing Reserve being for Council approval with the purpose to distinguish between this and Council strategic objectives for affordable housing initiatives;
- a Member asked if the 75% referenced in the Provincial Gas Tax funding directives is mandated municipally or provincially;
- staff replied the Provincial Gas Tax agreement stipulating this and this being a tool to ensure the municipality does not overstep Provincial requirements;
- regarding free transit a Member asked if funding from the Gas Tax would increase but the 75% would limit amount of incoming funds;

- staff replied the current level of spending on transit not being likely to reach this threshold;
- discussion was had regarding the costs and shortfall for road resurfacing and linear infrastructure identifying road work drawing from the Public Works Reserves.

Councillor Burbach amended the motion.

Motion by Councillor Burbach

THAT Council receive the Reserve and Reserve Fund Policy Review (FIN25-040) report for information;

THAT Council authorize the proposed housekeeping changes and the establishment of a new Reserve Fund for Affordable Housing;

AND THAT the proceeds of sale be distributed in equal parts to the Affordable Housing Reserve Fund, to the Grand Trunk Reserve Fund and to the Public Works Reserve Fund to be allocated to linear road resurfacing.

Discussion continued as follows:

- Members expressed support for the allocation to affordable housing and a preference that the remainder go to the tax stabilization to ensure a full conversation at Council during budget on the allocation of these funds;
- staff noted the Asset Management Plan coming to Council in the first quarter of 2026 to address how to fund shortfalls, opportunities and to review data to make a best decision on how to allocate funds; and
- a Member expressed reservation on using the Tax Stabilization Reserve and prefers the funds be applied to an asset class and not an operational expense.

The Chair called the question on the motion.

Defeated

Motion by Councillor McCabe

THAT \$1,000,000.00 of the proceeds of sale be allocated to the Affordable Housing Reserve Fund and the remaining \$2,062,481.78 be allocated to the Tax Stabilization Reserve.

Sub-committee Discussion: Sub-committee and Staff held a discussion regarding the motion. Highlights included the following:

- a Member asked if there is an alternative to the Tax Stabilization to allow future application of the funds to a specific asset;
- staff replied that there is not a general capital fund outside of the specific divisions with established reserve funds;
- it was noted that a portion could be allocated with the remainder of the funds flowing automatically into the Tax Stabilization by default at the end of 2025;
- there being a opportunity to redistribute the funds elsewhere until mid 2026 with this allowing for consideration with the Asset Management Plan;
- staff shared details regarding the current position of the Tax Stabilization and the position going into the 2026 budget deliberations; and
- Members expressed they would like to see information provided by the Director of Corporate Services at the time of the Asset Management Plan on options for the remaining funds.

Councillor McCabe amended the motion.

Motion by Councillor McCabe

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT Council receive the Reserve and Reserve Fund Policy Review (FIN25-040) report for information;

THAT Council authorize the proposed housekeeping changes and the establishment of a new Reserve Fund for Affordable Housing;

AND THAT \$1,000,000.00 of the proceeds of sale be allocated to the Affordable Housing Reserve Fund and the remaining \$2,062,481.78 be allocated at the time of receipt of the Asset Management Plan with recommendations from the Director of Corporate Services.

The Chair called the question on the motion.

Carried

6. Report of the Manager of Financial Services

**6.1 Operating Budget Variance Report as at September 30, 2025
(FIN25-038)**

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Operating Budget Variance Report as at September 30, 2025" (FIN25-038), dated November 18, 2025, be received for information.

Motion by Councillor Burbach

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Operating Budget Variance Report as at September 30, 2025" (FIN25-038), dated November 18, 2025, be received for information.

Carried

7. Advisory Committee/Outside Board Minutes

There were no Advisory Committee/Outside Board minutes provided to the Sub-committee.

8. Next Sub-committee Meeting

The next Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee meeting is January 20, 2026, at 4:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber, City Hall.

9. Adjournment

Motion by Councillor Beatty

Sub-committee Decision: THAT the Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee meeting adjourn.

Carried

Meeting Start Time: 4:30 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 5:02 P.M.