



The Corporation of the City of Stratford Finance and Labour Relations Committee MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, December 2, 2020

Time: 3:30 P.M.

Location: Electronically

Committee Present in *Mayor Mathieson
Council Chambers:

Committee Present Councillor Clifford - Chair Presiding, *Councillor Gaffney - Vice
Electronically: Chair, Councillor Beatty, Councillor Bunting, Councillor Burbach,
Councillor Henderson, *Councillor Ingram, *Councillor Ritsma,
*Councillor Sebben, Councillor Vassilakos

Staff Present in Joan Thomson - Chief Administrative Officer, Tatiana Dafoe -
Council Chambers: City Clerk, Chris Bantock - Deputy Clerk

Staff Present Ed Dujlovic - Director of Infrastructure and Development
Electronically: Services, Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services, David St.
Louis - Director of Community Services, John Paradis - Fire
Chief, Janice Beirness - Director of Corporate Services, Naeem
Khan - Manager of Information and Business Systems, Wendy
Partridge - Administrative Assistant

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the Meeting to Order.

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 declarations of pecuniary interest were made at the December 2, 2020 Finance and Labour Relations Committee meeting.

3. 2021 Budget Deliberations

3.1 2021 Draft Capital Budget

Committee Discussion: The Director of Corporate Services advised that all 2021 capital budget items are covered by reserve funds through transfers from operating and therefore do not impact the tax levy.

A question and answer period ensued between members and staff with respect to:

- operating costs having already been rolled into the 2.2% draft budget;
- a unified communication system enhancing communications between City staff but not resulting in any hard efficiencies or cost savings;
- website enhancements beginning in 2021 to include updates to front facing website and investigating implementation of a citizen portal;
- the scissor lift project being a hold over item from 2020 due to COVID-19;
- electric Zambonis costing twice the amount of conventional models;

*Mayor Mathieson now present at the meeting at 3:40 p.m.

- the Allman Cooling Tower project being a hold over item from 2020 due to COVID-19;
- the need for an expert to advise on ways to perform heat recapture at City facilities and the associated amount of energy efficiency to be achieved;

- water fountain installations to be a combination of bottle fill and drinking only;
- Rotary parking lot repairs being phased in over the next 10 years;
- the backstop replacement project not having been included in past budgets and discussing opportunities to setup a sponsorship program for equipment replacement;
- the possibility of purchasing electric busses in 2023 being dependent on approval of a second intake through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program;
- the bus shelter allotment resulting in at least 10 new shelters with accessible pad and solar lighting;
- staff review and inclusion of active transportation initiatives in asphalt resurfacing projects depending on COVID-19 funding relief eligibility;
- going to market no later than April 2021 for the Queen Street Storm Trunk Sewer project;
- housing service applications being funded by homeowners and only requires staff time to coordinate;
- street light improvements through LED's resulting in a reduction in electricity usage and less maintenance over their lifetime;
- areas of concern related to lighting and crossing illumination identified as developments continue and concerns raised throughout the community;
- the purchase of new trucks with front plow/sander getting extended lives due to staff upkeep and maintenance;
- masonry work at 82 Erie Street receiving a number of bids to complete;
- front stair and masonry repairs at 1 Wellington Street being just maintenance and spot repairs;
- bench and accessible ramp at 19 St. Andrew Street being on the east side of the building to allow better use of the book drop off area;

- reviewing the province's environmental assessment as it relates to the City's Transportation Master Plan Update and connecting this with the existing Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan;
- completing a Development Charges Study including an industrial review as per council direction;
- connectivity and security systems allotment being mainly related to licensing and monitoring;
- the Next Gen911 telephone system upgrade being different than the City Hall phone system and reviewing collaborative opportunities with Fire; and,
- investigating options for financing larger projects and rates being dependent on amortization term and timing.

Motion by Councillor Gaffney

Seconded by Councillor Vassilakos

Committee Decision: THAT the 2021 Draft Capital Budget be approved as presented.

A member requested that item 35, Renewable Natural Gas Project, be taken separately.

The Chair called the question on the motion, as amended as follows:

THAT the 2021 Draft Capital Budget, excluding Item 35 Renewable Natural Gas Project, be approved as presented.

Carried

Motion by Councillor Beatty

Seconded by Councillor Vassilakos

Committee Recommendation: THAT the Renewable Natural Gas Project be approved as a part of the 2021 Draft Capital Budget.

Discussion ensued between members and staff with respect to the Renewable Natural Gas Project, including:

- staff working on a report for a future meeting to provide an update and to seek direction for proceeding with the detailed design portion of the project;

- the price of natural gas being a benefit to moving ahead with the project;
- waiting to make a decision on the project until more updated information is available related to costing and timelines;
- the end of 2022 being a realistic completion date for construction;
- reporting back on costs required regardless if the project is approved such as increasing the life of digesters;
- the initial completion deadline being June 2021;
- not having to defer the project as further information can be brought back before consideration of the budget by Council; and,
- staff having further discussions with OCE to discuss project status and grant eligibility.

A request was made to defer consideration of this project until the staff report is presented for consideration.

The motion was withdrawn.

3.2 2021 to 2030 Capital Forecast

Consideration of the 2021 to 2030 Capital Forecast was deferred to the December 9, 2020 Finance and Labour Relations Committee meeting.

*Councillor Gaffney departed the meeting at 4:25 p.m.

3.3 2021 Draft Operating Budget

Committee Discussion: The Chief Administrative Officer provided an overview of the draft 2021 City Council Operating Budget.

A question and answer period ensued between members and staff with respect to:

- membership costs not covering actual conference fees and just being for various membership fees that are corporate wide;

*Councillor Gaffney returned to the meeting at 4:27 p.m.

- reducing the amount allotted towards Special Events considering COVID-19 in 2021; and,

- registration fees still being required for conferences that are held virtually.

The Director of Community Services provided an overview of the draft 2021 Parks Operating Budget.

A question and answer period ensued between members and staff with respect to:

- shifting the focus of plants in 2021 to the downtown core;
- staff coming back to Council with more details about the line item for plan materials and what makes up that allotment;
- 60k allocated for contractors is for the Goose Management Plan;
- the cemetery still receiving plants in 2021;
- the preference of baskets and planters for the downtown area and the black netting in beds being to control weeds; and,
- the options presented in 2019 for the goose management program when first presented to Council.

*Councillor Ritsma departed the meeting at 4:36 p.m., and returned at 4:27 p.m.

Motion by Councillor Sebben

Seconded by Councillor Gaffney

Committee Recommendation: THAT the contractor line item for the goose management plan be removed from the 2021 Parks draft Operating Budget.

Discussion ensued with respect to:

- the contractors line item being just for goose control;
- the program having an impact on goose control at the river and reducing droppings on the sidewalk;
- some minor savings to be recognized for dropping removal if the program was not in place;
- reverting back to the partial program option at a cost of \$32,000;
- the 2020 budget cost of \$58,000 reflecting a full year of the program;

- a scaled back program involving less visits to the site; and,
- only oiled eggs being broken through the program.

The Chair called the question on the motion.

Defeated

A motion was put forward to reduce the cost of the program to \$32,000 or equivalent for a partial goose control program. No seconder was received and the motion was not placed on the floor for discussion.

The Director of Community Services advised that this line item can be listed as contractor/goose control for future budgets.

*Councillor Ritsma departed the meeting at 4:51 p.m.

The Director of Community Services provided an overview of the draft 2021 Recreation Operating Budget.

A question and answer period ensued between members and staff with respect to:

- continued operation of four ice pads at limited capacity; and,
- the impact of moving to higher COVID-19 restrictions likely resulting in the closure of one or two facilities;

*Councillor Ritsma returned to the meeting at 4:53 p.m.

The Director of Community Services provided an overview of the draft 2021 Cemetery Operating Budget.

*Councillor Gaffney departed the meeting at 4:55 p.m.

The Director of Community Services provided an overview of the draft 2021 Transit and Parallel Transit Operating Budgets.

A question and answer period ensued between members and staff with respect to:

- the contract in place for snow removal being to clear all terminals and bus stops in the City;
- assistance being required from Public Works should the City wish to take on snow removal independently; and,
- expecting lower revenue for parallel transit due to fewer bookings.

The Director of Community Services responded to a question related to a breakdown of costs for each City facility and advised that specifics can potentially be pulled out for following years budgets.

*Councillor Gaffney returned to the meeting at 4:57 p.m.

The Director of Corporate Services provided an overview of the draft 2021 Corporate Services Operating Budgets, including:

- Taxation,
- General Revenues,
- City Clerk,
- Finance and Treasury,
- Information Technology,
- Parking,
- Crossing Guards,
- General Government,
- Industrial Land Servicing,
- Requisitions from others,
- Committees of Council,
- Community Support & Grants.

A question and answer period ensued between members and staff with respect to:

- considering the transfer of \$150,000 from the Strategic Development Reserve Fund for requests such as continuing Lights on Stratford, fee or license waivers;
- the reserve fund being used to complete the construction of an outdoor public washroom at City Hall;
- the current balance of the reserve fund being \$259,000;
- staff providing a breakdown of projects not currently budgeted and reporting back at the December 9 meeting;

*Councillor Gaffney departed the meeting at 5:08 p.m., and returned at 5:09 p.m.

- November parking revenue being consistent with previous years;
- reviewing the need for two crossing guards at the intersection of Huron and Huntingdon;

- the industrial land servicing reserve being back into a positive balance following the sale of land in the Crane development;
- the normal amount of funds in this reserve being provided to Council at a future meeting;
- options for providing budget changes through single PDF or marked on individual pages;
- the Stratfords of the World-Ontario Advisory Committee having a hold over of all registrations received and budgeting for a possible 2021 event;
- two 2020 grants being returned with remaining groups spending on items that fulfilled their application; and,
- looking into whether grant applications are up or down for 2021 compared to previous years.

It was the consensus of Committee to recess for 15 minutes. Committee recessed at 5:29 p.m., and resumed at 5:48 p.m.

*Councillor Ingram now present at the meeting at 5:48 p.m.

The Fire Chief provided an overview of the draft 2021 Fire and Airport Operating Budgets.

The Fire Chief responded to a question related to recent use of the airport and advised that more hobby and commercial use has been taking place during COVID-19.

The Director of Corporate Services provided an overview of the draft 2021 Human Resources Operating Budget.

The Director of Infrastructure and Development Services provided an overview of the draft 2021 Infrastructure and Development Services Operating Budgets, including:

- City Buildings,
- Development Services,
- Engineering,
- Fleet,
- Roads,
- Sanitary,
- Storm,
- Water,

- Waste.

A question and answer period ensued between members and staff with respect to:

- full-time salary and wages being included in one line item rather than being split up as done in previous years;
- the elimination of two student positions in the budget;
- funds remaining to cover 2021 costs for the Wightman project and work likely being required to continue beyond the initial 3 years;
- Wightman being responsible for all restoration or damage costs;
- LED lights lasting longer than high pressure sodium lights used previously;
- the line item for repairing roads going by the history of pothole patching required;
- pothole patching being done to get by until full repairs of roads are possible;
- no concerns received for increased traffic required to truck in sewage;
- an environmental compliance approval having been completed to ensure no detrimental impact on the City's treatment plant;
- revenue from water consumption remaining stable during COVID-19;
- City water towers being in good shape; and,
- the cost of hazardous waste events being as high as \$30,000 per event.

*Councillor Sebben departed the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

The Director of Social Services provided an overview of the draft 2021 Social Services Operating Budgets, including:

- Social Services Administration,
- Ontario Works,
- Anne Hathaway Daycare Centre,
- Housing,
- Children Services,
- Early Learning and Child Care,

- Britannia Street Apartments.

A question and answer period ensued between members and staff with respect to:

- insurance for housing being independent and separate from the City;
- most repairs having been completed at the Britannia Street apartments;
- identifying and reporting back on a date for completion of the Britannia scooter room; and,
- expecting a transfer to reserves at the end of 2020.

4. Upcoming Meetings

The following meetings will be held electronically:

- December 9, 2020 at 3:30 p.m.
- December 16, 2020 at 3:30 p.m.

5. Adjournment

Motion by Councillor Gaffney

Seconded by Councillor Burbach

Committee Decision: THAT the Finance and Labour Relations Committee meeting adjourn.

Carried

Meeting Start Time: 3:30 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 6:29 P.M.