



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

Date: Monday, January 31, 2022

Time: 5:30 P.M.

Location: Electronic Meeting

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

Staff Present in Council Chamber: Joan Thomson - Chief Administrative Officer, Tatiana Dafoe - City Clerk

Staff Present Electronically: Karmen Krueger - Acting Director of Corporate Services, Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services, David St. Louis - Director of Community Services, John Paradis - Fire Chief, Anne Kircos - Acting Director of Human Resources, Taylor Crinklaw - Director of Infrastructure and Development Services, Spencer Steckley - Manager of Financial Services, Chris Bantock - Deputy Clerk, Naeem Khan - Chief Technology and Security Officer, Wendy Partridge - Administrative Assistant to the Director of Corporate Services, Michael Mousley - Manager of Transit, Mark Hackett - Manager of Community Facilities, Brad Hernden - Manager of Recreation and Marketing, Quin Malott - Manager of Parks, Forestry and Cemetery, Nancy Roulston - Manager of Engineering, Jonathan DeWeerd - Chief Building Official, Johnny Bowes - Manager of Environmental Services, Alex Burgess - Manager of Ontario Works, Darren Barkhouse - Manager of Children's Services, Corry Gunn - Manager of Anne Hathaway Day Care, Jeff Wilson - Manager of Housing, Angie Juarez -

Supervisor of Housing, Julia Merritt - CEO of Stratford Public Library, Adam Ryan - Manager of Public Works, Andy Woodham - Airport Manager, Greg Skinner - Police Chief, Gerry Foster - Deputy Police Chief

Also Present: Members of the public

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the Meeting to Order.

Councillor Ingram now present at the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

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 by a member at the January 31, 2022, Finance and Labour Relations Committee meeting.

3. Adoption of Addendum

Motion by Councillor Ritsma

Seconded by Councillor Beatty

Committee Decision: THAT the Addendum to the Finance and Labour Relations Committee Agenda dated January 31, 2022, to add an additional delegation, be added to the agenda as printed.

Carried

4. Delegations

Councillor Sebben now present at the meeting at 5:31 p.m.

4.1 Delegation Request from Alan Kasperski

Motion by Councillor Ingram

Seconded by Councillor Burbach

Committee Decision: THAT the delegation by Alan Kasperski regarding an Open Data system for the City of Stratford be heard.

Carried

Committee Discussion: Alan Kasperski advised the purpose of the delegation was to discuss the concept of open data. He began his presentation by providing a history lesson on Francis Galton who expanded upon the theories of natural selection and found what is termed 'crowd wisdom'.

Mr. Kasperski stated that for crowd wisdom to work it requires open data. He advised the City collects a significant amount of data and that the City would be well served if a working group was struck to develop an open data policy. Examples detailing why an open data program makes sense and are beneficial were provided. Mr. Kasperski requested that a working group be created comprising City staff and interested persons to develop an open data policy and an implementation plan by the second quarter of 2022.

It was questioned whether this work is seen as being in cooperation with AMO's open data source policy or adjunct to it. Mr. Kasperski advised AMO has a good policy, as does the Federal Government and Open Data Canada. He recommended that the working group review best practices from other municipalities and organizations.

The financial cost of an open data policy/program was questioned. Mr. Kasperski advised there can be costs as the data needs to reside somewhere. He stated that as he does not know the City's infrastructure system, there may be costs for adding drives and staff time. He noted there are grants available to develop these types of systems.

A member advised they were interested in the concept of open data. The Chair thanked Mr. Kasperski for his presentation.

4.2 ADDED - Request for Delegation by the Stratford & District Chamber of Commerce

Motion by Councillor Ritsma

Seconded by Councillor Henderson

Committee Decision: THAT the delegation by Eddie Matthews on behalf of the Stratford and District Chamber of Commerce, regarding tax deliberations, be heard.

Carried

Committee Discussion: Eddie Matthews, General Manager, of the Stratford and District Chamber of Commerce, thanked Committee for their leadership during this difficult time. On behalf of the business community, he expressed concerns that a tax increase will make it more difficult for businesses in Stratford to stay competitive. He advised he has been hearing from businesses who are dealing with the ongoing impacts of the pandemic such as the increased cost of doing business and lack of customers.

It was questioned which sectors have been significantly affected. Mr. Matthews advised the hospitality sector has been greatly affected especially in Stratford given the number present. The ideal scenario, as far as budget deliberations go, from the Chamber's perspective was questioned. Mr. Matthews advised that some members from the business community have wondered why their voice is not being heard. He noted comments and feedback have been requested from the public. He further advised the Chamber wants to pass along what an increase will mean to the business community and that many are on the verge of closing their doors. Mr. Matthews was thanked for the presentation.

5. Treasurer Update

Staff Recommendation: THAT staff be authorized to make the proposed changes to the budget, as noted within the Treasurer Update.

Committee Discussion: The Acting Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer, referring to a PowerPoint Presentation, provided an update on the 2022 draft budget. Highlights of the presentation included:

- provision of information on amendments to the draft 2022 budget related to the airport, long term debt, and climate change;
- the total tax levy in dollars from 2021 being \$63,457,399;
- the total proposed increase to the tax levy in 2022 being \$4,964,989;
- the total taxation dollars proposed for 2022 being \$68,422,388; and,
- next steps in the process being to:
 - consider further amendments to the draft budget as identified in the Acting Director's presentation;

- continue deliberations and identify further amendments to the draft budget; and
- anticipate final Council approval of the budget by by-law at the February 14, 2022, Council meeting.

It was questioned whether the \$14 million dollars of debt, out of \$54 million, relates to the University of Waterloo. The Acting Director advised staff would review and prepare a report for a future meeting.

Motion by Councillor Sebben

Seconded by Mayor Mathieson

Committee Decision: THAT staff be directed to prepare a report on the Cooper site and the development of the University of Waterloo campus.

Carried

It was questioned and confirmed that 3% of the proposed levy increase is a result of long term debt re-payment commitments. Discussion was held on what happens when debt is retired, the City's ability to apply for debt financing and on the projects which required long term debt for financing.

Motion by Councillor Ritsma

Seconded by Councillor Burbach

Committee Decision: THAT staff be authorized to make the proposed changes to the budget, as noted within the Treasurer Update dated January 31, 2022.

With respect to the Climate Change Coordinator position, it was questioned whether they will be able to make recommendations based on a climate lens. The Chief Administrative Officer advised the Coordinator would work closely with staff in all departments to make recommendations which include a climate lens.

The Chair called the question on the motion.

Carried

6. Report of the City Clerk

6.1 Request to Reconsider Size of Council (FIN22-007)

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled "Request to re-consider the size of Stratford City Council" (FIN22-007), be received for information.

Motion by Councillor Beatty
Seconded by Councillor Sebben

Committee Decision: THAT the report titled "Request to re-consider the size of Stratford City Council" (FIN22-007), be received for information.

Carried

6.2 Stratford City Council Advisory Committees and Local Boards

Committee Discussion: The Chair noted this item was presented for the information of the Committee.

7. Completion of 2022 Draft Operating Budget Review

7.1 Corporate Services Operating Budget

Committee Discussion: Discussion was held on:

- the salary and wage line in the Information and Technology budget being amended to include:
 - a GIS Analyst that was previously included in the Infrastructure and Development Services budget;
 - an Asset Management Coordinator position that is funded from reserves; and
 - the inclusion of funds from the contract line as the contract has ended;
- the support and maintenance line of the Information and Technology budget including IT licensing and fees;
- hydro costs in the parking budget increasing to account for the 2022 electric vehicle charging station project;
- the Stratfords of the World reunion being postponed;
- the industrial land servicing account including funds for the removal of topsoil on a specific parcel which is being funded from reserves; and
- the request to review reserve policies to ensure they align with Council's strategic priorities and goals.

7.2 Fire Operating Budget

Committee Discussion: Discussion was held on:

- user fees decreasing as the City is not providing dispatching services to as many municipalities in 2022; and
- confirmation that staff will be undertaking a review on making the airport cost neutral.

7.3 Human Resources Operating Budget

Committee Discussion: It was questioned how funded the pensions are. The Acting Director of Human Resources advised she would need to review.

7.4 Infrastructure and Development Services Operating Budget

Committee Discussion: Discussion was held on:

- payment of trails through gas tax and accounting for it in the 10 year forecast;
- concern that industrial developments do not pay development charges and it being noted that a new draft study will be considered by Council in 2022;
- the transfer to reserve in the Building 1250 budget increasing following completion of a condition assessment as part of the asset management plan which identified several facilities requiring significant upgrades and repairs;
- the salary and wage line in the Sanitary 330 budget having been amended to re-allocate staff time;
- service charge revenue in 2021 including municipal consent and fees imposed following completion of a review; and
- the Accessible Coordinator contract position with the County having been terminated and the funds being reallocated to the City's Coordinator position.

Motion by Councillor Burbach

Seconded by Councillor Henderson

Committee Decision: THAT \$28,000 from the Service Contract (G-310-3000-4020) line item be transferred to the CAO's Operating

Budget to fund a portion of the Coordinator Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility Initiatives position.

Carried

Discussion continued with respect to:

- interest payment on long term debt having increased;
- the recommendations in the Waste Rate Study being followed, including the recommendation to increase the transfer to reserve; and
- consideration being given on alternative revenue options for future budget cycles.

7.5 Social Services Operating Budget

Committee Discussion: It was questioned when Phase 2 of the Britannia project would start and end.

Councillor Henderson departed the meeting at 6:46 p.m.

Members were advised the start date of the project is February 1, 2022.

Councillor Henderson returned to the meeting at 6:46 p.m.

Members were further advised the proposed end date of the Phase 2 project is March 2023 and that there would not be occupancy prior to this date. A request was made to amend the budget figures for the Britannia project to show actual costs and revenue.

Motion by Councillor Clifford

Seconded by Councillor Ritsma

Committee Decision: THAT the budgeted amounts for the Britannia Street Phase 2 project be amended to show the actual costs of the project in 2022.

Carried

7.6 Stratford Public Library Operating Budget

Committee Discussion: It was questioned whether COVID-19 will impact the Stratford Public Library's budget. The CEO advised there is no impact as the Library does not bring in a lot of revenue.

7.7 Stratford Police Services Operating Budget

Committee Discussion: Discussion was held on:

- the transfer to reserve including funds to replace police cruisers;
- the benefits of purchasing hybrid vehicles and currently having 5 hybrids in the fleet;
- reviewing alternative policing models, looking at ways to civilianize workload and focusing on core police responsibilities; and
- the bike auction costing more than the revenue that is generated and looking at ways to deal with found and seized property.

The Finance and Labour Relations Committee recessed from 7:02 p.m., to 7:12 p.m. Councillors Beatty, Henderson and Ingram no longer present at the meeting.

The Chair reminded members of the public that the City still licences bikes and encouraged members of the public to register their bikes.

Councillor Ingram now present at the meeting at 7:13 p.m. Councillors Beatty and Henderson now present at the meeting at 7:14 p.m.

8. 2022 Draft Budget

Staff Recommendation: THAT the draft 2022 Operating and Capital Budgets be approved, as amended.

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

- there being no amendments to the capital budget for the Britannia Phase 2 project;
- there being capacity in Infrastructure and Development Services to complete all capital projects listed; and
- a request being made to defer the upgrades to the National Stadium Project.

Motion by Councillor Clifford

Seconded by Councillor Sebben

Committee Decision: THAT the National Stadium Upgrades Phase 1 project (C.3.1) in the amount of \$100,000 be deferred.

Discussion continued with respect to:

- members advising they would not support the deferral as improvements for accessibility are required at the facility;
- concern being expressed that there may be a loss of use if improvements are not made;
- staff beginning work before the season starts;
- the need for the City to maintain its facilities and looking at service level changes if facilities cannot be maintained;
- concern that a deferral could increase the cost of the project; and
- the Community Services department not being able to build up reserves and staggering projects over multiple years to minimize impact to the annual budget.

The Chair called the question on the motion.

Defeated

A request was made to defer the re-construction of the Milton Tennis Court project. There was no seconder for the motion.

It was noted there is a retainer for members of council and different meeting rates for the Festival Hydro Board and the Police Services Board. A request was made to have all meetings have the same existing per diem and not a retainer for members of Council.

The Acting Director advised it is beneficial to standardize costs across the City. The City Clerk advised a referral to staff may be required to review the shareholders agreement and determine the process to be followed to amend the retainers given to members of Council.

Motion by Councillor Sebben

Seconded by Councillor Henderson

Committee Decision: THAT staff be directed to prepare a report on standardizing the existing per diem rates and removing retainers for Councillors beginning with the new term of Council in 2022.

Discussion was held on the per diems and retainers that are paid to members of Council and the various boards. Clarification was provided that this would only be applicable to members of Council and not other board members.

The Chair called the question on the motion.

Defeated

Motion by Councillor Beatty

Seconded by Councillor Burbach

Committee Decision: THAT the draft 2022 Operating and Capital Budgets be approved, as amended.

A recorded vote was requested.

It was confirmed the levy increase is 7.58%. Discussion ensued with respect to:

- a member stating they were opposed to the motion and that further reductions should be sought;
- long term debt accounting for 3% of the levy increase;
- the increase being a result of not investing enough into reserves, deferring projects and asking staff to cut funds from previous budgets; and
- having to cut \$2.5 million to lower the levy increase to 5%.

A recorded vote was taken on the motion.

In Support (9): Councillor Gaffney, Councillor Bunting, Councillor Vassilakos, Councillor Ingram, Councillor Burbach, Mayor Mathieson, Councillor Henderson, Councillor Beatty, and Councillor Ritsma

Opposed (2): Councillor Clifford and Councillor Sebben

Carried

A request was made for staff to review the reserve policy for outside boards and committees. The purpose of the review being to ensure:

- they align with City priorities and policies; and
- that when money is transferred by the City that these groups have a reserve policy that speaks to their process if the reserve becomes quite large.

Motion by Councillor Vassilakos

Seconded by Councillor Burbach

Committee Decision: THAT staff be directed to review the reserve policies of outside boards and committees to ensure:

- **they align with City priorities and policies;**
- **they outline what their reserve fund is for, what its intended purpose is, and what level the reserve fund should be at;**
- **the City has the ability to withhold transfers of funds when there is an excess amount in the reserve fund.**

The member clarified that a number of organizations that are funded by the City and a number of outside boards may have reserve funds. The purpose of the motion is to ensure they have a policy which outlines:

- what their reserve fund is for;
- what its intended purpose is;
- what level the reserve fund should be at; and
- that the City has the ability to withhold transfers of funds when there is an excess amount in the reserve fund.

The Chair called the question on the motion.

Carried

It was questioned what happens to funds in the advisory committee budgets that are not spent. The Acting Director confirmed the funds are used to cover the deficit at the end of the year, if there is a deficit. If there is no deficit then the funds are transferred to the Tax Stabilization Reserve.

The Chief Administrative Officer thanked the Mayor and Council for their stewardship and their hard work. The CAO also thanked the Corporate Leadership Team and the Executive Assistant to the Acting Director of Corporate Services for all of their work in preparing the 2022 draft budget.

9. Adjournment

Motion by Councillor Burbach

Seconded by Councillor Bunting

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

Carried

Meeting Start Time: 5:30 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 8:24 P.M.