



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

Date: Tuesday, February 7, 2023  
Time: 5:30 P.M.  
Location: Council Chamber, City Hall

Committee Present: Councillor Hunter - Chair Presiding, Councillor McCabe - Vice Chair, Mayor Ritsma, Councillor Beatty, Councillor Biehn, Councillor Briscoe, Councillor Henderson, Councillor Nijjar, Councillor Sebben, Councillor Wordofa

Regrets: Councillor Burbach

Staff Present: Joan Thomson - Chief Administrative Officer, Tatiana Dafoe - City Clerk, Karmen Krueger - Director of Corporate Services, Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services, John Paradis - Fire Chief, Anne Kircos - Director of Human Resources, Taylor Crinklaw - Director of Infrastructure and Development Services, Tim Wolfe - Director of Community Services, Mike Mousley - Manager of Transit, Alex Burgess - Manager of Ontario Works, Shannon Archer - Business Integration Manager, Mark Hackett - Manager of Community Facilities, Johnny Bowes - Manager of Environmental Services, Naeem Khan - Chief Technology and Security Officer, Wendy Partridge - Executive Assistant to the Director of Corporate Services, Brad Hernden - Manager of Recreation and Marketing, Sam Day - Manager of Revenue and Taxation

Also Present: Members of the public and media

## 1. Call to Order

The Chair called the Meeting to Order.

Councillor Burbach provided regrets for this meeting.

## 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 made by a member at the February 7, 2023, Finance and Labour Relations Committee meeting.

Mayor Ritsma stated that as the Committee continues budget deliberations, there is a need to reflect and be respectful of the impact inflation is having on both residents and the programs and services the City provides. The Mayor noted that without having appropriate budget levels there will be impacts to the service levels the City can offer to its residents. The Mayor advised the City will continue to work with the Member of Provincial Parliament, Matthew Rae, and the Provincial Government to access financial support for necessary, yet very costly, repairs and the development of new infrastructure. Through the work with the Association of Municipalities Ontario, there will be a united voice and continued advocacy at the provincial level for infrastructure and housing. Staff were thanked for their work in preparing the draft 2023 budget.

## 3. Report of the Director of Corporate Services

### 3.1 Treasurer's Update - Current 2023 Draft Budget Status with proposed adjustments and impacts as of February 7, 2023

**Committee Discussion:** The Director of Corporate Services and Treasurer, referring to a PowerPoint Presentation, provided an update on the draft 2023 budget. Highlights of the presentation included:

- Committee beginning to review the draft operating budgets;
- discussion continuing around proposed expansion requests;
- Committee reviewing and receiving the remaining information and being provided with an opportunity for further discussion;

- the next Committee meeting being an opportunity to identify any final adjustments to the draft 2023 budget;
- the final tax rate implications and approval of tax rates occurring at a subsequent meeting;
- the following amendments, representing a \$4,528,519 (6.63%) increase, being requested to be added to the draft 2023 budget;
  - Municipal Shared Services Committee budget amendments:
    - Spruce Lodge - increase from initial draft budget of \$142,622 (0.21%)
    - EMS - increase from initial draft budget of \$231,520 (0.34%)
    - Archives - increase from initial draft budget of \$14,461 (0.02%)
    - Museum - reduction from initial draft budget of \$10 (0.00%)
    - Huron Perth Public Health - reduction from initial draft budget of \$10,037 (0.01%)
- the impact translating to a 4.29% blended increase if entire the budget is approved as presented; and
- there being a 7.55% increase if all expansion requests are approved which represents a 5.1% tax rate.

**Motion by** Councillor McCabe

**Seconded by** Councillor Sebben

**Committee Decision: THAT the Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer be directed to incorporate the following amendments into the draft 2023 budget:**

- **Municipal Shared Services Committee budget amendments:**
  - **Spruce Lodge - increase from initial draft budget of \$142,622 (0.21%)**
  - **EMS - increase from initial draft budget of \$231,520 (0.34%)**

- **Archives - increase from initial draft budget of \$14,461 (0.02%)**
- **Museum - reduction from initial draft budget of \$10 (0.00%)**
- **Huron Perth Public Health - reduction from initial draft budget of \$10,037 (0.01%)**

**Carried**

#### **4. Operating Budget**

**Committee Discussion:** The Director of Corporate Services and Treasurer, referring to a PowerPoint presentation, provided an overview of the draft operating budget. Highlights of the presentation included:

- some line items in the detailed budget containing several components;
- with respect to interfunctional revenues and expenses, there being a significant difference from previous years or between divisions in order to use the allocation tool to make sure appropriate costs end up in the appropriate division;
- for the draft Fleet budget, those costs being included in the division budget but being an interfunctional transfer;
- there being wages and benefits variances based on collective agreements and renewals for existing packages and services;
- additional staffing requests being listed in the expansion request section of the budget;
- amendments to transfers to reserves impacting the 10 year capital plan;
- the total proposed increase to the transfer to reserve being \$3.3 million;
- there being a reduction in long term debt for funding capital purchases;
- staff recommending an increase to the capital reserves at a rate of \$13 million; and
- transfers from reserves being used as a source of funding in cases where the City received funding in 2022 but is spending those funds in 2023.

#### **4.1 Mayor and Council Services**

**Committee Discussion:** The Chief Administrative Officer provided an overview of the Mayor, Council Services and Advisory Committee draft operating budgets.

#### **4.2 Chief Administrative Officer**

**Committee Discussion:** The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) provided an overview of the CAO's draft operating budget. Discussion took place between members and staff with respect to:

- the Committee meeting being an appropriate place to discuss the addition of a lobbyist for the Grand Trunk project;
- benefits of a lobbying group being that a consultant is retained to advocate on behalf of the municipality to the provincial and federal government, and they monitor legislative and personnel changes;
- additional duties being the submission of applications, completion of required reports, and being a coordinator amongst ministries;
- lobbying groups ensuring projects remain a top focus for other levels of government;
- lobbying groups being composed of a single manager and then two additional staff;
- there being an opportunity for the lobbying group to leave their strategy and templates for staff use in the future;
- staff needing to investigate the costs and determine best point of entry;
- lobbying groups being used widely by municipalities; and
- there being two full time staff working internally on diversity, equity, and inclusion, specifically a training program for Council and staff, developing a land acknowledgment, statutory requirements for accessibility under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

**Motion by** Councillor Briscoe

**Seconded by** Councillor Sebben

**Committee Decision: THAT staff be directed to review the benefits, cost, and time required to retain a lobbying group to support and promote the Grand Trunk Masterplan and development of the Cooper Site.**

**Carried**

#### **4.3 Corporate Services**

**Committee Discussion:** The Director of Corporate Service and Treasurer provided an overview of the Corporate Services operating budgets. Discussion took place between members and staff with respect to:

- sick time increasing by \$100,000 as additional sick time is required for staff;
- additional allocation for sick time potentially being a temporary adjustment and there also being a concern about the reserve going into a deficit;
- the Accessible Parking Permit Policy being reviewed in 2023;
- parking permit revenue remaining the same but the contribution to reserves being slightly different;
- outside the core parking enforcement being undertaken on a complaint basis and information related to revenue being reviewed; and
- options available for development of a parking garage on the Erie Street parking lot and previous concerns noted with submitted proposals.

**Motion by** Mayor Ritsma

**Seconded by** Councillor Henderson

**Committee Decision: THAT the development of a parking garage on the Erie Street parking lot be referred to staff to review historical information on this project and to prepare a report with information for a future meeting.**

The City Clerk clarified the intent would be to review previously submitted and considered information and to provide this information at a future meeting.

The Chair called the question on the motion.

**Carried**

The Director of Corporate Services continued providing an overview of the Corporate Services operating budgets. Discussion continued between members and staff with respect to:

- the Requisitions from Others draft budget being updated to include revised information presented at the February 7, 2023 Committee meeting;
- staff reviewing the inclusion of the Stratford District Chamber of Commerce membership in the one time annual grants budget;
- the membership fee being the fee that the City, Perth County, and the Township of Perth South pays; and
- an overview of the Community Grants Policy and application process being provided.

#### **4.4 Community Services**

**Committee Discussion:** The Director of Community Services provided an overview of the draft 2023 Community Services operating budget. Discussion ensued between members and staff with respect to:

- the Community Services Department keeping a lot of the large plants annually for use and reusing plant material as much as they can;
- wayfinding and enhancement of the City's entrance signs being subject to receipt of funding; and
- complaints being received related to the strategies and practices used as part of the Goose Management Plan and there being an interest in terminating this program and investigating alternative solutions.

**Motion by** Councillor Sebben

**Seconded by** Councillor McCabe

**Committee Recommendation:** THAT the goose management program be terminated.

Discussion continued between members and staff with respect to:

- some members of Committee receiving positive comments about the program;
- the program assisting the geese and the City having tried a number of options to restrict geese in the area and to encourage creating habitats elsewhere;
- reviewing changes to habitat to discourage Upper Queens Park as a suitable habitat;
- the City being required to obtain a permit through the Ministry for this work and then retaining a contractor to complete the work through a tender; and
- the City being required to meet Ministry best practices and standards.

The Chair called the question on the motion.

**Defeated**

**Motion by** Councillor Sebben

**Seconded by** Councillor McCabe

**Committee Recommendation:** THAT staff be directed to investigate alternative options for the Goose Management program.

Discussion continued between members and staff with respect to:

- staff investigating another tool and relocation to a bird sanctuary to keep the bird population at a healthy level; and
- the intent of the motion to identify additional alternatives to the program.

The Chair called the question on the motion.

**Defeated**

The Director of Community Services provided an overview of the draft Facilities operating budget. Discussion between members and staff was held with respect to:

- the Accessibility Advisory Committee having completed audits of Community Services sports fields and facilities to identify issues related to accessibility;



- staff having incorporated improvements to National Stadium in the draft budget; and
- the completed audits being sent to staff for review.

The Director provided an overview of the draft Recreation and Cemetery operating budgets. Members and staff discussed:

- vandalism at the Cemetery not being too bad but being addressed immediately out of respect and dignity; and
- funeral homes selling environmentally friendly casks for green burials.

The Director provided an overview of the draft Transit operating budget. Members and staff discussed:

- the transit budget appearing to have increased by \$1 Million;
- costs for snow removal at the Transit Terminal and bus stops having increased significantly;
- amendments being made to the operating budgets to account for funds through interfunctional transfers where necessary;
- an overview of the PC Connect project being provided;
- the transit service striving to be on time and this being subject to several factors outside of the control of the Transit Division;
- there being an app that can be used to check real-time arrival for transit buses;
- riders being able to book a ticket online for the PC Connect project; and
- the City being a part of a consultant working group which are reviewing electrification of transit buses and the results helping the City to determine what the City will need to do in order to electrify transit buses.

#### **4.5 Fire**

**Committee Discussion:** The Fire Chief provided an overview of the draft 2023 Fire Services and Stratford Municipal Airport operating budgets.

#### **4.6 Human Resources**

**Committee Discussion:** The Director of Human Resources provided an overview of the draft 2023 Human Resources Operating Budget.

#### **4.7 Infrastructure and Development Services**

**Committee Discussion:** The Director of Infrastructure and Development Services provided an overview of the draft 2023 Infrastructure and Development Services operating budget. On the building permits draft budget, it was questioned what the City's position will be on the green development standards and potential legislative changes. The Director advised that due to limited capacity the division will review and address in the Fall of 2023.

The Director provided an overview of the Development Services and By-law Enforcement operating budgets. It was questioned whether enforcement of the Accommodation Licensing By-law will be completed proactively. The Director advised it can be proactive but that it will be subject to approval of the related expansion request. Discussion was held on licensing requirements and on the involvement of AirBnB.

The Director provided an overview of the Engineering and Fleet draft operating budgets. It was questioned and confirmed that the Fleet operating budget is being amended so that necessary costs are budgeted within the fleet budget and then accounting for necessary interfunctional transfers.

The Director provided an overview of the draft Roads operating budget. It was questioned whether it is anticipated that the transfer to reserve will continue to increase. The Director advised staff are looking to catch up in the next couple of years and that the amount will be defined through the Asset Management Plan.

The Director provided an overview of the draft Sanitary, Storm, Water and Waste operating budgets.

#### **4.8 Social Services**

**Committee Discussion:** The Director of Social Services provided an overview of the draft 2023 Social Services operating budgets. Members and staff discussed:

- there being an increase to the Ontario Works caseload;

- the increase in case load being upwards of 700 which is a rise from 550 pre-pandemic and being quite significant;
- the City providing a grant which is cost shared with Shelterlink to assist with their operations;
- numbers increasing in mental health, addictions, and homelessness;
- funding received during the pandemic ending and it being anticipated that the City will be required to maintain this funding; and
- there being an interest in tracking the shortfall between funding and rising case load in order to develop a tax to create a poverty reduction fund.

**Motion by** Councillor Briscoe

**Seconded by** Councillor McCabe

**Committee Recommendation: THAT staff be directed to track the shortfall within the community service delivery with the intention of translating it into a percentage for the 2024 tax levy. and propose a percentage increase for the 2024 draft budget to create a poverty reduction fund.**

Discussion continued with respect to:

- staff completing the review in 2023 in order to make recommendations for the draft 2024 budget;
- there being a potential for staff to report back to Council requesting additional resources or staffing to addressing rising case load; and
- data being helpful for the City to use when engaging with provincial counterparts in order to bridge the gap in funding.

The Chair called the question on the motion.

**Carried**

Discussion continued with respect to:

- Shelterlink being for youth between the ages of 16-24;

- there being an emergency accommodation program which is meeting the needs of homeless individuals in the municipality; and
- there being a 24/7 phone number that individuals can contact for emergency accommodations.

The Director of Social Services provided an overview of the draft Homelessness, Anne Hathaway Day Care Centre, Perth and Stratford Housing Corporation, Housing Service Manager, Britannia Street Apartments, and Children's Services operating budgets.

#### **4.9 External Boards**

**Committee Discussion:** The Director of Corporate Services noted that Stratford Police Services and the Stratford Public Library had presented their draft budgets at a previous meeting.

### **5. Expansion Requests**

#### **5.1 Chief Administrative Officer**

**Committee Discussion:** The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) provided an overview of the Strategic Priorities expansion request submitted by the CAO's Office. The CAO noted:

- the 2023 to 2028 Council Strategic Priorities is recommended to be completed by a third party consultant;
- the project would involve members of Council, the Corporate Management Team, and the public; and
- the purpose of Strategic Priorities being to set goals and objectives for the term of Council.

Discussion followed between members and staff with respect to:

- there being an opportunity to include in the request for proposal the objective of developing a tool that can be used in future years;
- direction of Council still being required on whether strategic priorities or a plan is to be developed;
- it being recommended that key performance indicators be added to the process in order to measure and monitor progress;

- concerns being expressed related to costs and due to the broadness of the priorities; and
- strategic priorities being a way for members of Council to focus on what they want to achieve over their four year term.

**Motion by** Mayor Ritsma

**Seconded by** Councillor Beatty

**Committee Decision: THAT the Council Strategic Priorities 2023-2028 and Key Performance Indicators Expansion Request totaling \$125, 000 be added to the draft 2023 budget.**

**Carried**

On the second expansion request, being Cooper Site Next Steps, the CAO advised the request does not have a direct impact on the tax levy as it is to be funded from existing reserves.

**Motion by** Councillor Henderson

**Seconded by** Mayor Ritsma

**Committee Decision: THAT the Cooper Site - Next Steps Expansion Request be added to the draft 2023 Budget.**

Discussion followed between members and staff with respect to:

- concerns being expressed with completing this work prior to the committee being formed to provide feedback;
- the work required to be completed not falling within the terms of reference for the committee;
- the work to be completed relating to internal servicing and remediation;
- Council being permitted to pause the project to review the Master Plan;
- the Master Plan that was created being subject to extensive consultation with the public and being flexible in the projects identified;
- concern being expressed that new members of Council are not familiar with the status of the various components of this project; and

- staff having presented a report on the seven components which details the status of the project and being able to provide an additional report for information.

The Chair called the question on the motion.

**Carried**

## **5.2 Infrastructure and Development Services**

**Committee Discussion:** The Director of Infrastructure and Development Services provided an overview of the Service Enhancement Expansion requests. On the Cloud Permitting Software, the Director noted it is currently being used for building permits but that it has limited functionality for other divisions. The purpose of this expansion request is to expand and modernize services to allow for online payment. It was questioned and confirmed that the software will reduce administration requirements for Planning staff.

**Motion by** Councillor Henderson

**Seconded by** Councillor McCabe

**Committee Decision: THAT the Cloud Permit Software (Building) Expansion Request be added to the draft 2023 Budget.**

**Carried**

On the Improvements to Water/Wastewater Network Communications (SCADA) expansion request, the Manager of Environmental Services advised the system is used to monitor water and wastewater systems. The purpose is to upgrade to a fibre network.

**Motion by** Mayor Ritsma

**Seconded by** Councillor Sebben

**Committee Decision: THAT the Improvements to Water/Wastewater Network Communications (SCADA) Expansion Request be added to the draft 2023 Budget.**

**Carried**

On the Fleet Vehicles (2) - Social Services expansion request, the Director of Social Services advised they are requesting two additional vehicles for use. Currently, there are three vehicles being used amongst 11-14 staff. As services are provided across the County staff are required to be mobile. It was questioned and confirmed that the City of Stratford would purchase the vehicles which would be funded from reserves. Maintenance of the

vehicles would be shared amongst the partners. It was noted that costs for vehicles depend on the components to be added.

**Motion by** Councillor Henderson

**Seconded by** Councillor Briscoe

**Committee Decision: THAT the Fleet Vehicles (2) - Social Services Expansion Request be added to the draft 2023 Budget.**

**Carried**

With respect to the Fleet Utility Vehicle - Community Services Expansion Request, the Director of Community Services advised the request is for one small utility vehicle. With the new vehicle there will be increased service levels and it should be paid back within 4-5 years.

**Motion by** Councillor Beatty

**Seconded by** Councillor Wordofa

**Committee Decision: THAT the Fleet Utility Vehicle - Community Services Expansion Request, totaling \$22,000, be added to the draft 2023 Budget.**

**Carried**

On the Erie Street Multi-Use Trail (Roads) expansion request, the Director of Infrastructure and Development Services advised staff were not successful in receiving funding and would be withdrawing this request. This project will be added to the capital budget for consideration in the future.

### **5.3 Community Services**

**Committee Discussion:** The Director of Community Services provided an overview of the Supervisor of Recreation Services expansion request and the need for this position in the department. A member expressed support with the Director reviewing the needs of the department over the next year and bringing staffing expansions forward to future budgets.

**Motion by** Councillor Sebben

**Seconded by** Councillor Briscoe

**Committee Decision: THAT the Supervisor of Recreation Services expansion request be added to the draft 2023 Budget.**

Discussion continued with respect to the benefits the position will bring and whether one supervisor could be hired instead of two. The Director

noted the two supervisor positions are different and that one staff member could not complete both roles.

The Chair called the question on the motion.

**Carried**

The Director provided an overview of the Supervisor of Facility and Building Operations expansion request. Discussion between members and staff was held on:

- there being a need for proper supervision of staff, especially younger employees and this being difficult to complete with the current complement; and
- it being possible to offer this position as a contracted position but contracted work not drawing the best candidates.

**Motion by** Mayor Ritsma

**Seconded by** Councillor Briscoe

**Committee Decision: THAT the Supervisor of Facility and Building Operations expansion request be added to the draft 2023 Budget.**

Discussion continued with respect to:

- there being a great responsibility on the City to ensure younger workers are safe and supervised;
- recruitment activities being budgeted in the Human Resources Department budget;
- the probationary period being one year for administrative employees; and
- there not being an opportunity for re-allocating employees since the Chief Building Official was managing facilities prior to it being transferred to Community Services.

The Chair called the question on the motion.

**Carried**

The Director of Community Services provided an overview of the Clerk Secretary II - Facilities expansion request and the need for this position. Discussion between members and staff occurred on:



- staff being forced to close the reception area if sufficient coverage cannot be maintained with the current complement;
- there being a need to maintain facility tracking for grant submissions;
- there being a need for this position to be full time; and
- the probationary period being 90 days.

**Motion by** Councillor Sebben

**Seconded by** Councillor Wordofa

**Committee Recommendation:** THAT the Customer Service Clerk II - Facilities Position be added to the draft 2023 Budget as a one year temporary position;

AND THAT a review be undertaken to determine the need for a full time permanent position.

Discussion continued on options available for completing this work while keeping the tax levy increase low. The Manager of Recreation and Marketing provided information on the increase in recreation programming since 2006 and that additional staff have not been hired to meet the increasing demand.

The Chair called the question on the motion.

**Defeated**

**Motion by** Councillor Beatty

**Seconded by** Councillor Briscoe

**Committee Recommendation: THAT the Customer Service Clerk II - Facilities Position be added to the draft 2023 Budget.**

**Carried**

The amount added to the budget following inclusion of the Community Services expansion requests was questioned. The Director of Corporate Services advised it represents half a percent.

An overview was provided on the expansion request related to Transit Drivers.

**Motion by** Councillor Beatty  
**Seconded by** Councillor Wordofa

**Committee Recommendation: THAT the 1 Parallel Transit Driver and the 3 Transit Drivers be added to the draft 2023 Budget.**

A request was made to separate the motion.

The Chair called the question on the motion to add one Parallel Transit Driver to the draft 2023 Budget.

**Carried**

With respect to the addition of three Transit Drivers, a member spoke against the addition.

The Chair called the question on the addition of three Transit Drivers to the draft 2023 Budget.

**Carried**

### **5.3 Corporate Services - Deferred**

The Corporate Services and Infrastructure and Development Services staffing requests were deferred for consideration to the February 21, 2023, Finance and Labour Relations Committee budget meeting.

## **6. Summary by Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer and Committee Discussion - Deferred**

The summary by the Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer was deferred to the February 21, 2023, Committee meeting.

## **7. Upcoming Meetings**

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 21, 2023 at 5:30 p.m., Council Chambers, Stratford City Hall, 1 Wellington Street, Stratford, ON, N5A 6W1

## **8. Adjournment**

**Motion by** Mayor Ritsma  
**Seconded by** Councillor McCabe

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

**Carried**

Meeting Start Time: 5:30 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 9:33 P.M.