



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

Date: Tuesday, February 21, 2023
Time: 5:30 P.M.
Location: Council Chamber, City Hall

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

Regrets: Councillor Hunter - Chair

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, Chris Bantock - Deputy Clerk, Tim Wolfe - Director of Community Services, Johnny Bowes – Manager of Environmental Services, Andrea Hachler – Manager of Planning, Miranda Ivany – Planner, Shannon Archer – Business Integration Manager, Adam Ryan – Manager of Public Works, Brent Raycraft – Supervisor of Fleet, Spencer Steckley – Manager of Financial Services, Wendy Partridge – Administrative Assistant to the Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer, Jonathan DeWeerd – Chief Building Official

Also Present: Members of the public and media

1. Call to Order

The Vice Chair called the Meeting to Order.

Councillor Hunter 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 were made by a member at the February 21, 2023, Finance and Labour Relations Committee meeting.

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 21, 2023

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

- the objectives for this meeting being noted and that a subsequent meeting has been scheduled for March 7, 2023, if needed;
- amendments to the draft budget being noted since the first budget meeting to maintain current service levels following Committee discussions;
- discussions remaining which may further impact the draft budget;
- consideration of 'service creep' in the context of general staffing levels and issues often being deferred until internal capacity is exceeded;
- the City's proportion of the budget spent on salaries for 2023 being 38%;
- an overview of significant impacts to the budget for 2023 in comparison to the 2022 budget being provided;

- the revised increase to the draft budget as of February 7, 2023, with all expansion requests included, being 7.53%;
- an approximate impact to the average assessment value from 2022 being \$255 based on the revised draft budget;
- additional information to be provided on property tax rates and classes; and
- next steps including opportunities to add or remove items in the draft budget.

In response to a question regarding use of the tax stabilization reserve compared to 2022, the Director of Corporate Services advised that \$1 million was budgeted for use in 2022 and \$500,000 in 2021. It was further stated the amount budgeted for in 2023 includes surpluses from previous unused amounts due to the pandemic and decreased service levels at the time.

Motion by Councillor Burbach

Seconded by Councillor Briscoe

Committee Decision: THAT the Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer be directed to incorporate the amendments presented at the February 21, 2023, Finance and Labour Relations Committee meeting into the draft 2023 budget.

Carried

4. Expansion Requests

4.1 Infrastructure and Development Services

Committee Discussion: The Director of Infrastructure and Development Services provided an overview of the expansion request for a Deputy Chief Building Official. It was noted specifically that this position was being brought forward to oversee administration of the Accommodation Licensing By-law and filling in for the Chief Building Official as required.

A question and answer period followed with respect to:

- the main component of the position being to address hours needed to support the Accommodation Licensing By-law;
- enforcement of the Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) being a separate issue than short term rentals;

- whether the position would still be needed after compliance was achieved with the Accommodation Licensing By-law;
- the cost of a contractor to fill the needs being twice the cost of staffing; and,
- the potential need for additional enforcement officers in the future.

Motion by Mayor Ritsma

Seconded by Councillor Nijjar

Committee Decision: THAT the expansion request for a Deputy Chief Building Official be added to the draft 2023 Budget.

Discussion continued with respect to:

- the probation period for the position being one year;
- Council being required to have a Chief Building Official (CBO) under the Building Code Act and a Deputy CBO being able to assume the same powers;
- concerns with unionized staff performing management responsibilities if work of the CBO is assigned to other staff;
- this position, as with each of the other expansion requests, being gapped at 50% of costs for 2023;
- expansion request gapping not having been reflected in the current draft budget increase; and,
- the position being required if service levels are to be met for administering the Accommodation Licensing program.

The Vice Chair called the question on the motion.

Carried

The Director of Infrastructure and Development Services provided an overview of the expansion request for a Planning Student. It was noted that this position would be utilized to help support the Planning Division with administrative responsibilities.

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

- the position anticipated to be filled in April if approved and being either a 4-month or 8-month contract with a second student filling the remainder of the contract;
- being able to reevaluate the position in future years to determine if needed or potentially transitioning into a full time position;
- the request being a contract position and therefore not unionized;
- exploring grants available for hiring students;
- the posting of the position being circulated to all schools;
- the position potentially being contingent for future years subject to funding;
- the position not being eligible for benefits; and,
- not having the position filled for all 12-months of 2023.

Motion by Councillor Burbach

Seconded by Councillor Nijjar

Committee Decision: THAT the Planning Student expansion request be added to the draft 2023 Budget.

Carried

The Director of Infrastructure and Development Services provided an overview of the expansion request for a full time Fleet Maintenance Worker. It was noted that this is currently a part-time position that has typically had a high turnover rate.

Members and staff discussed:

- there not currently being any full-time staff working on weekends;
- the position being blended with a current position and having a work schedule including every other weekend; and,
- the schedule for this position resulting in a three day weekend with four 10-hour shifts.

Motion by Councillor Biehn

Seconded by Councillor Wordofa

Committee Decision: THAT the Maintenance Worker (Fleet) expansion request be added to the draft 2023 Budget.

Carried

The Director of Infrastructure and Development services provided an overview of the expansion request for a Seasonal Maintenance Worker. It was noted that this is to be a six month, temporary position.

Discussion was held on:

- the job being a unionized position and having requirements that a student would not typically have;
- it being a common practice for seasonal workers to only be hired for 6-months;
- the responsibilities of the position being to fill gaps for seasonal road, reconstruction, traffic, and storm work;
- the posting of temporary positions not always resulting in the same person being hired from year to year; and,
- wages for the position being set based on the current collective agreement.

Motion by Councillor Burbach

Seconded by Councillor Nijjar

Committee Decision: THAT the Seasonal Maintenance Worker (Roads) expansion request be added to the draft 2023 Budget.

Carried

Councillor Henderson put forward a motion with respect to the review of part time positions and whether they could become full time interdepartmental positions. As no seconder was received the motion was not considered by Committee.

The Manager of Environmental Services provided an overview of the expansion request for a Supervisor of Waste Operations. It was noted that recent legislative changes have resulted in increased service level requirements, which this position would support. It was further noted that the position is being repurposed from a current vacant supervisor position in Public Works and that there would be a tax levy reduction paid from wastewater reserves.

Discussion ensued with respect to the work of the vacant Waste Reduction Coordinator position being assumed by this position.

Motion by Councillor Sebben

Seconded by Councillor Burbach

Committee Decision: THAT the Supervisor of Waste Operations expansion request be added to the draft 2023 Budget.

Carried

The Finance and Labour Relations Committee took a break at 6:32 p.m., and returned at 6:39 p.m.

4.2 Corporate Services

Committee Discussion: The City Clerk provided an overview of the expansion request for a Council Committee Coordinator. It was noted that, without this position, staff will not be able to fully support advisory committees.

Discussion between members and staff occurred as follows:

- it being possible to combine the two requested positions into one but there being significant tasks required for the Legislative Coordinator, many of which are legislatively required responsibilities and obligations;
- the City implementing an Electronic Documents Records Management System and there being a need for additional staff being to complete the project successfully;
- there being opportunities for increased revenue through other delegated responsibilities such as issuance of marriage licenses and other efficiency opportunities through review of policies and procedures;
- the approval of a Legislative Coordinator, and not a Council Committee Coordinator, freeing up time to assist advisory committees but that support not being full time;
- the Council Committee Coordinator focusing on advisory committees and assisting the Clerk with providing support to local boards; and
- the City's advisory committees fulfilling more of an action group role and wanting to undertake projects that impact the work of staff across the Corporation and this work not being included in work plans.

Motion by Councillor Burbach

Seconded by Councillor Nijjar

Committee Decision: THAT the Council Committee Coordinator expansion request be added to the draft 2023 Budget.

Carried

Motion by Councillor Henderson

Seconded by Councillor Briscoe

Committee Decision: THAT the Legislative Coordinator expansion request be added to the draft 2023 Budget.

Carried

5. Summary by Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer

Committee Discussion: The Director of Corporate Services advised the Committee has an opportunity to introduce additional ideas, concepts, and initiatives to be considered and discussed. Members and staff discussed:

- whether there are ways to reduce the tax levy increase and one way being noted is to reduce service levels or eliminate services being provided;
- there being additional opportunities to make changes to the draft budget prior to final approval;
- concerns being expressed with the proposed increase and requesting staff to identify items that can be deferred and ways to reduce the proposed levy increase for consideration at the March 7, 2023, Finance and Labour Relations Committee meeting.

Motion by Councillor Sebben

Seconded by Councillor Biehn

Committee Decision: THAT staff be directed to review the draft 2023 budget and identify:

- items that can be deferred; and
- options for reducing the levy increase in 2023;

AND THAT a report be brought to the March 7, 2023, Finance and Labour Relations Committee meeting for consideration.

Discussion continued with respect to:

- 2023 being a different tax year as the City does not have the same resources and has been downloaded more legislative responsibilities;
- it being noted that a way to reduce taxes is to reduce services which is a decision of Council;
- a report being requested on the success of the new positions, specifically on how they helped departments, whether revenues were increased, and efficiencies identified, and overall whether they met their intended purpose; and
- it being noted that reducing the budget by 1% represents cutting \$650,000 from the budget.

The Vice Chair called the question on the motion.

Defeated

6. Upcoming Meetings

The next Finance and Labour Relations Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 7, 2023, at 5:30 p.m., in the Council Chambers, Stratford City Hall, 1 Wellington Street, Stratford, ON N5A 6W1.

7. Adjournment

Motion by Councillor Burbach

Seconded by Councillor Nijjar

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

Carried

Meeting Start Time: 5:30 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 7:08 P.M.