



**MUNICIPALITY OF THE DISTRICT OF WEST HANTS**  
**Committee of the Whole – Special Budget**  
**March 16, 2016 9:00 a.m.**  
**Sanford Council Chambers**

Present:	G. Cochrane	Chair
	R. Dauphinee	Warden
	S. Pineo	Councillor
	R. Matheson	Councillor
	T. Brown	Councillor
	J. Daniels	Councillor
	R. Zwicker	Councillor
	P. Morton	Councillor
	G. Miller	Councillor
	C. Osborne	CAO
	M. Laycock	Director of Finance
	K. Kehoe	Director of Recreation
	K. Dempsey	Director of Planning
	R. Brown	Municipal Clerk
	A. McDade	Brooklyn Fire Department
	P. Maynard	Hantsport Fire Department
	C. Spencer	Summerville Fire Department
	D. Patterson	Walton Fire Department
	D. Stairs	RCMP
	J. Woodman	Administrative Assistant

Regrets R. Allen

1. Call to Order
2. Announcements

Chair Cochrane reviewed the fire evacuation procedures.

3. Approval of Agenda, including additions or deletions

**MOVED and SECONDED that the agenda be approved as circulated.**

**Motion Carried.**

4. Presentations

a) Walton Fire Department

Chief Patterson reported the Department relies on fundraising as well as assistance from East and West Hants Councils. He suggested the three most important factors for the Department are equipment & vehicle maintenance, and training of members. He confirmed this year the Department is celebrating its "50th" anniversary and they intend to show their gratitude to the community for the continued support throughout the years.

The Chief indicated that they have budgeted for a new roof and replacement of one of their main pumper trucks this year.

There was discussion on the needs assessment taking place for the fire services and the possibility of sharing of vehicles and equipment. The chief confirmed he was currently in discussions about purchasing a truck from the Hantsport Fire Department. He indicated that East Hants has agreed to fund 1/3 of the price of replacing the truck.

b) Grants to Organizations



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There was discussion on Council having the opportunity to review the grant requests submitted before voting on the budget. CAO Osborne suggesting that staff is proposing that Council approve the budget amount to distribute as grants and contributions, staff then would come back with the list of asks and those that are recommended and through that process Council can make changes.

c) Summerville Fire Department

Chief Spencer reported the forecasts for 2016 is based on a calendar year not fiscal year. There was discussion that the dispatch had been moved to the West Hants fire budget, it was agreed the budget should be adjusted accordingly.

Chief Spencer reported that it was difficult to determine how much the Department will fundraise in the upcoming year however suggested they were on track from last year's actuals. He emphasized the forecast is what the Department plans to spend and clarified he is not requesting additional funds from the Municipality over and above what was paid in 2015.

There was discussion on whether the department was a designated comfort shelter, and Chief Spencer confirmed the Department was and could care for approximately 150 people in an emergency event.

Discussion was held on whether there is an opportunity to participate in having a wireless tower on the Department's building for communication opportunities. Chief Spencer suggested they would have to investigate if they have a site and would need to discuss the matter further.

Chief Spencer expressed the critical need for a new pumper truck for the Department.

d) Brooklyn Fire Department

Chief McDade reported the budget remained similar to the previous year and noted the significant increases were \$20,000 for the honorarium process, funding for half a custodian position and explained the workload has increased due call volume.

There was discussion regarding the amount budgeted for the ½ custodian position and the duties they entail.

Discussion was held regarding the calls that Mount Uniacke responds to in Brooklyn. Councillor Pineo cautioned that Forest Lakes Development could fall under Mount Uniacke's call response territory. CAO Osborne noted the importance of the departments having a good working relationship with mutual aid response and suggested in the future a more informed decision on when the timing of the change should occur and cautioned making a swift decision at this time.

Station 2

CAO Osborne commented that the Station 2 budget is unique as administration has been covering the costs that were previously covered by the Windsor Fire Department. She reminded Council that it has only been running in the current location for less than 6 months and can only make an estimation to ensure there is efficient funding within the parameters.

e) Hantsport Fire Department

Deputy Chief Maynard reported that morale is very high in both stations and have responded to 67 calls since the transition to West Hants. He confirmed there coverage area



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has expanded significantly and reflects in increases within the budget. He noted leading up to the transition the Department had minimum funds for capital and equipment.

Councillor Daniels questioned why Brooklyn Fire Department janitorial services are significantly higher than the Hantsport Fire Department. Deputy Chief Maynard responded their Department just has an individual who comes in weekly to clean their auditorium and does not do any testing or maintenance, which is done by their members on a regular training night.

Southwest Hants

Deputy Chief Maynard reported a lot of the figures provided are estimates of the operational costs and suggested a year would be needed to determine actual costs.

There was discussion on the building of the helipad, and it was noted the South West Hants Society has been attempting to get it in place for some time and is part of the capital expenditures. The Director of Finance noted the \$5,000 capital costs are associated to the auxiliary and would not impact the tax rate.

f) RCMP

CAO Osborne explained the RCMP reports to the Police Advisory Board and they bring the information forward.

Discussion took place on the need for an additional officer and Staff Sergeant Stairs confirmed they are requesting an additional officer and provided the rationale. She expressed concern with the amount of overtime members have incurred to stabilize their resources. CAO Osborne clarified the Municipality is part of the "Boots on the Street" plan and pay for 70% of the cost of a police officer on the street with the Province funding the remaining 30%. She confirmed that funds are not refunded if the overtime is reduced.

Staff Sergeant Stairs understood the Municipality's financial restraints this year and understood if additional officer couldn't be funded in this fiscal year.

g) IT Services

CAO Osborne reported as part of the dissolution process staff undertook an IT Review to look at how and what services are being required. She reported the Municipality is embedded with the Town of Windsor's IT infrastructure through the VCFN. She noted that staff wanted to determine the risks and what IT issues needed to be addressed. She suggested that clear direction has not been provided both operationally and strategically to the IT Service Provider. She confirmed the review is completed and have recommendations which staff has accepted and should be implemented. She advised that staff have determined some operational issues and opportunities they would like to see and the budget reflects these.

CAO Osborne stated if the budget is approved the next step would be to move forward with discussion with the Town of Windsor in order for them to identify which direction to go and then it would be brought to Council for consideration and direction.

Jeff Hanshaw reported two major projects have been identified with both pending gas tax funding. He reviewed the items that have been accomplished this year and new initiatives for the upcoming year.

There was a brief discussion on what IT services the Town of Windsor supplies. CAO Osborne indicated staff is discussing this matter and noted there is no written contract of what services they were previously providing to the Town of Hantsport. Jeff Hanshaw



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added the VCFN network was built around the Town of Windsor as the main hub which is the network that the Town of Windsor managed for all three units and it was determined by the IT review the cost would be significant to get the Municipality out of that.

CAO Osborne reported the budget includes a Permit Tracking System and suggested it would allow staff to work more efficiently because it would be in an electronic format. She added it would also be beneficial for the complaints received under the by-law administration component.

h) Office of CAO

CAO Osborne reported the budget encompasses a number of areas, however noted from a financial perspective a number of the items show up in different parts of the detail. She confirmed it is a combined budget with the former Town of Hantsport, adding the changes pertain primarily to the fact that the Town had been asked to maintain a certain amount of funding they divested as related to the CAO and administration. She explained the funds have been spent this year and next year to help realign the differences between salaries of Hantsport and West Hants staff. She indicated staff will continue to carry the funds forward to ensure there is no impact on West Hants operations directly from that.

CAO Osborne pointed out pension costs predominately increased due to the Municipal Clerk full time position as well the By-law Officer is now a permanent position and entitled to benefits. She confirmed the budget also includes overall general training objectives.

REMO Budget

CAO Osborne reported the budget was discussed by the REMO Advisory Committee. She indicated that it was agreed to investigate the costs for telephones, computers and determine if there is an option for sharing the remote REMO trailer.

By-Law Enforcement & Dangerous & Unsightly

CAO Osborne reported the budget increased as there is a permanent full time employee in the position. She pointed out an area that was removed was the dog tag contribution to the SPCA which is being recorded as a grant. She confirmed funding has been included for the Feral Cat Program under grants and an application has been received from a registered society seeking funds.

She confirmed in the past there was 24/7 response for By-Law Enforcement which has been changed to add relief to the officers on call, who will now only respond after hours if it is a dog related emergency.

There was discussion regarding the Communications Coordinator monitoring what is happening in the community regarding social media and responding to incorrect information. CAO Osborne clarified the Municipality is committed to managing its Facebook page and should people make comments on the Municipal page that are misleading it will be corrected immediately by the Executive Assistant. She indicated staff is committed to distributing quarterly newsletters to help improve the appearance of the Municipality.

i) Overview of non-departmental expenses

The Director of Finance reviewed the overview of non-departmental expenses, noting there is a significant increase in debt servicing mainly due to the Municipality now funding fire apparatus. He cautioned next year the debt service ratio under the FCI would increase; however, will remain below the threshold.



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CAO Osborne reminded that the Municipality is heading into arbitration and the outcome will be a timely point to communicate any messages.

j) Overview of Revenue

The Director of Finance reported that commercial assessments have decreased in the industrial park. There was discussion on the difference between the Town of Windsor and Municipality tax rate and if there could be a more favourable tax rate. CAO Osborne confirmed the Municipality is bound by an agreement in place by the Province when it was originally developed and negotiations could result in a possible loss of revenue to a unit.

There was discussion on the intermunicipal agreement on uniformed assessment for education. CAO Osborne stated that in time discussions should be held to determine if this would have a neutral affect at which time it would be brought back to Council for consideration.

The Director of Finance reported that he submitted the HST and he felt the Municipality would come in close to the \$22,000 rebate but cautioned it would be depending on capital purchases and gas tax used. He noted he is anticipating receiving \$24,000 from the Town of Windsor for their contribution to REMO.

A suggestion was made to include an administration fees for HMCC, CAO Osborne argued this is money that is being collected from taxpayers. She clarified there would be no change to the revenue stream just that it is coming in as an area rate as opposed to a general rate.

Councillor Pineo asked for clarification on capital budget for the berm upgrades for the Avon River Heritage Society. CAO Osborne stated a request was received from the Society to consider helping them offset the costs to upgrade their building. She suggested there appears to be a strong community development component to the work occurring in the Avondale Region so staff felt it should be included for consideration and funded from Gas Tax. She pointed out the building is within ten feet of the waterline which raises concern, she added there will be a recommendation from MCCAP do a study in the area.

The Director of Finance pointed attention to penalties and interest on taxes and suggested increasing the interest rate would be an opportunity to raise additional revenue. It was agreed this could be included in the June newsletter.

**MOVED and SECONDED make a recommendation to Council to the penalties and interest on uncollected taxes be raised from 1% to 1.25%.**

**Motion Carried.**

k) Capital and Reserve Budget

The Director of Finance indicated he did not have the reserve budget completed and would send it out at a later date.

There was discussion regarding the Newport Rink and the need for funding and the impact it would have on residents if it were not to open next year. CAO Osborne suggested funding was not included in this draft but staff would include an amount when revising the budget which could be taken from Gas Tax.

l) Area Rate Policy



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CAO Osborne provided a brief overview of the policy. It was agreed to circulate the policy and defer the discussion to the regular Committee of the Whole meeting in order to give Council time to review.

m) Wrap up/Directions

Councillors Daniels expressed concern about the significant difference for the janitorial positions within the fire department, especially with the Brooklyn Fire Department. She felt this amount was excessive and asked why other departments could do the work themselves. She suggested she could not support that figure. CAO Osborne reminded that Brooklyn is a significantly larger department with more calls which results in additional work. Staff was directed to meet with Chief McDade to seek clarification on the issue.

CAO Osborne suggested there are ongoing issues the Municipality is facing that staff cannot accurately estimate such as the full cost of the arbitration, and the potential on the amalgamation piece. She cautioned increasing the proposed amount to be taken from the surplus is risky and Council should wait until staff has a better understanding of these areas.

CAO Osborne asked for direction from Council on where they were comfortable setting the tax. She cautioned staff could come in at a lower rate however services would suffer. Staff agreed to revisit the budget and make adjustments as directed for Councils consideration at the April 19<sup>th</sup> Budget meeting.

Warden Dauphine gave notice of a special Council meeting on March 22 at 5:00 pm to deal with amendments to the Forrest Lakes Country Club Master Plan.

5. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for March 22, 2016.

6. Adjournment

**MOVED and SECONDED that the meeting adjourn.**

**Motion Carried.**

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

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Gary Cochrane, Chair

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Rhonda Brown, Municipal Clerk