



MUNICIPALITY OF THE DISTRICT OF WEST HANTS
Committee of the Whole Minutes
March 21, 2017, 4:00 p.m.
Sanford Council Chambers

Present:	P. Morton	Chair
	A. Zebian	Warden
	T. Leopold	Councillor
	D. Keith	Councillor
	K. Monroe	Councillor
	J. Daniels	Councillor
	R. Jannasch	Councillor
	R. Hussey	Councillor
	D. Francis	Councillor
	C. Osborne	CAO
	M. Laycock	Director of Finance
	R. Brown	Municipal Clerk
	J. Woodman	Administrative Assistant
Regrets:	R. Zwicker	Councillor
Guest:	D. Stairs	RCMP
	A. Corscadden	RCMP
	D. Jewers	RCMP
	A. McDade	Brooklyn Fire Department
	J. Cochrane	Brooklyn Fire Department
	P. Maynard	Hantsport Fire Department
	R. Merchant	Hantsport Fire Department
	D. Peters	South West Hants Fire Society
	A. Wile	South West Hants Fire Society
	T. Swinamer	Mt. Uniacke Fire Department
	C. Spencer	Summerville Fire Department

There were 8 members of the public in attendance.

1. Call to Order

Chair Morton called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

2. Announcements

Chair Morton gave the standard fire evacuation announcement.

3. Approval of Agenda, including additions or deletions

MOVED and SECONDED that the agenda be approved with the following additions:

4. Introduction – Municipal Fire Services Budget

4. Introduction – Employee and Family Assistance Program

Motion Carried.

4. Presentations

Introduction and Overview of 2017-18 Budget

CAO Osborne noted this would be the first budget for most Councillors and stated that staff encourages feedback on the budget process for future improvements. She reported that staff have spent a lot of time preparing the budget with senior staff presenting what they feel to be a fair representation of the operational needs while considering Council's high level objectives that were set in February. She advised at the end of the budget presentations, staff will be seeking direction on whether the budget is appropriate to move forward in its present state or if Council would like to see changes. She confirmed the final redraft would be prepared and presented in April for final approval.

The Director of Finance stated the main focus would be on the Draft Operating Budget. The Director reviewed the layout of the Draft Budget documents. The Director of Finance informed the Draft Capital Budget did identify the source of funding for the capital project and that the former Council approved a Reserve Policy with an obligation to set aside certain percentages of funds towards reserves for future expenses, which is seen in the Draft Reserve Budget.

The Director of Finance presented an overview of the Draft Budget. He reviewed the projected revenues for 2017/18, clarifying the vast majority of the revenue comes from taxes. He confirmed in 2016/17 there was a minimal increase in the residential assessment of \$6.2 million, however in 2017/16 the residential assessment increased by approximately \$32.7 million. He suggested this is positive for the Municipality as maintaining the same tax rate would garner more revenue without increasing the tax rate. He confirmed the commercial tax rate decreased by approximately \$1.3 million in 2016/17 and in 2017/18 increased approximately over \$4 million.

The Director of Finance reported the Municipality does garner other revenue through Grants in Lieu, which are taxes generated from the Provincial and Federal Governments. He highlighted that the Landfill Tipping Fees have increased significantly and are estimated at an additional \$160,000 for this year. He advised that the Municipality is now able to fully tax the wind turbines in the area.

The Director of Finance reported that 88% of the revenue is derived from taxes, with the next highest from services provided to other governments at 5%. He reported in 2017/18 based on the current projected draft budget the revenue would be \$15.8 million this year.

The Director of Finance reviewed the proposed expense increases this year noting the increase for funding for an RCMP is due to the officer that was missed last year plus a 3.9% increase for this year. He added that sewer has increased which is primarily related to treatment costs and getting the depreciation up to the reserve standard, but offered this cost does not impact the general rate as it is born by the sewer users. He noted Public Health has decreased which is reflective of decreases in the cemetery costs. He suggested there is an increase in Planning, Education, and Net Transfers which is funding going towards the reserves. The total net increase of expenses was approximately \$730,000.

The Director of Finance reported that Protective Services is a significant cost at 31%, which includes Fire, Police, By-law, REMO and Building Inspection. Education is the next highest expense at 21 %, followed by General Government and Environmental Services. The budget expenses must equal the budget revenue.

The Director of Finance stated the budget shows a proposed tax increase of 0.00037 cents, for a General Residential Rate of \$1.02. He noted there would be no changes to the Commercial Tax Rate, Hantsport Residential Tax Rate or Hantsport Commercial Tax Rate.

Councillor Monroe inquired where community grant requests were in the budgets. CAO Osborne reported the Grants to Contributions Policy is based on Council setting a fixed value for grants for the year and staff comes forward with recommendations on awarding the grants in late April or May after the budget is approved. She cautioned there may be some requests that don't meet the criteria of the policy and staff could make a recommendation to fund using a different source.

Councillor Jannasch asked for clarification on the size and what the Gas Tax Reserve can be used for. CAO Osborne noted the amount of the Gas Tax Reserve was found in the Reserve Budget under Special Reserves. The Director of Finance gave examples of eligible Gas Tax projects, noting it is very mandated. He confirmed that before proposing the funds be used he makes an inquiry to the Province to see if the project is eligible. Any amount of gas tax can be used for eligible projects in a year, however there is a limit to the amount of Federal money that be used for a single project if other federal funding is included, so other grants can limit the amount of Gas Tax that can be used.

MOVED and SECONDED that the Overview of the Draft Budget presentation be received and placed on file.

Motion Carried.

CAO Osborne reported that staff was asked to provide an analysis of costs on the previous contract with the Windsor Fire Department and the current services being provided by West Hants. She noted

that the Municipal Fire Services accounts include all the debt currently held by all the fire departments where the Municipality has purchased the new vehicles through Municipal Finance Corporation (MFC), noting the prior practice was the fire departments obtained a loan and the Municipality provided them with a grant and/or guarantee. She confirmed the Municipality obtains a better rate through MFC and saves a significant amount of money on interest. She indicated this is now on the Municipality's books as a debt and is recorded under Municipal Fire Services.

CAO Osborne suggested that staff is trying to centralize certain services that are common across the fire departments. Councillor Francis asked if eventually there could be one insurance provider that all departments could fall under an umbrella. CAO Osborne suggested that currently each fire department is using the same provider but as independent departments. She advised that there has been discussion about getting a better rate if it is done as one unit. Councillor Daniels inquired if bulk purchase of pagers would provide savings. CAO Osborne indicated the pagers are purchased through a Provincial agreement which already provides savings.

The Director of Finance reviewed the overall costs of the fire services before and after the Windsor Fire Department. Using defined assumptions, the Director of Finance provided a 20-year net present value cost projection. He suggested there is a present value saving of \$481,784 for going forward with Southwest Hants and Tongue Hill stations versus maintaining operations with the Windsor Fire Department. CAO Osborne advised that staff has been asked to create a policy that sets standards and structures in place for what this Municipality is prepared to pay and to look under regionalization of fire services. She suggested there is potential for a new formula.

MOVED and SECONDED that the Fire Services Analysis be received and placed on file.

Motion Carried.

RCMP - Overview of Police Services in West Hants

CAO Osborne reported that the RCMP did present the budget earlier to the Police Advisory Board prior to this meeting. She introduced Staff Sergeant Dianne Stairs to present the RCMP budget for 2017/2018 detailing the services they provide both operationally and financially.

Staff Sergeant Dianne Stairs introduced Corporal Angela Corscadden and Donna Jewers, Manager of Strategic Planning and Client Services Unit of the RCMP. She reported on the types of calls for services and where their resources go. She noted some of the key issues they respond to which take up a significant amount of resources are; 911 calls, Mental Health, Well Being Checks, Alarms, Sudden Deaths, Impaired Driving, Domestic Violence calls, Distribution of Intimate Images, Bullying, Cyber Crime and Summary Offence Tickets. She noted that RCMP will work with Council and the Police Advisory Board to create target measures for the specific issues in the area. Staff Sergeant Stairs reviewed cost associated with an officer and outfitting a vehicle.

Councillor Daniels asked how much time is spent on false alarms calls. Staff Sergeant Stairs clarified response to 911 calls are mandatory and immediate, however if a second alarm occurs at the same time, both would be responded to but they would respond to the most critical first. She stated response time can vary depending upon the location. CAO Osborne reported there is a False Alarm By-law on the books, but she noted there has never been anyone appointed to the oversight of that. She confirmed that she has discussed the issue with staff and she would like to bring something forward that has a small revenue generation to it.

MOVED and SECONDED that the report be received with the understanding that the Municipality releases only the information permitted under the direction from the RCMP.

Motion Carried.

D. Jewers discussed the difference between the Provincial Police Service Agreement and Municipal Police Service Agreement. Warden Zebian inquired whether it would be more

effective for both the Municipality and Town of Windsor to have the same agreement. Staff Sergeant Stairs agreed it would be beneficial but couldn't say which agreement would be better or more cost effective. CAO Osborne indicated that the Province has been asked to review the agreements to determine the most appropriate.

Councillor Leopold asked if the RCMP forecasts additional expenses for the legalization of marijuana. Staff Sergeant Stairs suggested in general there is speculation that the workload will increase.

Employee and Family Assistance Program

Councillor Daniels expressed concern that fire fighters do not receive help for mental trauma from the work they do. She suggested that the Municipality provide better coverage for the members of the fire departments, she felt it was very important to investigate the issue. CAO Osborne felt that the fire departments should be consulted on the issue, and that this could be discussed at the Policy Committee, who could provide a recommendation to Council.

Brooklyn Fire Department (Stations 1&2) – Overview of BFD Fire Services

Chief Andy McDade and Deputy Chief Jason Cochrane presented the budget for the 2017/18. Chief McDade reported the Brooklyn Fire Department has 92 active members and cover from the South Rawdon Road through to Highway 14 Chester Highway, to Lakelands and to the cemetery on Highway 215, through the 236 on the North River Road. He confirmed they border the Town of Windsor and provide mutual aid to Southwest Hants and First Response calls to Falmouth. He reported last year the Department responded to a total of 422 alarms.

Councillor Daniels inquired how many calls were received for medical calls. Chief McDade confirmed there were 110 medical calls last year. Councillor Daniels expressed concern that fire departments are spending too much time responding to these types of calls. Chief McDade suggested from an ethical response the fire departments are happy to assist the community with medical responses.

There was discussion about the janitorial position for the Brooklyn Fire Department. Chief McDade confirmed that the position is not just responsible for cleaning the building, they also service, clean and check equipment on a regular basis. Councillor Monroe expressed concern that this position was not consistent with the other fire departments, and suggested it seemed like this was a paid fire fighter position.

Chief McDade reported the department fundraised a total of \$48,338 last year.

Councillor Monroe asked for clarification what the budgeted \$12,000 for renovations was for. Chief McDade indicated it would be used for working on the training ground and to replace a shed on the property which stores training equipment. He felt it should be a three-year project to complete. Deputy Chief Cochrane suggested the training ground will eventually save money as members won't be sent out for offsite training which is very expensive, and can be used by surrounding fire departments.

Councillor Monroe asked if there was a set amount for honorariums. Chief McDade confirmed that all members get under \$1,000.

CAO Osborne agreed to work with the fire departments to discuss the issue of the janitorial positions to provide clarity from Council's perspective.

There was concern expressed regarding the budget amount for snow removal for the parking lot for the Brooklyn Fire Department.

Chief McDade invited all Councillors to tour their department.

Hantsport Fire Department – Overview of HFD Fire Services

Deputy Chief Paul Maynard and Captain Rob Merchant presented the 2017/18 budget for the Hantsport Fire Department and substation in Southwest Hants. The Hantsport Fire Department has 44 members. He reported the Department responded to 170 calls in 2016. He noted that they changed their level of Medical First Response to a Level 6 which allows members to respond to cardiac arrests and MVA collisions and at the requests of paramedics, and confirmed the Department does not respond to all medical calls which has reduced their medical calls by approximately 75%. He advised the department has an Automatic Mutual Aid Agreement with Brooklyn Fire Department for the Falmouth and Southwest Hants areas. He indicated that a significant amount of the fundraising done by the Hantsport Fire Department is donated back to the community.

Deputy Chief Maynard highlighted that a fire inspection has restricted the Hantsport Fire Department's kitchen from cooking, especially with oil, and they are no longer able to use it for events.

Deputy Chief Maynard confirmed the Hantsport Fire Department has included in their budget a part time janitorial position and funding for renovations to the Department. He confirmed the self-contained breathing apparatus and bunker gear needed to be replaced as they don't meet safety requirements. He indicated there are some major holes in the fire department's roof and repaving of the ramp that will need to be completed.

The Hantsport Fire Department were thanked for their presentation.

South West Hants Fire Department – Overview of SWH Fire Services

David Peters, Chair of South West Hants Fire Society; Alicia Wile, Treasurer; and Deputy Chief Paul Maynard presented the South West Hants Fire budget for 2017-18.

CAO Osborne reported this is a combination of the operating fire service that Hantsport Fire Department is responsible for, adding on the other side is the operational costs for the building that houses the fire department. She confirmed that South West Hants Fire Society has a 99-year lease on the building and property to be used as a fire station.

Mr. Peters clarified the Society provides the additions required to the building such as new doors and windows, graveling of yard, installation of heat pumps, and installation of the exhaust fan. He confirmed the Society pays for some items through fundraising with no cost to the Municipality.

Council commended the South West Hants Fire Society for doing such a tremendous job.

Deputy Chief Maynard reported the department has 11 active members and 34 calls to date. He advised in the capital budget they have nothing in the budget this year.

Council thanked them for their presentation.

Mt. Uniacke Fire Department – Overview of Mt. Uniacke Fire Services

Chief Todd Swinamer presented the West Hants portion of their 2017/18 budget. Mt. Uniacke Fire Department has 41 active members and responded to 218 calls last year, 12 of which were in West Hants. He confirmed that a significant amount of their district is in East Hants. CAO Osborne advised that Mount Uniacke has always provided a mutual aid response to West Hants. She suggested that the Brooklyn Fire Departments ability under the old station was not adequate to cover their area and the Mount Uniacke Fire Department assisted with the coverage. She confirmed when the new Brooklyn Fire Station was completed, Council made a change in the fire zones; however never ceased the relationship with Mount Uniacke which she felt was fortunate as the Department assisted when the relationship with the Windsor Fire Department ended.

Councillor Keith asked for clarification on the two-paid positions for the Mt. Uniacke Fire Department. Chief Swinamer reported the positions are five days a week and their duties

include maintenance of the fire equipment including record keeping, general cleanup of the hall and are qualified Medical First Responders and can respond to calls.

Council thanked Chief Swinamer for his presentation.

Summerville Fire Department - Overview of Summerville Fire Services

Chief Chris Spencer presented the 2017/18 budget for Summerville Fire Department. He confirmed the Department has 31 active members. He noted the membership plans to continue their fundraising initiatives with the proceeds going towards a new battery powered combination tool at a cost of \$20,000 which is not included in the budget. Chief Spencer thanked the Municipality for the support provided to the Department.

Chief Spencer reported the majority of their calls are medical related. Councillor Leopold asked for clarification on what other station expenses included. Chief Spencer indicated it would include items needed by members, while on scene.

Chief Spencer reported for honorariums the Summerville Fire Department typically budgets \$15,000 which is based on member's participation.

Councillor Francis asked for clarification on the note of Credit Union penalty under the Administration in the budget. Chief Spencer confirmed this pertains to the Departments' truck loan with the Credit Union which was taken over by the Municipality after the truck was received and a penalty occurred for the loan prepayment. The Director of Finance added this relates to the Temporary Borrowing Resolution which was recently passed by Council which worked out financially. He noted that this amount was budgeted for last year and there is no additional cost.

Councillor Daniels asked if Summerville Fire Department has a Code of Conduct. Chief Spencer advised that the Department has as Policy Document which includes a Code of Conduct which the Department strictly follows.

Councillor Jannasch asked if the Summerville Fire Department was financially supporting the group building a boat ramp at Hobart's Beach. Chief Spencer confirmed the Department has not received a request to financially support the ramp.

Councillor Monroe asked about the significant donation the Summerville Fire Department received. Chief Spencer stated it was called the Catherine Card Trust and would be used to fund those items normally obtained through fundraising. CAO Osborne suggested that the Municipality has both the confidence and assurance of the Chief that the Department would not place a burden on the Municipality for anything that they could cover themselves. Chief Spencer confirmed the Department's mandate is that the funds has been put into a moderate/low risk investment.

Council thanked the Summerville Fire Department for their presentation.

Update on Kings County/Hantsport Area Rate

CAO Osborne reported the Municipality has not received last year's area rate portion from the Municipality of the County of Kings, she confirmed she has met and discussed this with the Interim CAO and Manager of Finance from Kings County. She stated that Kings County have determined that Council has both an obligation and right to impose an area rate if they deem necessary. She indicated that Kings County may call a meeting of the residents for an information session and she hopes something will be presented to Kings County Council for approval to pay for the service provided by the Hantsport Fire Department before the end of June.

Discussion and overview of March 22 Budget meeting

The Director of Finance suggested that Council take the opportunity to reflect on the budget and reconvene on March 22, 2017.

Councillors expressed concerns on the Brooklyn Fire Department, regarding other expenses accounts, the janitorial position and snow plowing. CAO Osborne cautioned the Municipality's role is strategic and to determine what to fund and the services required, not to advise how the fire departments should run their operations. Councillor Monroe suggested the Municipality should consider using a metric measure for funding. Councillor Jannasch felt that the Brooklyn Fire Department should separate the budget from the operations of the Civic Center for better clarification. CAO Osborne reported there is a Municipal West Hants/Brooklyn Civic Center Committee with the purpose to meet and discuss important issues and she suggested that consideration could be given to working with the auxiliary as a separate entity.

5. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for March 22, 2017 at 10:00 a.m.

6. Adjournment

MOVED and SECONDED that the meeting adjourn.

Motion Carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Paul Morton, Chair

Rhonda Brown, Municipal Clerk