



**MUNICIPALITY OF THE DISTRICT OF WEST HANTS
Committee of the Whole Minutes – Special Budget
April 3, 2018, 4:00 p.m.
Sanford Council Chambers**

Present: P. Morton Deputy Warden
A. Zebian Warden
R. Jannasch Councillor District 1
K. Monroe Councillor District 2
D. Keith Councillor District 3
T. Leopold Councillor District 4
D. Francis Councillor District 5
J. Daniels Councillor District 7
R. Zwicker Councillor District 10
M. Laycock Chief Administrative Officer
M. LeMay Director of Planning
C. Lowe Accountant
C. Remme Acting Municipal Clerk
J. Woodman Administrative Assistant

Regrets: R. Hussey

Guests: Staff Sergeant Stairs, RCMP
Chief Patterson, Walton Shore Volunteer Fire Department
Chief Todd Swinamer, Uniacke & District Fire Department
Chief Chris Spencer, Summerville & District Fire Department
Chief Peter Johnston, Hantsport Fire Department
Deputy Chief Paul Maynard, Hantsport Fire Department
Karrie Ritchie, Volunteer Fire Fighter, Hantsport Fire Department
Dave Peters, Volunteer Fire Fighter, Southwest Hants Fire Department
Alicia Wile, Volunteer Fire Fighter, Southwest Hants Fire Department
Chief Andy McDade, Brooklyn Volunteer Fire Department
Deputy Chief Jason Cochrane, Brooklyn Volunteer Fire Department
Executive Committee Chair, Art Crowell, Brooklyn Volunteer Fire Department

There was 1 member of the public in attendance.

1. Call to Order
Chair Morton called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.
2. Announcements
Chair Morton reviewed the standard fire evacuation procedure.

3. Approval of Agenda, including additions or deletions
MOVED and SECONDED that the agenda be approved as circulated.
Motion Carried.

4. Presentation (s)

- a. Introduction and Overview of 2018-19 Budget – Martin Laycock

CAO Laycock presented the Introduction and Overview of the 2018-19 budget indicating that the presentation reflects all the asks from Council.

Councillor Jannasch asked for clarification on whether the arbitration settlement from the Windsor Fire Department had been received and where it was distributed. CAO Laycock confirmed it had been received and explained it was sitting as a revenue line item in last year's budget and confirmed as a surplus it would end up in the operating reserve as per the policy. He said the money could be used to offset costs in the current year, he cautioned it is not an ideal method..

Councillor Monroe asked for clarification on the proposed contributions to an Infrastructure Reserve for Hantsport. CAO Laycock explained it was an artificial number to get the tax rate back to \$1.66. He added the rationale for the \$194,000 going into infrastructure is that Hantsport has far more infrastructure than any other community within West Hants, so specific reserves are required..

Councillor Monroe asked for information on the plan for infrastructure funding for Hantsport. CAO Laycock indicated that half of the infrastructure funding that had been received during the dissolution had been used towards identified projects in the Opus infrastructure study adding staff will be looking at leveraging provincial and federal money. He advised the Province has not signed their agreement with the Federal Government so there is no money currently to access and suggested that it is expected to be signed in the fall. He added there are three identified projects which are considered high priority in Hantsport.

Warden Zebian asked whether it would be better to take the fire arbitration funds to use towards the cost of a new station. CAO Laycock replied that it could be done and would be an important issue for Council to discuss and decide.

Councillor Zwicker asked if the Hantsport Library funding was taken out of the area rate. CAO Laycock indicated that it was not and noted most of the costs for the library relate to the maintenance of the building versus the ongoing operations. Councillor Zwicker didn't agree that Hantsport residents should be paying for their library and part of Windsor's as well.

Councillor Zwicker asked if any of the Smoothing Reserve had been used. He suggested that he would prefer to see infrastructure upgrades which he felt would drive the Community. CAO Laycock clarified that the Municipality receives \$132,000 in equalization payments because of the dissolution of Hantsport to ease the burden to the Municipality which would stop after five years.

Councillor Daniels asked if there could be consideration for a reserve to assist the fire department with their capital replacement plan. CAO Laycock suggested it was an oversight when the reserve

policy was completed and suggested there should be something specific for fire services. Councillor Daniels suggested it could be considered for the future. CAO Laycock indicated the only solution at this time would be to borrow as there is nothing set aside besides from operating which could have restrictions.

b. Overview of RCMP

Staff Sergeant Stairs presented the Overview of the RCMP.

Councillor Daniels asked if the RCMP found that the domestic violence cases coincide with mental health issues. Staff Sergeant Stairs confirmed there is a relationship between the two. Councillor Zwicker asked what the ratios is for female/male in their members. Staff Sergeant Stairs confirmed they have 4 female members out of 15.

Councillor Leopold asked if provincial and federal funds have been allotted to assist with the upcoming legalization of cannabis. Staff Sergeant Stairs stated that she was not aware of any funding. Councillor Leopold asked if there is any prediction for the increased need for additional policing services because of the upcoming legalization. Staff Sergeant Stairs advised there had been discussions in house that the RCMP are going to have an increase in the calls for service because people are not going to know what the rules are. Councillor Leopold asked if the RCMP has more information about the legalization than what the public is aware of. Staff Sergeant Stairs stated that the RCMP receive information the same time it is announced to the public.

Councillor Leopold asked if nuisance calls are already captured in the calls for service. Staff Sergeant Stairs stated that these calls could be reflected under crime prevention noting they will be looked at in regards to how to capture and monitor them to determine the impact to the RCMP.

Staff Sergeant Stairs commented on the ask for the Community Programming Officer noting the current resources do not allow for community policing time. She confirmed they do have a School Safety Officer however that position is mandated for being in the schools and dealing with public safety issues. She clarified the Community Programming Officer is not a police officer, however could be an employee of the RCMP. She advised that she had made a proposal to the Police Advisory Board to consider contracting the position out to someone in the community to provide community services by working with the RCMP and filling in the gaps, starting up programs and engage the RCMP when it is most required. She felt there are a lot of areas that are lacking and require outreach. She suggested this would be a place the Municipality could contribute money and receive significant value.

c. Walton Shore Volunteer Fire Department Overview

Chief Danny Patterson presented the overview for the Walton Shore Volunteer Fire Department.

Councillor Daniels asked if East Hants have expectations for training and medical calls of what is needed for each fire department. Chief Patterson responded that medical is based on provincial training requirements and dispatched by the EHS system, adding normally they don't respond to any other calls.

Councillor Jannasch asked for clarification on the Department's renovations that took place last year. Chief Patterson indicated that all the renovations were completed adding the Department is currently working in a slight overdraft. He advised Council that the Department plans to redo the floors which includes refinishing the concrete to cut down on dust in the building.

Councillor Monroe asked why there is nothing in the current budget for insurance. Chief Patterson clarified the Department's insurance is covered under an umbrella through East Hants.

Chair Morton asked if honorariums are given out to the Department members to which Chief Patterson responded no.

d. Uniacke and District Fire Department – Overview

Chief Todd Swinamer presented the overview for the Uniacke and District Fire Department. Chair Morton asked if the two-page staff was able to drive vehicles. Chief Swinamer confirmed that most members have class three drivers license and area fully qualified to drive.

Councillor Daniels asked if the two tankers were used to go into the private developments. Chief Swinamer confirmed the main engines hold approximately 1,000 gallons of water which is generally enough for the initial knock down of a fire.

Chair Morton asked what level service the Department would be considered. Chief Swinamer responded that the Department is in the upper level for fire calls and medical calls. Chair Morton asked for clarification on the \$1,000 request for medical responses to which the Chief replied, due to the large number of medical responders, the Department is trying to distribute more equipment kits.

Councillor Leopold asked of the service agreement with Uniacke and District Fire Department. CAO Laycock indicated there is not an agreement but a mutual understanding of shared assistance suggesting it be reviewed by Council. Councillor Leopold inquired what type of long term service agreement the department is seeking. Chief Swinamer responded the Department would like an agreement over an extended period as he felt from a training perspective it is different from other departments. He expressed concern about areas that are being developed such as Forrest Lakes.

Councillor Leopold inquired whether the members are paid honorariums. Chief Swinamer confirmed that no honorariums are paid, however they do reimbursements for expenditures to cover members costs when responding to calls or on training. Councillor Zwicker asked what the average reimbursement would be for the year. Chief Swinamer confirmed it would be approximately \$500.

CAO Laycock asked if the Department manages the finances or if East Hants did for them. Chief Swinamer confirmed the Municipality of East Hants does the accounting services on their behalf and the Department prepares the budget and expenditures. CAO Laycock asked if the Municipality charges an administration fee for providing that service to which the Chief responded no.

Chair Morton asked if the Department fundraises throughout the year. Chief Swinamer responded their main fundraiser is the Annual Fair which raises approximately \$7,000 to 10,000 each year.

MOVED and SECONDED that the report from the Mt. Uniacke Fire Department be received and placed on file.

Motion Carried.

e. Summerville & District Fire Department – Overview

Chief Chris Spencer presented the overview for the Summerville & District Fire Department.

Councillor Monroe asked if the \$5 million liability insurance requirement would affect all departments. CAO Laycock indicated that it is his understanding this is a standard amount required, adding he hasn't heard from any of the departments that it has been an issue. He suggested there could be an opportunity to seek a competitive price, suggesting a future discussion on the topic.

Councillor Zwicker asked for information on the Department's honorariums. Chief Spencer explained their members are given honorariums based on 35% participation levels with \$12,000 given out annually to members.

Councillor Jannasch asked if the Department was running at 50% medical calls like the other departments in the Municipality. Chief Spencer responded that the Department averages about 60% medical, 40% fire calls. He added that fire calls have increased slightly this year due to participation with mutual aid calls for neighboring departments.

Councillor Zwicker asked if the Department has a junior member program. Chief Spencer confirmed the department does have a program and their by-laws stipulate that the Department can have a maximum of 10 juniors, adding currently they have 3 juniors.

Councillor Leopold inquired why the budget reflects two entries for insurance. CAO Laycock clarified that one is for liability insurance and another is for the station, adding there is a third for apparatus.

Councillor Leopold asked for clarification on the legal costs under administration. Chief Spencer confirmed that legal is a municipal term but is used for auditing fees. Councillor Leopold asked what the Department does for fundraising to which the Chief responded there are a number held throughout the year, but their primary fundraiser is the monthly fish suppers.

Councillor Leopold asked if the Department has paid caretakers on site during the week. Chief Spencer confirmed the department does have a janitor and the salary includes the services as well as the cleaning supplies. He noted the position is paid just slightly over minimum wage for approximately 10-15 hours weekly noting the individual is not a firefighter. Councillor Leopold asked if the Department has members available to respond to calls during the week day. Chief Spencer responded typically the Department has a core group of members that are able to respond.

Chair Morton asked what the Department's level of response is. Chief Spencer advised Level 4 for medical responses.

f. Hantsport Fire Department – Station 1 Overview

Chief Peter Johnston and Deputy Chief Paul Maynard presented the Hantsport Fire Department Station 1 Overview.

MOVED and SECONDED that presentation on the Overview of the Hantsport Fire Department be received and placed on file.

Motion Carried.

Councillor Zwicker asked if the existing site of the Hantsport Fire Station could be used for a new station or if there were any other sites under consideration. Chief Johnston indicated the only site he would recommend at this time would be the property in front of the West Hants Public Works Shop.

Councillor Daniels inquired if there are safety issues with the municipally owned station or liability issues that would need to be addressed. CAO Laycock responded that this would need to be investigated, adding that safety is a primary concern for the Municipality.

Councillor Daniels pointed out that the Public Works Shop also has structural issues suggesting there could be an opportunity for a combined facility as a long-term solution. CAO Laycock suggested Council would need to discuss the matter and give direction to investigate and recommend a solution. Councillor Jannasch asked if there is any risk that insurance will be denied due to the overcrowding and safety concerns with the fire department. CAO Laycock advised there is no risk that he is aware of, adding that a risk assessment was recently done for all municipal assets.

Councillor Leopold asked how many members the Department has to which the Chief responded 40 members at Station 1 and ten at Station 2 along with one junior member. The Councillor asked if there was an auxiliary for fundraising. Chief Johnston stated no.

Councillor Leopold asked if the Department had paid janitorial positions. Chief Johnston confirmed they have a paid position for three days at Station 1 and one day in Station 2. Councillor Leopold asked if that position was also a fire fighter to which the Chief responded that the person in the position was a fire fighter noting the position is currently not filled.

Councillor Zwicker asked for clarification on the amounts given out for honorariums. Chief Johnston explained it is distributed based on ranking of the members.

Councillor Zwicker asked if there are any short-term solutions to use the kitchen at the Department, adding it had been a significant asset to the community. Volunteer Fire Fighter, Karrie Ritchie, explained that the Department would need to reorganize the kitchen to accommodate noting it would be costly.

Chair Morton asked for an explanation on what the MFR certificate allows members to do. Deputy Chief Maynard clarified if members do not have an MFR certificate they are limited to first aid, adding EHS would not call members to respond to medical calls. He indicated that the Department is considered a Level 6 and can respond to major trauma calls at the request of paramedics. He explained that members are required to take a five-day course to start which costs approximately \$400 per member and then training is required every two years.

Councillor Francis asked for clarification on communication costs for pagers and portable radios. CAO Laycock advised this is an ongoing process of upgrading the equipment.

Chair Morton asked how many members are available to respond during the week. Chief Johnston responded there are normally ten members available.

CAO Laycock stated that there seems to be a lot of chimney fire calls and asked if there was a way to reduce the amount. Deputy Chief Maynard expressed that, with the assistance of the local media, more public education could be done during Fire Prevention Week.

g. Southwest Hants Fire Department – Station 2 Overview

Chief Peter Johnston, and volunteer firefighters Dave Peters, Alicia Wile presented the overview for Station 2.

CAO Laycock clarified the Southwest Hants Fire Society is responsible for the building administration costs of Station 2.

Chair Morton asked if there were any plans for renovations in the upcoming year. Alicia Wile indicated that no renovations were planned but money had been set aside in the budget as a contingent to offset unforeseen costs. David Peters added that many of the costs are offset by fundraising from various events. He clarified that they are not able to break down the costs for heat, water, electricity between the hall portion of the building and fire department. He added that the building was purchased by the community and there was no expense to the Municipality.

Councillor Zwicker asked if there was any consideration on becoming their own society. David Peters suggested that they would like to know what it would take to be a standalone station.

Councillor Monroe asked if there was a plan for vehicle replacement this year. CAO Laycock advised he had spoken with the Chief on the current budget restraints who agreed to work on the issue but cautioned the ask may come in the future if there is an immediate need.

Councillor Leopold asked if there was a paid janitor for the Department. David Peters confirmed there is a paid position for two hours per week adding the individual is not a fire fighter for the Department.

Councillor Zwicker asked if they had a functioning kitchen for events to which Alicia Wile confirmed there is a functioning kitchen and the maximum occupancy for the hall is 100.

h. Brooklyn Volunteer Fire Department - Station 1 & 2 Overview

Deputy Chief Jason Cochrane and Chair of the Executive Committee, Art Crowell presented the overview for the Brooklyn Fire Department.

MOVED and SECONDED that the presentation from the Brooklyn Fire Department be received and placed on file.

Motion Carried.

Councillor Daniels asked for a breakdown of how many calls were in the Department's district through auto aid. Deputy Chief Cochrane indicated he didn't have those numbers to provide this evening but would distribute them to Council.

Councillors Daniels asked for the average amount of members that respond to any alarm. Deputy Chief Cochrane confirmed between the two stations 25-30 members would respond to most alarms.

Councillor Leopold asked for clarification on testing, repair, and maintenance costs. Deputy Chief Cochrane clarified it covers vehicle inspections, aerial testing, and any equipment.

Councillor Leopold asked where the two paid custodian salaries are reflected in the budget. CAO Laycock explained the title has changed to better reflect the role and is under Fire Station Maintenance and Apparatus Superintendent. Councillor Leopold asked if the person in these positions are also fire fighters to which the Deputy Chief Cochrane responded yes.

Councillor Leopold asked for clarification on the difference between the two stations for office supplies. Deputy Chief Cochrane explained the bulk of the administrative work is done at Station 1 therefore the budget is larger.

Councillor Leopold inquired why the costs associated with fundraising does not show as a line item in the budget. CAO Laycock explained the costs of the Civic Center do not show up in this budget as it is a separate entity. He agreed the net funding should show up as revenue source for Brooklyn Fire Department, but the cost would be offset. Councillor Leopold asked about the message board outside station 1. Deputy Chief Cochrane indicated the Department's board had been damaged and is being repaired adding that the board outside the Station had been loaned to the Department at no cost.

Councillor Jannasch asked if the Station had any intention of hiring a professional bookkeeper or accountant. Deputy Chief Cochrane indicated this had never been discussed at the executive level adding it is a significant workload.

Councillor Monroe asked if there were any legal or audit expenses this year. CAO Laycock clarified that although the budget shows zero on the actuals the Department is in the process of doing their audit and have yet to be invoiced.

Councillor Monroe asked what was being proposed for renovations and major repairs for station 2 as it was a new building. CAO Laycock advised that the amount is a contingency set aside in case any issues arise. Chief McDade offered there is some landscaping that is required.

Councillor Monroe advised last year there was a request for consulting work for the aerial radios which was denied by Council and asked if the problem has been resolved. Chief McDade clarified the issue was not resolved instead the members starting using Simplex.

Councillor Monroe asked how much has been fundraised. Chief McDade advised they have raised approximately \$3,700 which they will use for an imaging camera.

Councillor Daniels asked for clarification why the Department is requesting money under public events again this year as their significant milestone banquet was held last year. Chief McDade confirmed the banquet cost double what they had requested, adding that the catering fees was very expensive. He advised that this year they are holding a smaller banquet which is why the request was made.

Councillor Daniels asked for clarification on the \$30,000 ask for equipment in the contingency fund. CAO Laycock suggested he would need to confirm but felt the majority of this amount was spent.

Councillor Leopold asked why the Municipality is not handling the operational costs for the Civic Center. CAO Laycock responded there was previous agreement which would need to be renegotiated expressing the discussion on the topic should happen at Council.

Chair Morton asked what level of service the Stations provide. Deputy Chief Cochrane advised that station 1 responds at Level 4 and Level 6 at Station 2. It was reported that most of the calls that the Department respond to in East Hants are fire related.

Chair Morton asked for clarification on travel and meals costs. Chief McDade confirmed this is for members while on training.

Chair Morton expressed concern about the significant amount being spent on snow removal costs suggesting that there should be more control. CAO Laycock clarified that Brooklyn is responsible for snow clearing for station 1 and the Municipality is for station 2.

Chair Morton asked if there is enough work to keep both custodians busy every day, and if one person could do both buildings. Chief McDade suggested that would not be feasible as station 1 is significantly larger and offered there is a lot of general daily maintenance required.

Councillor Daniels asked how many pieces of apparatus there are between the two stations. Chief McDade confirmed there is 11 pieces. Chief McDade indicated that during a recent training session a lever was damaged on their 31-year-old engine truck, he explained the caretaker at station 2 was able to fix it instead so a service call was not necessary which saved a significant amount of money.

Councillor Daniels suggested maybe it would be worthwhile having a person at southwest station on a full-time basis if it is a liability issue. She felt discussion should occur and consideration be given.

5. Discussion and Overview of the next day
CAO Laycock advised Council that the revenue and expenses, departmental budgets as well as capital and reserve budgets will be presented at the next meeting.
6. Date of Next Meeting
The next regular Committee of the Whole will be on April 4, 2018.
7. Adjournment

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Paul Morton, Chair

Rhonda Brown, Municipal Clerk