



MUNICIPALITY OF THE DISTRICT OF WEST HANTS
Special Committee of the Whole Minutes
April 16, 2019, 6:00 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
	R. Hussey	Councillor District 6
	J. Daniels	Councillor District 7
	R. Zwicker	Councillor District 10
	M. Laycock	Chief Administrative Officer
	C. Rochon	Director of Finance
	R. Brown	Municipal Clerk
	A. Henhoeffter	REMO and Fire Services Coordinator

There were 2 members of the public in attendance.

1. Call to Order

Chair Morton called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Announcements

Chair Morton announced the meeting was being broadcasted on Facebook Live and reviewed the standard fire evacuation procedure.

Councillor Francis thanked the Recreation Department and everyone involved with the Easter Egg Hunt at Irishmen's Road Recreation Site on April 13th.

3. Approval of Agenda, including additions or deletions

MOVED and SECONDED that the agenda be approved.

Motion Carried.

4. Correspondence

- 04-03-2019 Letter from Hantsport Memorial Community Centre
- 04-12-2019 Letter from Brooklyn Fire Department

CAO Laycock clarified the intention of the letter from Brooklyn Fire Department was to highlight their budget needs, as they did not feel they clearly articulated this during their presentation to Council.

5. 2019-2020 Budget Update

a. 2019-2020 Budget (Recommendation Report)

Councillor Daniels noted her conflict of interest regarding fire issues. She would be refraining from fire discussions when they arise but would remain at the table as fire discussions may be mixed in with other discussions.

Director Rochon presented her report which outlined the two budget reduction scenarios requested by the Committee of the Whole and other updated budget information. She informed the changes would affect the overall revenue and expenses.

The Director stated the original proposed tax rate was \$1.0477 and informed Scenario 1 reductions would bring the tax rate to \$1.0272, an increase of \$0.0109 from the 2018-2019 tax rate of \$1.0163. She noted the Hantsport Area Rate was proposed at \$0.6123 and would now change to \$0.6329, an increase of \$0.0206. The increase in the Hantsport Area Rate allows the Hantsport Infrastructure Reserve contribution to increase by \$31,3260 to maintain the Hantsport Residential Rate of \$1.66 and therefore allows further repairs of the aging infrastructure in Hantsport.

Director Rochon reviewed the Scenario 2 budget reductions stating the tax rate would be \$1.0297, an increase of \$0.0134 from the 2018-2019 tax rate. She stated in Scenario 2 the Hantsport Area Rate would change to \$0.6123 and the Hantsport Infrastructure Reserve contribution would increase by \$29,660 to maintain the Hantsport Residential Rate of \$1.66. The Director summarized for the average property assessed at \$140,000, Scenario 1 would see an increase in taxes of \$58.40 from 2018-2019; Scenario 2 would see an increase of \$62.01.

The Director reviewed the changes to the Capital budget noting there was an addition of \$374,352 for the Sports Complex reflecting the award of the Sports Complex Request for Proposal; which brought the total change in the Capital budget to an increase of \$46,227. The changes to the Reserve budget reflected the new balances for the Gas Tax and Operating Reserve, the increase to the Hantsport Infrastructure Reserve and the Sports Complex Fundraising Reserve. She stated the Sports Complex Fundraising Reserve was changed to reflex the potential \$800,000 from the Town of Windsor which has yet to be confirmed, noting until the figures may change pending the Town of Windsor approval.

The Director clarified the amount in the Brooklyn Fire Department budget for the repeater maintenance was for the Etter Road repeater not the Provincial Willow Hill repeater, noting that REMO also has a small repeater at Etter Road that requires maintenance.

When requested by Councillor Zwicker, Director Rochon confirmed the Hantsport Fire Station was still in the Capital budget and there would be no increase in the Hantsport Residential Rate.

Councillor Monroe asked what caused the changes in the Capital budget for the Sports Complex. The Director of Finance stated after the award of the design-build Request for Proposal she was able to use actual figures.

Councillor Daniels was concerned about the elimination of the Economic Development Officer (EDO) position, noting that Coby Milne and his partner have been very involved and were networking well in the area. She informed the EDO had used information from the Hants Community Health Strategic Plan to review daycare options for the industries in the area. The Councillor stated that she felt the EDO was an asset noting that in the consolidation there would be an expectation from residents to become a more robust region and felt the EDO position should be kept in the budget so the productive work could continue.

Councillor Monroe stated after recommending cutting the position she had met with the EDO and had a meaningful discussion on how to move economic development along. She felt the EDO was moving in the right direction and it would be bad to lose the continuity.

Councillor Jannasch stated originally, he was conflicted regarding the EDO position and keeping the tax rate low. However, he now felt losing the position would be premature, noting how the EDO had looked at daycare, which is critical for a good employment climate in the region, and how the EDO was working with community groups. The Councillor agreed the EDO should be kept.

Councillor Hussey noted the purpose of an EDO is help develop the economy which takes time to do. He stated to develop the economy the EDO helps brings in new businesses which generates more business taxes and reduces residential taxes. Councillor Hussey therefore was in favor of keeping the EDO position in the budget.

Councillor Daniels suggested the EDO would be a benefit for both the Municipality and the Town of Windsor and asked if the position could be considered by the Co-ordination Committee. The CAO informed the budget for the consolidation had been set and an EDO position was not in it, so it would strictly be a West Hants position. The CAO confirmed the next Regional Council could look at all options for an EDO position and decide how best to spend their budget.

Councillor Zwicker expressed it was not the right time for an EDO especially if it meant having to increase taxes. Councillor Keith agreed and did not think the current EDO was given tools needed to perform the job to bring in businesses, such as the identification of available land.

MOVED and SECONDED that Committee of the Whole recommends that Council maintain the Economic Development Officer position to March 31, 2020.

Councillor Leopold stated she would be supporting the motion noting it just maintains the salary in the budget and if the goals were not met then current

contract could be ended. The CAO stated that ending the contract would be operational and noted that once Council gave direction through the budget, the funds are taken from the residents for the projects; and cautioned there may be a blurring the line between governance policy and operations. When asked the CAO informed the EDO operationally is under the CAO and as part of the contract deliverables have been set.

CAO Laycock went on to states goals included developing an economic development plan and noted the EDO had been working on the accelerated market readiness program through Atlantic Canada Opportunity Agency for local businesses, looking at an interchange for the Forest Lakes Development, working on the economic framework.

Councillor Zwicker asked if the Hantsport Residential Tax Rate would be the same with or without an EDO position. The Director of Finance confirmed it would remain the same, but the portion given to the Hantsport Infrastructure fund would change. CAO Laycock noted the EDO position would mean a cost of \$55,000 or approximately half a cent on the tax rate.

Motion Carried.

Councillors Zwicker, Francis, Keith and Warden Zebian voted nay.

The Director of Finance stated the revised tax rate would be \$1.0323 for Scenario 1 and the Hantsport Infrastructure contribution amount would be \$248,500.

MOVED and SECONDED that Committee of the Whole recommends that Council reduce the budget in accordance with Scenario 1 presented at the Special Committee of the Whole on April 16, 2019, without the removal of the Economic Development Officer position.

Councillor Francis was concerned with the removal of the Brooklyn Fire Department (BFD) janitorial costs as it impacted an employee that was not a Municipal employee and was concerned if BFD could re-arrange their budget to keep the employee at their current salary.

Councillor Monroe stated that she felt the funds being provided for janitorial would be enough and suggested there may have been extra requested in this budget line. Councillor Monroe went on to state that not all fire departments require a driver onsite during the day and so it equated to a paid fire position.

Councillor Keith agreed with Councillor Francis suggesting it was a slippery slope when taking money away and there is no one there to go out on a call. He stated honorarium are already low and there would be a concern that volunteers may leave. The Councillor noted the janitor has a high level of training for the position as she was trained for all the equipment. He felt it was important to have someone available to respond to calls when needed.

Councillor Leopold noted most fire departments have some sort of attended present for cleaning or attending fire calls and she did not support removing it the budget amount. She noted there had been previous presentations that spoke of difficulties in having drivers during the daytime. The Councillor asked if the line item was comparing similar items between fire departments, noting she was not present during the previous discussions.

Director Rochon noted the direction given to her by Committee of the Whole at the last discussion was to provide \$30,000 to BFD Station 1, \$15,000 to BFD Station 2 and \$15,000 to Hantsport Fire Department (HFD) for janitorial. Deputy Warden Morton inquired if the amount for HFD included janitorial funds for South West Hants Fire Department and was informed it did not.

Councillor Monroe noted that if \$15,000 was enough for HFD, then BFD Station 2 should not be double the amount and BFD Station 1 should not be four times that of HFD. She acknowledged that BFD Station 1 was larger than HFD and so it was determined they should get double the amount or \$30,000 for janitorial. The Councillor suggested that if more drivers are needed then more should be trained and that there are fire fighters that hang-around stations during the day other than the janitor.

Councillor Leopold stated a Regional Fire Study is to be done in future and that funding should be maintained until the report was finished. CAO Laycock informed that a Request for Proposal for the Regional Fire Study was being issued and the report would use a wholistic approach with a 10-year plan.

Councillor Hussey inquired where the money from fundraising was in the BFD budget and suggested if a driver was wanted it should be fundraised for or put in the budget separately. Councillor Zwicker agreed that people are at the fire stations during the day at the same time as the janitor but 2/3 of the day the station is empty, and most fires happen at night. Councillor Zwicker stated Council respected the volunteers but there needed to be checks and balances when spending public funds, so he supported keeping the janitorial cuts.

Councillor Monroe stated that she believed the amount left in the budget line for BFD Station 1 would cover the salary of the janitorial position without taking away anything. She suggested there was no explanation of what the remainder of the budget line was for. The CAO noted the letter from BFD stated the budget line included salary and benefits of \$40,500 and the remaining amount was for supplies.

Councillor Hussey asked what the statistics were for medical, motor vehicle accidents and fire calls for BFD. The REMO and Fire Services Coordinator reviewed the overall call responses for all fire departments and the detailed call statistics for BFD Stations 1 and 2 in 2018, noting there were a total of 442 calls.

The Director of Finance pointed out there was no change from last years' janitorial request for BFD Station 1, but there was an increase for BFD Station 2. If the janitorial was left the same as last year the tax rate would be \$1.0344. The increase for the average home would be \$69.36 and the Hantsport Infrastructure contribution would change to \$247,000.

CAO Laycock reviewed the motion and the budget reduction scenarios, noting the EDO position being kept. Councillor Leopold stated she would not be supporting the motion as she supported Scenario 2. She noted most budgets are frozen not usually reduced.

Motion Carried.

Councillors Leopold, Francis and Keith voted nay.

MOVED and SECONDED that Committee of the Whole recommends that Council approve the 2019-2020 operating budget as presented outlining total general rate budgeted expenses and transfers of \$16,680,647 and total area rate budgeted expenses and transfers for the community of Hantsport of \$671,547

Motion Carried.

MOVED and SECONDED that Committee of the Whole recommends that Council approve the 2019-2020 Capital budget as presented at Special Committee of the Whole on April 16, 2019.

Motion Carried.

MOVED and SECONDED that Committee of the Whole recommends, that Council approve the 2019-2020 Reserves budget as presented at Special Committee of the Whole on April 16, 2019.

Motion Carried.

MOVED and SECONDED that Committee of the Whole recommends that Council approve the 2019-2020 West Hants Water Utility budget as presented at Special Committee of the Whole on April 16, 2019.

Motion Carried.

Councillor Hussey summarized there would be a tax rate increase of about 1.6%.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The next regular Committee of the Whole will be on April 23, 2019.

7. Adjournment

MOVED and SECONDED that the meeting adjourn.

Motion Carried.

Meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Paul Morton, Chair

Rhonda Brown, Municipal Clerk