

WEST HANTS MUNICIPALITY

Committee of the Whole – Budget Meeting Agenda **AMENDED**

April 19, 2022, 5:30 p.m.

Sanford Council Chambers 76 Morison Dr, Windsor, NS

(also held via virtual via Zoom and Facebook livestreamed)

Agenda is subject to changes up to and including during the meeting



West Hants
something inspiring awaits

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1. Call to Order
 2. Attendance
 3. Approval of the Agenda, including additions or deletions
 4. Declaration(s) of Conflict of Interest
 5. Announcements
 6. 5:30-5:45 Summary of Previous Day
 7. 5:45-6:30 **Department of Community Development**
 7. 6:30-7:15 General Government Services
 - a. Office of the CAO
 - b. Department of Financial Services
 - c. **Information Technology Services Motion**
 - d. **Recommendation Report – Banking Services**
 - ~~e. Recommendation Report – Banking Services~~
 - ~~d. Information Technology Services Motion~~
 - e. Tax Exemption List Review and Motion
 8. 7:15-7:45 Department of Planning and Development
 9. 7:45-8:30 Break / **MEETING ADJOURNED DUE TO AN EXTENDED POWER OUTAGE (9:00 p.m.)**
 - ~~10. 7:45-8:30 Department of Community Development~~
 - ~~11. 8:30-9:45 Department of Public Works-(Power Outage)~~
 - ~~12. 9:45-10:00 Discussion & Direction from Council (Power Outage)~~
 13. Next Meeting Date / Adjournment
 - a. Committee of the Whole Budget Meeting April 20, 2022, at 5:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order – Mayor Zebian called the meeting to order at 5:32pm

2. Attendance

Council

Abraham Zebian, Mayor

Rupert Jannasch, Councillor, Dist. 1

Mark McLean, Councillor, Dist. 3

Debbie Francis, Councillor, Dist. 5

Ed Sherman, Councillor, Dist. 7

Laurie Murley, Councillor, Dist. 10

Paul Morton, Deputy Mayor, Dist. 8

Scott McLean, Councillor, Dist. 2

Jeff Hartt, Councillor, Dist. 4

Bob Morton, Councillor, Dist. 6

John A. Smith, Councillor, Dist. 9

Jim Ivey, Councillor, Dist. 11

(Councillors Scott McLean and Smith and Deputy Mayor Morton running a few minutes late)

Staff:

Mark Phillips, CAO

Todd Richard, Dir. Public Works

Madelyn LeMay, Dir. Planning &
Development

Shelleena Thornton, Municipal Operations
Supervisor

Carlee Rochon, Dir. Financial Services

Kathy Kehoe, Dir. Community Development

Diana Gibson, Mgr. Accounting & Financial
Reporting

Carmen Dewar-Miller, Admin Assistant,
Financial Services

3. Approval of the Agenda, including additions or deletions

Agenda was amended as follows:

- Item #10 is being moved ahead of item #7
- Original item #7c will become item #7d and item #7d will be item #7c
- No further amendments

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS MORTON AND FRANCIS THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED AS AMENDED. MOTION CARRIED.

4. Declaration(s) of Conflict of Interest

Councillor Murley advised of a conflict of interest with new agenda item #7d.

5. Announcements

- Mayor Zebian acknowledged that West Hants Regional Municipality recognizes that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people and that this land is governed by the treaties of Peace and Friendship signed in 1726. We also recognize that we are all treaty people and have responsibilities to each other and this land.

6. Summary of Previous Day

Director Rochon reviewed previous budget day highlights, including the majority of the Capital Budget (excluding Fire), Reserve Budget and General Revenues and Expenses.

7. Department of Community Development (CD)

Director Rochon reviewed this department with input from Director Kehoe

Discussion Points

- Each department's salaries and benefits are computed into general rate expenses. Reference Appendix 16, p. 101 for detailed breakdown. Each section (e.g. Rec Admin, Parks and Grounds, Swimming Pool, etc.), within CD has a separate salary account.
- Increases in insurance, HMCC area rate, training, and conference costs, HMCC grant are driving numbers up. The pool is seeing insurance and power increase.
- There is a decrease in water and sewer based on actual usage in previous years.
- The new CD front-mount mower and loader are leased. They would allow for current and future work to be completed more efficiently. This equipment would only be used by Parks and Grounds.
- There was a piece of equipment within the capital budget (previously approved in 2019), that would hit the operating budget. There was also larger equipment that met our capital requirements.
- The 2019 capital item truck in the operating budget was a purchase, not a lease. An annual repayment of an internal loan.
- Bike racks fall under the Active Transportation section of the budget, under Programs. Director Kehoe was not sure if bicycle racks are included in this budget, she can check.
- The loader included in the CD budget would replace an older model Coyote tractor, which does not have quick-attach attachments. Working towards acquiring equipment that can be used interchangeably.
- The proposed capital budget flail mower for Public Works is separate and will be used for side roads, ditches, easements and right of ways at the watersheds.
- Last year snow removal at the Sports Complex was tendered out. This was due to capacity and current workload.
- Revenue from Sports Complex sponsorship found on page 107 of the detailed budget - sponsorship money is transferred to a reserve. This is well within the advertising

section of the budget. Around \$35,000 from advertising and sponsorship. Track sponsorship will be realized within this fiscal year.

- Our new Manager of Parks and Recreation Facilities will be looking after sponsorship.
- The position created to support economic development in Windsor and Hantsport will be partially funded by the Windsor Township and Hantsport Business Society. The position will be shared between the two groups, possibly a 70/30 or 60/40 split.
- Riverbank, Maplewood Cemeteries funded through Hantsport and Windsor area rates.
- Sales and care of cemetery lots have increased, burial fees have decreased. Many current burials are for cremations, generating less revenue. Volume is down slightly but still comparable to last year.

At the end of the CD presentation Director Rochon referenced one additional item that has been at discussion of Council (no accompanying slide prepared). The Municipality is in discussion with the Newport GFL Rink Commission regarding their funding request. (Similar to Dial-A-Ride.)

Staff are reviewing financials and will prepare a report for Council for consideration through the grant process. There will be a recommendation for a funding agreement (including conditions), to be funded through the operating reserve for this year. Some requirements still to be met which is why it is not included in the budget package.

The rink group want to maintain board independence. A financial snapshot of the past five years showed a substantial loss of over \$65,000 to the organization. Under expenditures it was noted that their repair and maintenance increased substantially in 2021 which also influenced their net loss. Ice rental revenue has been consistent as has government assistance in the form of funding. For reference, County of Kings provides a flat amount of \$10,000 to each of their five rinks as a level of support. As policy, Colchester County provides support to their rinks for capital projects, but not operating costs. Community Development is looking to Council to provide direction.

Discussion Points

- Timeline expectations would be to bring this forward in May with the grants.
- Should we be identifying other organizations that may become line items?
- We have been dealing with larger funding requests as regular one-off's which fall outside of the grants policy. Council has taken the time to look at them that way. It can be explored as a policy or policy amendment in future.
- For swimming, recreation, and sports complex, more than the 5.7% cost of living referenced (running to 22%-27%).
- There is no year-round component at the pool, all lifeguards, pool manager and cashiers are seasonal. Within the pool section of the budget, the increase is based on

staff to swimmer ratios and specific safety situations. Last year there were no lessons. This year they are looking for capacity to offer lessons which means hiring more staff, typically students (10 – 15 staff, not all seasonal full-time).

- We need a policy to be fair to everyone on larger funding agreements. We need to ask for specifics along the same lines as Dial-A-Ride.
- This year, sponsorship should be a priority.
- Under the Sports Complex for full time - sick and vacation time is now all included in one line. Union benefit agreements and cost of living weigh in.
- There has been no change in staff complement at the Sports Complex. Two full time staff there year-round plus seasonal customer service. The season was extended to roughly 30 weeks of work for seasonal staff with the facility closing on May 1.
- Community Development has 12 full time employees. Youth could be a bit higher in a normal year. Parks and Grounds - approx. 8, Program Staff – 10, Welcome Centre 3-4, Cemeteries – 3 (during summer), some seasonal work through the year for programs.
- This year we were able to extend the Sports Complex season a little bit longer. Opening earlier than October would depend on rentals.
- Full-time staff take vacation in off-season and support other areas as needed; primary function is at the Sports Complex. Maintenance is performed during summer months.
- General use opening only if warranted as track was not well-utilized last summer.

8. General Government Services

Director Rochon reviewed this section with input from CAO Phillips and Manager Gibson. Includes Office of the CAO, Legislation and Financial Services (including IT Services).

a. Office of the CAO

Discussion Points

- CAO pension agreements were discussed. The length of these agreements varies. Some agreements extend spouses. Do not apply to all former CAOs (historical).

b. Department of Financial Services

12 employees plus one IT Specialist and one IT Consultant.

Discussion Points

- Cost of living, benefits, overtime costs, pro-rated salaries, a 10-month term relating to maternity leave
- Credit card fees go into financial services charges – annual fees for using and accepting.
- Credit cards are reconciled monthly. Each charge on the card gets coded to the best-suited account. Paid through our banking.
- We accept credit card payment for Planning and Development services only.

- We do not accept credit card payment for water or taxes. This was a decision made by the former West Hants Council based on fees charged.
- Each of the directors except for Planning & Development have credit cards. The Director of Finance's card is kept in the Municipal vault (shared with Planning, IT, Finance and General CAO costs).
- Credit card limits are set at \$20,000 except for the Director of Finance's card which has a \$40,000 limit because it's used more widely.
- Admins match up receipts and invoices. Manager Gibson oversees reconciliation and ensures approvals. Limits can be increased if needed, with proper approvals.
- No reward points collected with our credit cards. Not available to our organization.
- Every purchase made via credit card requires a PO.
- Water utilities, fire departments, Sports Complex and pool are all identifiable insurances that can be broken out within their respective departments.
- Liability and general coverage goes in this line (including fraud), for more broad stroke coverage.
- Not sure if Cyber insurance is part of our current policy but can be checked. Something to be considered as part of our annual review. There might be a focus on cyber security within the NSFM insurance program.
- The Comms budget includes radio, newsletters, flyer ads, mandated communications (CAO's Office, Financial Services, By-law), marketing, and PR items for events.
- Planning and Water would have line items for their mandated comms.
- The CAO's office and Community Economic Development are the only two departments with their own marketing and PR
- Costs for hardware and software both went up significantly (Appendix 14)
- Increased hardware costs due to lack of availability of equipment, we are not buying more. Council chambers equipment upgrades will improve online public presence. Network maintenance costs have increased slightly.
- Most subscription software has an annual increase.
- VCFN was already addressed, it is a general expense. Fibre network maintenance is no longer an expense in our budget. The overall fee to VCFN hasn't changed.
- The internet fee that we pay to VCFN is in the IT budget.
- Separate connections to facilities are paid for by the facilities.
- We are not fully implemented with the new asset management software. We do not want to lose the valuable HIPPO information so it will be kept up for now.

c. Information Technology Services Motion

Director Rochon presented the following motion:

Committee of the Whole recommends that ...

Council approves the renewal five-year Information Technology Services Contract with Custom Page Media and Consultant Inc., ending March 31, 2027, as presented in the 2022-23 Budget presentations on April 19, 2022

Discussion Items

- IT services are delivered through a contract, found on p. 98
- Five-year is the standard contract for us.
- We have one full-time in-house IT specialist and one consultant overseeing two separate areas of IT. The consultant handles software and implementation, connectivity and everyday service. The specialist handles hardware, network and emergency services
- Custom Page Media is the name of contracted employee's company.
- The consultant is paid bi-weekly. Going forward, cost of living is going up, pay will be adjusted yearly to a max of 1.5%
- There are no benefits associated with this contract.
- Consultant's services include on-call, not a typical 8:30-4:30 position. The rate is per hour based on demand. A set number of hours (27 per week) within the contract. Could be some deviation depending on projects.
- There is a clause in the agreement that after March 31, 2027, the contract can be renewed annually. The agreement includes a six-month notice to terminate.
- Council would like time to review this contract and vote tomorrow night. Director Rochon will email the contract and address any questions at tomorrow's meeting.

d. Recommendation Report – Banking Services

Manager Gibson reviewed this report

Discussion Items

- Regarding this particular contract, we looked more at the disruption that switching to a new banking services contract would cause so soon after consolidation.
- If we went out to tender, we would certainly be looking at the best rates offered
- Through consolidation there was research done when the original five-year contract was proposed
- Through dissolution processes in the past, we have run two banks. For investment purposes we do have the flexibility to shop around
- Our procurement policy does speak to these kinds of agreements and going out to tender after a certain period of time

- A year will be an appropriate amount of time. This will take two to three months to RFP and nine months to implement
- We expect the RFP process to be in April 2024, following budget

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS FRANCIS AND SHERMAN THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDS THAT COUNCIL APPROVES EXTENDING THE CURRENT SERVICE AGREEMENT WITH THE ROYAL BANK OF CANADA FOR BANKING SERVICES FOR AN ADDITIONAL TWO YEARS, ENDING MARCH 31, 2025. MOTION CARRIED.

e. Tax Exemption List Review and Motion

Manager Gibson provided a policy refresher and reviewed the report

Discussion Items

- This report is separate from the budget package.
- Some halls qualify for 100% exemption. Some get reclassified from commercial to residential (non-profit commercial).
- Clarification was requested on the Newport Station properties. We have received their Registry of Joint Stocks. We are missing a letter that shows that they are continuing with the same type of use. One hall has been sold, neither of these are that hall.
- The AR Clerk has notified them of the June 1 deadline
- With regard to the Town of Windsor's prior practice, it was confirmed that those organizations still qualify for grants
- If you are on the list, you will receive a letter each year. If your group is not on the list, you have to reach out.

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR IVEY AND DEPUTY MAYOR MORTON THAT, "BE IT RESOLVED THAT SCHEDULES A, B AND C OF THE ANNUAL TAX EXEMPTION PROPERTY LISTING FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023 BE APPROVED AS PRESENTED." MOTION CARRIED.

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR IVEY AND DEPUTY MAYOR MORTON THAT, "BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT NEWPORT STATION COMMUNITY HALL SOCIETY BE GRANTED AN EXTENSION TO JUNE 1, 2022, TO SUBMIT THEIR OPERATIONAL LETTER FOR EXEMPTION." MOTION CARRIED.

9. Department of Planning and Development (P&D)

Director Rochon reviewed this section with input from Director LeMay. This department is made up of P&D, Building Inspection and By-law.

Discussion Points

- The MCCAP position is for a summer intern. There is discussion around having a dedicated employee under their direction, employing their strategy. Recommendation of committee, nothing has come to Council yet. Employee would fall under Planning and Development
- Regarding the additional P&D positions- it is one new position, one existing position
- 15 P&D employees
- MCCAP Committee grant is only for 50% of salary. 50% is included in this budget under Federal / Provincial grant funding
- The electric vehicle lease is funded under Capital out of Revenue for \$10,000
- We did lease a vehicle for P&D last year
- A third vehicle only provides for three out of four officials.
- Mileage payout has been considered, but new vehicle is more cost-effective
- To be determined where an electric vehicle would be charged. MCCAP is looking at the installation of EC Stations, will be based on that decision.
- Electric vehicles are more expensive to lease.
- Cost is an estimate, research being done. Manager has not yet reached a conclusion.
- We do have relatively new vehicles which are more fuel efficient.
- Prosecuting attorney costs paid to the Department of Justice, based on previous year.
- By-law salary would be for two employees. CPP, EI, Workers' Comp, Benefits, Insurance, Pension changes, adjustments (in responsibilities, job tasks) all contribute to salary and benefits increases
- There has to be progression related to compensation.
- Temporary increase in Development Officers is due to succession planning.
- One Development Officer will begin the first week in May. Still short a building official (replacement)

10. Break at 7:50 p.m. for 30 minutes.

During the break, an extended power outage caused the meeting to be adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

11. Next Meeting Date will be April 20, 2022, at 5:30 p.m.

X

Mayor Abraham Zebian

X

Deanna Snair, Municipal Clerk