

WEST HANTS MUNICIPALITY
Committee of the Whole – Budget Meeting Agenda
April 13, 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



-
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 Introduction and Overview of 2022-2023 Budget
Mark Phillips & Carlee Rochon
 7. 5:45-6:45 General Revenues and Expenses
 8. 6:45-7:30 Reserve Budget Overview
 9. 7:30-8:00 Break
 10. 8:00-9:45 Capital Budget Overview
 11. 9:45-10:00 Discussion & Direction from Council
 12. Next Meeting Date / Adjournment
 - a. Committee of the Whole Budget Meeting April 19, 2022, at 5:30p.m.

1. Call to Order – Mayor Zebian called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.
2. Attendance – all in attendance (*Councillor Bob Morton running late*)

Council

Abraham Zebian, Mayor	Paul Morton, Deputy Mayor, Dist. 8
Rupert Jannasch, Councillor, Dist. 1	Scott McLean, Councillor, Dist. 2
Mark McLean, Councillor, Dist. 3	Jeff Hartt, Councillor, Dist. 4
Debbie Francis, Councillor, Dist. 5	Bob Morton, Councillor, Dist. 6
Ed Sherman, Councillor, Dist. 7	John A. Smith, Councillor, Dist. 9
Laurie Murley, Councillor, Dist. 10	Jim Ivey, Councillor, Dist. 11

Staff:

Mark Phillips, CAO	Carlee Rochon, Dir. Financial Services
Todd Richard, Dir. Public Works	Kathy Kehoe, Dir. Community Development
Madelyn LeMay, Dir. Planning & Development	Diana Gibson, Mgr. Accounting & Financial Reporting
Shelleena Thornton, Municipal Operations Supervisor	Carmen Dewar-Miller, Admin Assistant, Financial Services

3. Approval of the Agenda, including additions or deletions
MOVED BY DEPUTY MAYOR MORTON AND COUNCILLOR SHERMAN THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED. MOTION CARRIED.
4. Declaration(s) of Conflict of Interest - None
5. Announcements
Mayor Zebian acknowledged that West Hants Regional Municipality recognizes that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the unceded ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq people.
6. Introduction and Overview of 2022-2023 Budget
CAO Phillips gave a brief introduction. Director Rochon reviewed the evening's budget agenda.

7. General Revenues and Expenses (Operating Budget)

Director Rochon reviewed the Operating Budget.

Staff is recommending the following:

- no change in the residential tax rate for 2022-23
- a \$0.05 reduction in Windsor's commercial tax rate
- no change for the West Hants and Hantsport commercial tax rates

Discussion Points:

- Clarification on overall and average PVSC residential assessment increase percentages in the region was provided.
- Comparing budget to budget, not using actuals. Will this create a bigger surplus than forecast?
- There is risk associated with forecasting deed transfer and we are not budgeting for double equalization.
- CPI, NS Power, insurance have all seen increases, as has debt servicing for projects.
- A request for more realistic numbers and for expenses driven down by at least 3%.
- Staff budgets to zero, does not chase peaks and valleys when creating the budget. Not enough history (3-5 years) established as a new entity.

8. Reserve Budget Overview

Director Rochon reviewed the Reserve Budget.

Discussion Points:

- If no transfer from WH Operating Reserve, West Hants would see a tax increase.
- Reserve budgets are healthy. Over the next few years, Council should focus on Capital reserves and look to increase contributions or explore funding strategies.
- Increase in amount proposed to be spent from the operating reserve due mainly to budgeting for a full year of costs related to two municipal complexes.
- Budget surplus based on projection to month ending Feb. 28th. Need to factor in March and fiscal year-end transfers. Based on projection we have 1.2 million being contributed to the operating reserve from the operating budget.
- Council previously denied a request to transfer to capital reserves.
- Reserve balances based on projections used to highlight proposed additions and expenses in the upcoming year.
- Some line items formerly part of the operating reserve were reclassified as the result of first audit. Fire Reserve falls under Capital Reserve now. Cemetery reserve is a restricted reserve, related to investment and should be treated differently.
- Dissolution /consolidation reserves are restricted.

9. Capital Budget Overview

Director Rochon reviewed the Capital Budget.

Discussion Items:

- Detail provided on carry forward items, seasonal community decorations, Sports Complex upgrades, MCCAP solar project, wheelchair ramp, Hants Aquatic Centre, two gazebos in Windsor, Old Parish Cemetery.
- Carry forward items could be due to RFPs coming in higher than anticipated, revisiting scope and potential funding sources, supply chain delays, reduced capacity, increases in cost. Staff are driven to complete projects.
- Explanation as to what constitutes a capital improvement. Not an arbitrary decision.
- Repair versus replacement was explained as related to two funding sources for the gazebos.
- Asset management software will help track costs and offer predictability.
- Public Works and Community Development have shared trucks in the past, as required.
- Explanation of bigger Sewer Utility spends in Windsor 24/25 and WH 25/26, detail provided on Lagoon Drive study, the condition and number of CSO's in Hantsport.
- Clarification provided on Cunnabel Creek – it is stormwater-related (charged to roads).
- TMP booster station should be completed in next 4-8 weeks.
- Additional information provided on water storage tank, Wentworth Road water main replacement project and sluice gate carryover.
- Concern expressed regarding implementation of electronic water meter reading system for Windsor as related to cost.
- King St. N. parking, Public Works facility and municipal complex budget items were discussed.
- Concern expressed regarding inclusion of municipal complex sale / renovations as line items in budget without a committee report / recommendation for Council to review.
- Questions were answered regarding the street sweeper / flail mower, related machinery currently on hand, the hydraulic lift, trial brine system, security gates and municipal fleet.
- Avondale boat launch and Hobart's Beach projects are over budget, costs are higher.
- There was a request for the total number of vehicles per department and how this number compared to pre-consolidation fleet numbers.
- Prioritization of Roads projects over five years was reviewed. Based on condition, services in the ground, ratings of asphalt. No sidewalk rehab scheduled but could be added at Council's discretion.
- Cunnabel Creek engineering costs were discussed. Reiteration that this project has no sewer component. Waiting to hear on funding applications for Stannus Street (mostly federal).
- There was an expression of interest in having up to two more traffic radar signs added.

- Once money is borrowed from MFC, it's a set rate for the term of the load. Resolutions state, "Up to a maximum of 5%" and we use 4.5% with a potential of 0.5% variance. Not much risk.
- No communications from MFC regarding changes to interest rates. Fall debenture is coming, we can revisit the most recent resolution.
- Debt ratio is projected to cross the yellow line this year. Sewer is part of the debt ratio. Not water utilities.
- The Porter's Avenue rehab could potentially be done in-house at a large cost savings.
- MFC borrowing process happens after a project is completed. No third party borrowing between debenture calls. We do have temporary borrowing resolution through Council
- Cunnabel Creek is a stand-alone Public Works line item, not a road rehab, no borrowing for this project reflected in debt ratio.
- Debt ratio not projected further than 23/24 due to loss of accuracy. Looking ahead you must consider maturing debt and potential for new funding sources.
- Rate of interest does not change if debt ratio goes up.

10. Discussion & Direction from Council

Discussion Points

- Next would be deliberation and direction as related to the Capital budget.
- Staff need to know how to proceed with any suggested changes (additions, deletions).
- Council needs time to review what has been presented thus far.
- Council would like to see the operating budget presented, then revisit capital.

11. Next Meeting Date / Adjournment

The next Committee of the Whole Budget Meeting will be held on April 19, 2022, at 5:30p.m.

**MOVED BY COUNCILLORS HARTT AND SCOTT MCLEAN THAT THE MEETING BE ADJOURNED.
MOTION CARRIED.**

Meeting adjourned at 10:02 p.m.

Mayor Abraham Zebian

Deanna Snair, Exec. Assistant/Municipal Clerk