

WEST HANTS MUNICIPALITY
Committee of the Whole – Budget Meeting Agenda
May 21, 2024, 5:15 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



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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. 5:15-6:00 Protective Services – Part 1
 - a. Royal Canadian Mounted Police
 - b. West Hants Ground Search and Rescue
 - c. Emergency Management Office
 7. 6:00-6:45 Water Utilities
 - a. Operating Budgets
 - b. Capital Budgets
 9. 6:45-7:15 Break
 10. 7:15-8:15 Protective Services – Part 2
 - a. Fire Protection
 - i. Operating Budgets
 - ii. Capital Budgets
 11. 8:15-8:45 Department of Public Works
 - a. Sewer System
 12. 8:45-10:00 Discussion & Direction from Council
 14. Next Meeting Date / Adjournment
 - a. Committee of the Whole Budget Meeting Monday, May 27, 2024, at 5:15 p.m.

1. **Call to Order** – Deputy Mayor Paul Morton called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

2. **Attendance**

Council

Abraham Zebian, Mayor	Paul Morton, Deputy Mayor Dist. 8
Rupert Jannasch, Councillor Dist. 1	Bob Morton, Councillor Dist. 6 (6:24 p.m.)
Scott McLean, Councillor Dist. 2 (5:18 p.m.)	Ed Sherman, Councillor Dist. 7
Mark McLean, Councillor Dist. 3 (5:22 p.m.)	John Smith, Councillor Dist. 9
Jeff Hartt, Councillor Dist. 3	Laurie Murley, Councillor Dist. 10
Debbie Francis, Councillor Dist. 5	Jim Ivey, Councillor Dist. 11

Staff

Mark Phillips, CAO	Deanna Snair, Exec. Asst/ Clerk
Carlie Rochon, Dir. Financial Services	Sara Poirier, Dir. Planning and Development
Todd Richard, Dir. Public Works	Kevin Bennet, Manager of Parks and Facilities

Regrets:

Shelleena Thornton, Municipal Operations Supervisor
Kathy Kehoe, Dir. Community Development

Presenters:

Staff Sgt David Ferguson, RCMP
Kyla McDow, Senior Financial Analysts, RCMP
Liam Fraser, West Hants Ground Search and Rescue

3. **Approval of the Agenda, including additions or deletions (5:16 p.m.)**

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS FRANCIS AND SHERMAN THAT THE 2024-05-21 SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE BUDGET AGENDA BE APPROVED. MOTION CARRIED

4. **Declaration(s) of Conflict of Interest (5:16 p.m.) - None**

5. **Announcements (5:16 p.m.)**

Deputy Mayor P. Morton acknowledged that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People and this land is governed by the treaties of Peace and Friendship signed in 1726. West Hants Regional Municipality also recognizes that we are all treaty people and have responsibilities to this land and each other. West Hants Regional Municipality also recognizes African Nova Scotians are a distinct people whose history, legacies, and contributions have enriched that part of Mi'kma'ki known as Nova Scotia for over 400 years.

6. **Protective Services Part 1**

a) Royal Canadian Mounted Police (5:17 p.m.)

Director Rochon highlighted the previous year had a budget error (the provincial portion of the RCMP was not included). Changes within the Multi-year financial plan included:

- Removing two (2) vehicles and two (2) ATV's.
- Addition of car video systems and car video system infrastructure.
- Removed a live scan unit.

Staff Sgt David Ferguson reviewed the West Hants RCMP 2024-25 Financial estimates and multi-year financial plan outlining the projects costs for policing services in West Hants. The full multi-year plan was not available at the time of the meeting, but it would be updated as soon as all the financial components were available.

Human Resources – there are 22 established municipal positions (WHRM pays for these). Three (3) additional positions are provincially funded (additional officer program) with no additional costs to WHRM. The vacant positions, special member leave, parental leave or suspensions (anything over 30 days sick leave) were not billable to WHRM.

Utilization in 2023/24 = 18.13 due to periods of vacancies and special leave, which resulted in a reduced amount billed to WHRM. The estimated average pay for an RCMP officer represents the total human resourcing amount divided by the regular member utilization (\$147,173).

The 2024-25 year (\$3,535,981) included a 3.5% estimated salary increase/year. The current bargaining agreement expired March 31, 2023, it went to arbitration and an award was rendered April 16, 2024. The second collective agreement covered a two (2) year period starting April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2025, once signed, it will be in effect.

Accommodation Operating and Maintenance – WHRM was responsible for providing accommodations for policing services (rent was charged at 100% to WHRM). The rental rate was set every 5 years, 2022-23 was the beginning of the 5-year cycle. WHRM was charged a proportional share based on the 24 municipal funded police officers.

The increase in contracted services and minor repairs was related to “options analysis” (property management and maintenance of the building was contracted out to another company on ways to deal with the HVAC unit (repair or replace it). \$30,000 was charged to WHRM as a result of this analysis. It was determined the entire unit would need to be replaced, the costs were built into the formula that is charged on an annual basis.

Equipment – Criminal Operations accounted for firearms, ammunition and intervention equipment. Beginning in 2023-24 firearms, ammunition and weapons included equipment related to the roll out of police modernization equipment.

The TMR 2 radio system is used (pay a proportional share of the costs) and computer equipment replacement was based on a four (4) year cycle. Due to the condition of the current fleet and looking at spreading out the replacement schedule; two vehicles were deferred.

The amount for firearms, ammunition, and weapons in 2023-24 included carbines and tasers. Increases were a result of the need to purchase six (6) additional carbines (to meet national standards/guidelines), purchase of tasers (roll out of the new taser sevens) as well as the infrastructure to support them and yearly billing associated with tasers.

The 2024-25 investigational aids included portable ballistic shields and breaching tools. These tools were not currently in the RCMP's possession.

The radio, mobiles and computer equipment estimates included computer equipment evergreening with the in-car video system and infrastructure. Several RCMP vehicles have dated car video equipment that is no longer serviceable.

Divisional administration and Other Costs – include WHRM's proportional share of program costs and pooled costs (members on special leave, health costs as well as payout leave upon retirement) pertaining to administration of the police force.

Division specific costs (related to programs within the division within the province) include pool programs and program costs for units (finance, human resources, records, information management, information technology and communications).

Region specific costs include the pooled and program costs for units such as procurement, fleet business systems and facilities management.

Consolidated services costs include program costs for units associated with pay and compensation, accounting operations and employee assistance.

The increase within the other O&M operations and maintenance costs in 2022-23 to 2023-24 was primarily driven by two members joining the detachment (experienced officer program) and were required to be outfitted with all their equipment, kit and clothing.

There was also an increase seen in travel and training related costs.

Special Initiatives - body worn cameras were being rolled out (this fiscal year) for every active police officer in West Hants. \$3,000/frontline member. Some of the infrastructure equipment related to body worn cameras has already been implemented. Body worn cameras were initially included in the 2023/24 projected costs, but they did not come to fruition resulting in no costs associated to the body worn camera initiatives in the previous fiscal year.

Financial summary – the cost estimate for the 2024/25 year was \$5,650,801, with the Federal cost share being (10%) \$570,631.

Discussion Points:

- There was a direct correlation between the utilization of the members seen that directly impacts the overtime budget. In order to mitigate the issue of staff being on leave, often shifts are backfilled (paying members overtime) in order to provide an acceptable level of service. Sometimes these shifts are filled by members from other detachments resulting in case files not being carried through by the same officer, which increases the workload for remaining detachment members.
- The Reservist program (retired RCMP members come back on a contract basis) was being discussed as an option to lessen these impacts. Another discussion occurring was looking at potentially modifying the schedule to have members on duty and reduce overtime costs as well as limit the number of officers brought in from outside detachments. There were concerns with this as members may not receive adequate time off and potentially negatively impact their mental wellbeing.

b) West Hants Ground Search and Resue (GSAR) (5:42 p.m.)

Liam Fraser, president of the West Hants Ground Search and Rescue presented their request for operational and capital funding.

The group was requesting support for a \$26,715 operational budget (maintain current standards and pay the bills- heat, lights, utilities, snow removal, maintaining current serviceable vehicles, training for current and new members).

With respect to Capital, the group was requesting \$119,455 to support a new roof (\$9,200) for their building, two (2) additional real time tracking radios (currently only have five as one is likely to be unrepairable), Starlink to assist with communication issues, the remaining funding (\$13,000) for a pneumatic communications tower (have a grant that currently covers 75% of the costs including installation), an additional AED, training radios and to replace their 2006 Dodge truck (inspection is due in June and it will not pass, they received two (2) quotes and provided the information for Councils consideration).

Current provincial funding amounts to \$3,000/year and municipal funding amounts to \$8,500/year.

EMO Coordinator Thornton noted what other municipalities were doing in relation to funding GSAR groups. County of Kings provides just under \$39,000/year for operating and \$15,500/year for capital and have a ten (10) year agreement in place and increases yearly based on CPI. The Municipality of Colchester provides \$35,000/year for operating and \$11,000/year for fleet, equipment, building, liability, insurance, and personal private insurance. East Hants provides \$28,000/year in support.

Discussion Points:

- Support and appreciation were expressed for all the work the volunteer group does.
- The purchase of a truck would not be financed as it would not be an asset owned by WHRM. The purchase would be funded similar to a grant and the funded would be provided based on the quotes received.
- There are 38 members in good standing, approximately six (6) new members have joined since last fall. There are currently 15-20 people who have expressed interest in joining.
- CCBF was not able to be used as the roof was not a new build. Although two (2) years ago, CCBF added fire services to the list of eligible criteria (not all protective services).
- Staff have put forward the ask of \$26,715 for operation and the ask of \$119,455 for capital within the proposed budget, if there was support for a longer-term funding agreement, a motion to enter into a funding agreement would be available for Council to consider. Should GSAR be incorporated similar to the fire service, they would be required to follow the same annual recording requirements as fire departments. *There was value in having a further discuss on the matter towards the end of budget deliberations. *
- GSAR was involved in project lifesaver. Two (2) of their current radios remain at the base in case there is a need for project lifesaver. All contact information can be found at Nova Scotia Project Lifesaver Association.

c) Emergency Management Office (6:05 p.m.)

Director Rochon and EMO Coordinator Thornton provided a high-level overview of the proposed budget. The increases within the expenses were associated with staff time allocated to the

departments and the increase in expenses was associated with additional communications (newsletters and exercises) based on the direction of Council for increased communications to the public.

Discussion Points:

- The increase in the salary expense line was due to a higher percentage of staff time being allocated to EMO (these change from year to year based on the needs).
- Questions were raised on what was not going to be done due to the reallocation of staff time. The allocation of time and salary for the EMO coordinator was split between Governance and EMO office. The change would see a reduction within the Department of Administration and Governance and an increase in EMO management.
- Two (2) EMO independent newsletters/year were being proposed as well as a large quantity of printed resources for community outreach sessions. Current printing is done inhouse, it would be more affordable to have this outsourced.

7. **Water Utilities** – two (2) separate budgets were being presented as the UARB have not made a ruling on the application to consolidate the water utilities or the new rates. If the UARB voted to consolidate the utilities, the date the approval was effective would be when the utilities were combined within the budget.

a. Operating Budgets (6:09 p.m.)

West Hants

- Decreases in Administration & General were due to a reduction in administration and professional services.
- Increases in Operation labour and supervision were due to CPI, benefit changes and reallocation of staff time within Public Works.
- Increases in water treatment were associated with the cost increase for power usage and chemicals.

Discussion Points:

- The largest variance in the decline in revenue (reduction) was associated to the “other revenue” line. Bulk water sales were included in the “other revenue line”. Last year \$161,000 was budgeted for these sales, based off of projections from earlier in this year and the financial updates, the amount was closer to \$73,000.
- Prior to the rate increase, sales of bulk water were run through the municipal office (bulk water station was not on the utility) and done through a token system (a token got so much water). The move of the system over to the utility was a similar process (purchase water through a card reader system). These numbers were based off of sales occurring at the front counter where bulk water haulers purchase their credit amounts.
- A variety of factors such as rain fall amounts or lack of these impact bulk water sales
- A lot of residential builds have not come online where an increase in water consumption would be seen yet.
- Industrial and Commercial usage would see the larger volume users.
- New development and residents converting their systems were looking at water conservation (low flow faucets and toilets).

- Staff were also in the process of doing an American Water Works Association (AWWA) audit to determine the volume of non-revenue water being used to reflect increased accuracy.
- The 2.9% fire protection and sprinkler services reduction were associated to the budget error that occurred last year.
- The utility was projecting a loss for 2024/25; less water sales, more expenses (human resources, chemicals, facility and insurance costs were increasing).
- A standing offer is used to purchase chemicals.

West Hants Water Debt – as of March 31, 2023 the outstanding long term debt was \$635,850.

- Within the 2023-24 year a new loan was added for a 2023 Ford Transit van and was split between the utilities.
- No debts were scheduled to retire in 2023/24 or 2024/25.
- Debt servicing equated to 2.8% of the total operating and non-operating expenses of the utility.

Windsor – adjustments within revenue were based off of where actuals were.

- Decreases in Administration & General were due to a reduction in administration, professional services and taxes.
- Increases in Operation labour and supervision were due to CPI, benefit changes and reallocation of staff time within Public Works.
- Decreases in non operating expenses were associated with the debenture maturing in 2023/24.
- Increases in water treatment were associated with the cost increase for power usage, fuel, insurance and chemicals. There was also a billing discrepancy from Nova Scotia Power (from 1P to 3P – highlighted during the financial update), which was also driving power costs up within the water treatment line.

Discussion Points:

- The largest variance in the reduction in revenue sales (-10.7%) was associated to “other revenue” and interest in customer accounts as well as the operating revenue. The West Hants service charge (WH base rate - \$113,993) was previously included in that line and now it is included in the water rate sales.
- The 94.7% variance within the presentation was an error.
- There were also decreases seen within water consumption and the decreases within the Three Mile Plains water utility.
- The 4.7% sprinkler services reduction were associated to the budget error that occurred last year.
- The 50% reduction forecasted on sale of water from the Windsor utility to Three Mile Plains utility was based (what was going through the metre at the five backroad) on where the usage was currently at (the estimates from the study were not used). The volume was much lower. There was also a corresponding increase at the Underwood Road metre as well.

- All the bulk metres were recently tested for accuracy. The Underwood metre was 100% accurate, the Back Road metre (most of the water flows through this metre) was noted to be 90% accurate resulting in 10% of the water flowing through the meter was unaccounted for – not registering on the meter (staff were looking to replace this meter) and the Wentworth Road meter was 93% accurate and the Dill Road metre was 94-95% accurate. In addition, hydraulics were being tested to ensure all water flowing into Three Mile Plains system was captured.
- Questions were raised as to how billings were happening based on adjustments made rather than what was flowing through the metre.
- The credit issued was related to a decimal point reading error on the system. Meters vary in decimal place readings (factor of 10 of a factor of 100); they are not the same.

West Hants Water Debt - as of March 31, 2023 the outstanding long term debt was \$567,577.

- One (1) debenture retired in 2023/24 for the Water Treatment plant.
- Within the 2023-24 year a new loan was added for a 2023 Ford Transit van and was split between the utilities.
- No debts were scheduled to retire in 2024/25.
- Debt servicing equated to 3.6% of the total operating and non-operating expenses of the utility.

Water Utilities 5 Year Capital

- Utilities represent 20.5% (\$28.1 million) of the 5-year Capital (6.9% (\$9.5 million) was West Hants and 13.6% (\$18.6 million) was Windsor).
- The majority of the funding was through long term debt (55%). There was some funding through Capital depreciation and Reserves (14.8%), provincial/federal grants (25.6%), consolidation funding (1.0%), CCBF (2.1%) and a small portion associated to the users (1.2%).

Director Rochon highlighted the different areas of funding over the five years (\$600,000 – CCBF, \$4,174,795 – Reserves, \$63,500 – General operations, \$343,000 – Users, \$15,479,810 – Long term debt, \$272,700 – Consolidation, \$7,189,450 – Prov/Federal grants.

The utilities combined represented 44% (\$11.9 million) of the 2024-25 Capital Budget (9.5% (\$2.5 million) - West Hants and 34.9% (\$9.4 million) for Windsor).

Director Rochon reviewed the various projects identified in the 2024-25 Capital spend. The water portion of any road renewal projects would be captured in this spend.

Discussion Points:

- Three Mile Plains service upgrades were associated with laterals and service upgrades in various streets (Tonge Hill, Panuke Road, Windsor Back Road and Chester Road). Trying to get as many done during this construction season, those not done would be carried over to next year.
- Bulk water haul station in Three Mile Plains was deferred as the vendor was unable to deliver the bulk station. If it arrived within the next few weeks, it could be operational this summer.

- \$300,00 from CCBF was being proposed to put in the utility, items were selected based on their ability to build capacity within the utility. The upgrades were considered new vs a repair. CCBF will pay for an upgrade, not a repair.

Director Rochon reviewed the 5-Year Capital Reserve balances. The projected Reserve balance on March 31, 2025-29 was \$4,408,980.

Water Utility Reserves – make up 7% of the total reserve funding. Water Reserve balances at the end of 2024/25 were projected to be approximately \$1.1 million (operating and capital). The projected spend was \$4.6 million (includes the Municipal Capital Growth Program grant – this comes in and then goes out). An addition amount was also shown as going in that would account for depreciation this year. There was also a slight variance as this was an area associated with the budget error last year.

8. **Break** - A break occurred at 6:53 p.m. The meeting resumed at 7:24 p.m. A request was made to add In-Camera item MGA 22(2)(a) Land Matter at the end of the meeting. Councillor Francis and Mayor Zebian declared conflict at 7:25 p.m. due to owning land, they did not vote.

MOVED BY COUNCILORS SHERMAN AND SMITH THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE APPROVES THE ADDITION OF AN IN-CAMERA ITEM, MGA 22(2)(A) LAND MATTER. MOTION CARRIED. Nays: Hartt

9. **Protective Services - Part 2**

a) Fire Protection

i. Operating Budgets

Director Rochon provided a brief summary of the Regional Fire Budget, which highlighted the variances between the portion funded through the Municipal General rate. Increase in fuel, insurance, power and utilities were the driving factors behind the increases seen. Fire was up 9.6% compared to last years budget. There were also slight variances associated to the budget error from last year. The funding for Walton was not expected to change.

Director Rochon provided a view of the percentage of Fire Protection Operating Budget by departments. Regional Fire percentage was 17.4%, Summerville Fire was 10.4%, Brooklyn Station 1 was 18.7%.

Regional Fire Service

- \$82,300 highlighted was part of last years budget error (it was excluded from the overall budget).
- Proposing to increase apparatus servicing to twice a year. The current budget allowed an annual service (once a year) for apparatus, the proposal was to increase this to twice a year. The departments currently servicing their apparatus twice a year were paying for it from their own budgets.
- Walton Fire Department was added to lamResponding.
- Added Regionalized training (elevator, high-rise and Action training).
- Added an allocation to purchase four (4) old school buses to support training

- Added \$3,000 for FireSmart.
- Increase in insurance attributing to administration as well as an adjustment for WCB.

Hantsport Fire Department – WHRM owns the building. There is an agreement with Kings County that supports some of the Capital and Operating expenses. This revenue generated from this agreement was contingent upon Kings County Council approval. The percentage of calls was 37.2% and the operation portion was capped at \$82,300. Kings County funds 37.2% of the debt servicing costs.

Changes included:

- Honorarium ceiling increased to \$1,000. They also have six (6) new members.
- Station ware replacements within Administration costs and increases in equipment due to new members relating to wildland gear required and regionalization of bunker gear. In addition, hoses, nozzles and hydrant tools being proposed. Some of the station ware was older and in need of replacing and some members were unable to fit in their current gear.
- A building maintenance line was added for the new station.

Currently honorariums were not standardized, a draft policy was previously proposed, however there are two (2) new chiefs, and the item will be revisited. Creating a fair and equal formula that works for all departments was challenging. There were several factors that influence honorariums (calls, meeting attendance, training attendance, responsibilities around the departments, etc.). Membership numbers were thought to be healthy (Fire Chief was not present and will need to confirm).

Summerville Fire Department – Chief Spencer was present. There was a 0.5% increase seen in the budget. The station was owned by Summerville Fire.

Changes included:

- The decrease within Administration was due to the 60-year fire banquet hosted in 2023-24. This occurs every five years.
- Increases were attributed to heat and power cost increases, regionalization of bunker gear and radios and pagers on order.

Membership included 26 active members, 8 veterans, 3 active veteran, 3 juniors, 1 mutual aid member and 2 honorary members.

Summerville have responded to a total of 53 calls since January 1, 2024; 37 of those were medical calls, 5 were mutual aid responses to Brooklyn, 1 mutual aid response to Walton, 1 mutual aid response to Southwest Hants, 4 motor vehicle accidents, 2 calls for arched powerlines and 2 calls related to grass fires and 1 call related to a structural fire.

In 2023/24 a section of the main roof was replaced. This year the department is replacing seven (7) windows (\$12,000) in the main station and replace the entire metal siding (\$80,000) and being paid for by membership fundraising efforts.

Brooklyn Station 1 Fire Department – Chief Tetanish was present. WHRM owns the building. There is also funding (\$86,333) received from East Hants for 2024-25.

Changes included:

- Increases seen were a result of increased costs associated with fuel, regular apparatus maintenance.
- The addition of the new SCAB x-ray process to increase equipment longevity, along with gear inspection frequency.
- Radio and pager replacements.
- Additional training in fire control courses, UTV training, fire investigation, and an increase in Medical Fire Responder Training.
- The addition of 10 chairs and general maintenance for the aging building.
- A Health and Wellness committee was created, an increase to fire prevention in schools and new promotional suits needed as well as new IT equipment.

Combined membership numbers for Station 1 and 2 was approximately 70 members.

Brooklyn Station 2 Fire Department - Chief Tetanish was present. WHRM owns the building.

Changes included:

- Radio and pager replacements.
- Increase in Medical Forst Responder training.
- Purchase of 6 new chairs and additional costs associated with maintenance of the building.
- Increased costs associated with fuel, regular apparatus maintenance.
- A Health and Wellness committee was created, an increase to fire prevention in schools and new promotional suits needed as well as new IT equipment.
- Honorarium increase due to inflation.

Windsor Fire Department – Acting Chief Harvey was present. Station was located at 100 King Street; they pay rent based on square footage and operating cost of the facility.

Changes included:

- A 10% replacement schedule of Personal Protection and regionalization of bunker gear.
- Updating equipment for standpipe operations and Highrise kits.
- Water Rescue courses.
- Meeting equipment.
- Increases to honorariums to match inflation and increased fuel costs.
- Additional computer equipment (part of the final adjustment figures).

Membership was between 45-47 active members, with three new members joining this past year.

Southwest Hants Fire Department - Acting Chief Harvey was present. Station was owned by the Society. WHRM reimburses the Society for fire station related costs.

Changes included:

- Increased costs associated with fuel, power, insurance, etc.
- Funding was proposed to be \$29,095 (increase of 40% since 2023-24).
- 10% replacement schedule with the purchase of water rescue suits for the proposed boat (Capital budget).
- Equipment for a wench for motor vehicle accidents.
- Water rescue training and special licensing for the proposed boat.

Membership was between 17-18 active members, with two new member this past year.

ii. Capital Budgets – 5 Year Capital

Director Rochon highlighted the proposed five-year Capital spend. The Protective Services amounts was associated with the EMO for radios associated to EMO operations. Fire Protectives services represented 5.7 of the five-year Capital.

The proposed spend over the five years was \$7,805,096.

Director Rochon provided a breakdown for each department spend over the five years. The Regional Fire budget included radios for the Regional Fire Services.

Hantsport Fire Five Year Capital - Year 1: a light Rescue, highway stabilization kits, voice amplifiers, video imaging thermal cameras. Year 2: included an additional thermal imaging camera, a full set of jaws of life and the roof scene lights for the rehab trailer. Year 3: Ten (10) VFD portable radios and roof scene lights for #31. Year 4: Another ten (10) VFD portable radios and 25 pagers (split over the two final years). In 2028-29: an additional ten (10) VFD portable radios.

Brooklyn Fire Station 1 Five Year Capital - Year 1: 20 ft RTV trailer, a vent saw. Year 2: Civic Centre floor and painting and repairing of the Civic Centre and Station. Year 3: Compact tractor.

Brooklyn Fire Station 2 Five Year Capital – Year 1: Extrication tools, batteries and chargers for squad 9 and a vent saw.

Southwest Hants Five Year Capital – Year 1: A boat, portable radios with n-mics and a thermal imaging camera. Year 2: Portable radio replacements and a Ram kit. Year 4: Replace E5 Pumper.

Summerville Five Year Capital – Year 1: member parking area lot paving and a thermal imaging camera.

Windsor Five Year Capital – Year 1: Boat replacement (funded through DFA), the hose tower roof replacement, apparatus area wall painting and repair, an omni shore kit, bunker rack replacement, a mini cutter, heat pump and thermal imaging camera. Year 2: Truck bay floor coating, Engine 4 replacement, Utility 9 replacement and the truck bay door window replacement. Year 3: Pumper tanker replacement ad a safety officer vehicle 7 replacement. Year 4: ATV replacement.

Director Rochon highlighted the funding sources for the asks for each department. Most of the funding was through long term debt, with some coming from Reserves (Windsor Fire Department reserve and the fire equipment reserve), there was also a small portion funded through grants.

Within the current year, Protectives Services made up 3.9% of the 2024/25 Capital budget (74% was from long term debt, 7% from provincial/federal grants and 19% from reserves).

Discussion Points:

- When possible bulk purchasing was used. Some variables impacted the ability to purchase like items based on the needs of each department. Currently there were two different types of thermal imaging cameras being used within the departments.
- The only items covered under insurance was Windsor’s Boat (\$20,000), the remainder was being funded through DFA.

- It was noted that Summerville Fire has a tight budget. They identified their membership contributes a lot to their operations through their fundraising efforts.
- All the departments have and continue to invest heavily in wild land operations and preparedness as well as flood and swift water rescue capabilities. Investments were also being done to ensure personnel were properly outfitted and trained properly.
- DNR remains active at a reduced capacity. They continue to respond to requests for support.
- Brooklyn was still waiting for their sprinkler system to arrive. They order a sprinkler protection system (paid for by the 50/50 money raised) that provides the ability to protect up to 30 homes. They have also invested in the swift water program; there were currently 20 trained members at an advanced level for swift water rescue. With the assistance of MLA Sheehy-Richard they were also successful in receiving a grant for costs associated with the purchase of two (2) new boats and swift water rescue training and equipment. BFD was able to respond and use the sprinkler system wherever the need was in the region. It was suggested by the chief that an investment in waterbomber capabilities was needed to help mitigate wildfires.

9. Department of Public Works

a) Sewer System – shown as the consolidated operating budget as of April 1, 2024.

The rate study was completed in 2023-24 and the new rates were in effect until 2026-27. The increase in sewer treatment and disposal was associated with increases in power costs (single phase to a three phase). Increases within Administration were associated with staffing allocations, increases for CPI and benefits and increases in the Kings County costs associated to wastewater treatment within Hants Border (WHRM's portion of treatment costs were 67.6% until 2027-28, when it will be updated based on the number of dwellings). Within the facilities, there were also increases in insurance and utility costs (power, fuel).

Discussion Points:

- Concern was noted regarding the reduced revenue. The sewer study was used for the first year of the consolidated sewer budget, along with any known amounts (Kings County agreement). After the first year of consolidation, the accuracy at the end of the year (v-based on the study) will be reflected in the second year of operation.
- The Wentworth Road Headworks sewer treatment and disposal was where the single-phase vs three phase power impacts were seen. The issue resulted from when the power meter was hooked up, it was registered as one phase (resulting in WHRM paying less for power). When the meters were swapped out, the issue was corrected resulting in significant increases in power costs (now being billed for the power consumed). This was one of the areas being explored for a land-based solar project.
- The addition of the transducer was included in the proposed budget (part of operations) and was already in place.

10. Discussion & Direction from Council - Items to bring back to discuss at the next meeting.

Director Rochon reviewed notes that she had taken during the process thus far. Items to be added to the agenda were:

- Chester Road Sidewalk
- Causeway Trail paving
- Removal of the \$2 skating fees

Further additions included:

- A line item for Search and Rescue, an agreement of \$30,000 (CPI to be included based on usual agreements) over a 3- or 5-year period.
- The Capital ask for GSAR was already included in the proposed Operating budget.
- Would like to see a payroll-personnel summary (total staff, what was paid as basic compensation and then the overlay of CPI applied and the cost of benefits).
- Review the Dial-A-Ride agreement and confirm CPI was part of the agreement and applied correctly. CPI should be applied consistently (same period of time/date) for all organizations).
- Council discussed the funding request from Landmark East. Concern was raised the school was located in a different region and families had to pay for their children to attend. Confirmation was received that the school was not a private school, it was not-for-profit. The school provides capacity for families that need additional school support for their children. Other organizations within West Hants receives funding from outside the region. It was worthy of a deeper discussion that may see some level of support for the school. Consensus was to provide a short-term support of \$5,000 for 2024-25 and the next Council will determine funding moving forward. Staff will confirm tuition amounts and report the information back to Council.
- Council discussed the funding request from the Windsor Township Funding (\$60,000 all in). Several concerns were raised regarding the personnel hired no longer working with the Township and the lack of support for areas outside of Windsor. Consensus was to request the Township be invited to the next budget meeting to provide more details about their request.
- Council discussed have a Fire Protection Coordinator. This topic has been discussed a lot over the past term of Council and was identified in the Fire Study. It was felt now was time for Council to have a deeper discussion about this position. There was value in having one dedicated position that would only oversee Protective Services. Consensus was to support having this conversation as long as the person was qualified and has experience in the industry and Council had more input on the
- There was value in having a conversation regarding the tax rate, specifically as residents would see a substantial change in their taxes-based increases in assessments from PVSC.
- There was value in having a larger discussion about the proposed addition of five (5) staff. There may be a need to have a realignment done within the current staff component vs adding additional personnel.
- Questions were raised if WHRM had a hiring policy (selection of candidates) and if it could be shared with Council prior to a decision being made on any additional staff. The additional staff being proposed were based on a desire for improved service levels (ie:

- communications personnel; currently communications are done by a team (not their primary focus/responsibility) and the demand for communications was increasing and more complex).
- It was noted the planner position was completely funded by the grant from the Housing Accelerator fund.
 - The Certified Engineering Technologist position proposed would assist Public Works with assessing development capacity for water and also be the dedicate person to oversee inflow infiltration (INI – stormwater entering the sewer systems (not the combined systems)), in an effort to increase wastewater capacity and also having a person dedicated to leak detection efforts and enforcement.
 - The additional mechanic would provide cost savings, there would be less contracted services.
 - An additional labourer was needed to support all the public services being provided.
 - There was a request to have the total amount paid out for mileage in a fiscal year, as well as an explanation on municipal vehicle usage for on-call staff.
 - There was a request to have audited detailed financial statements from all fire departments. This information would provide clarity on asks, needs and determine if additional funding was required based on what each department was paying for themselves.
 - The Private Roads policy would be part of the Solid waste collection by-law, the draft is being reviewed by the solicitor and will be coming to Council for consideration.
 - There was support to see Valley Comms used for the Public Works after hours emergency phone number.
 - Questions were raised as to the future of 100 King Street. If the building was rented, it would offset the operating costs. A report would be provided at the next Council meeting.
 - The \$150,000 request from the Newport District Rink was based on a four-year request, last year was the first year \$150,000 was provided as a grant within the Operating budget. Concern was raised about providing four years of funding without knowing if the other funding opportunities were received. It was noted that the ice plant was in the process of being overhauled as it was the original ice plant from the previous rink. Director Rochon advised that when a Capital grant of that size was approved, 75% was paid upfront and the remaining 25% was released once proof of all the bills were paid and copies of receipts sent to WHRM. Requests for advances were required to be in writing (including quotes and required documentation). Council were encouraged that if they wanted to commit to the ice plant that a motion could be made to enter into a four year funding agreement with them to include a, b and c.
 - It was noted there was a lack of Council input from the beginning of the budget process, specifically when the budget was being presented for consideration (as the money has already been spent). There was value in Council having more responsibility for projects and expenditures. It was proposed that a portion of revenues from the Cogmagun Landfill tipping fees, deed transfer tax and windfarms be placed in a Reserve account for Council to expend at their discretion. A policy was needed first.

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS JANNASCH AND S. MCLEAN THAT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE DIRECTS STAFF TO BRING BACK A REPORT ON DEVELOPING A POLICY TO CREATE THREE RESERVE ACCOUNTS FROM A) LANDFILL TIPPING FEES, B) DEED TRANSFER TAX AND C) WINDFARM REVENUES WITH THE PURPOSE OF ALLOCATING A PERCENTAGE OF REVENUES FROM THESE SOURCES TO PROJECTS AND EXPENDITURES DECIDED UPON BY COUNCIL BEGINNING IN THE 2025/26 BUDGET YEAR. MOTION CARRIED

11. In-Camera

a) MGA 22(2)(a) Land Matter

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS M. MCLEAN AND SHERMAN THAT THE MEETING MOVE IN-CAMERA AT 9:38 P.M. MOTION CARRIED

MOVED BY COUNCILLORS MURLEY AND M. MCLEAN THAT THE MEETING MOVE OUT OF IN-CAMERA AT 10:13 P.M. MOTION CARRIED

MOVED BY MAYOR ZEBIAN AND COUNCILLOR FRANCIS THAT THE MEETING ADJOURN AT 10:13 P.M. MOTION CARRIED

12. Next Meeting Date / Adjournment

Next regular meeting will be May 27, 2024 Special Committee of the Whole Budget meeting, 5:15 p.m.

Deputy Mayor Paul Morton

Deanna Snair, Municipal Clerk