

Minutes - Finance & Administration Committee of the Whole



MEETING DATE: January 13, 2009
LOCATION: Beaver Valley Community Centre
PREPARED BY: Serena Wilgress, Administrative Assistant

A. Call to Order

- Chair Gamble called the meeting to order with all members in attendance, save Mayor Anderson and Councillor Martin, absent due to a previous commitment.
- Also in attendance were CAO Paul Graham, Director of Financial Services Robert Cummings, Manager of Accounting & Budgets / Deputy Treasurer Elizabeth Thompson, Capital Accountant Darcy Chapman, Lisa Kidd, Communications and Economic Development Coordinator, Tracey McKenna, Manager of Human Resources, David Finbow, Director of Building & By-law / CBO and Carol Cooley, Library Chief Executive Officer.
- Approval of Agenda

Moved by: John McKean Seconded by: Cameron Kennedy

THAT the Agenda of January 13, 2009 be approved as circulated, including any items added to the Agenda.

In speaking to the Motion, Deputy Mayor McKinlay requested that a project in the Parks & Trails budget be revisited.

Council then voted on the recommendation, Carried.

- No member declared a pecuniary interest with any matter as listed on the Agenda.

B. 2009 Budget Deputations / Presentations

Director of Financial Services Robert Cummings noted that a new page 9 revising the overall tax rate change had been distributed as part of the budget update.

Rob noted that the County was projecting a 4.87% increase for 2009, putting the overall tax increase for the Town at 3.8%.

Councillor McGee questioned the previously noted Education tax increase of 0.6%, Rob noting that it was not an increase, rather an impact due to assessment.

Rob noted that the impact translates to an increase of approximately \$4.00 per residence.

Manager of Accounting and Budgets / Deputy Treasurer Elizabeth Thompson then reviewed other changes to the budget binders made at the last meeting, adding that page 15 had also changed, tracking the local tax levy.

Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk – Paul Graham, Chief Administrative Officer

CAO Paul Graham reviewed the Operating budget for the Administration Department including the CAO's office and the Clerk's Department. Paul noted that the budget was lower across the board due to the removal of the Human Resources and Health and Safety to their own budget.

Paul noted professional fees budget has increased due to PSAB requirements and a consultant study now being an operating project.

Paul then reviewed the Performance Management Program that is to be funded from the HR Reserve established by Council. Paul noted the reserve currently has a deficit and some catch up would be needed.

Paul then noted the budget also included the Records Management Program.

Deputy Mayor McKinlay questioned where the \$35,000 was coming from for the Performance Management program, Paul clarifying the reserve transfers.

Councillor Kennedy questioned TOMRMS, Paul noting the Ontario Municipal Records Management System.

Duncan then questioned what staff is currently using, Paul noting there is nothing being used to assist in electronically tracking documents.

Chair Gamble then questioned the linkage of pay to performance and keeping it under control, Paul noting that currently compensation is increased upon completion of a successful review. Paul added the new system will add another dimension to the review including skills development.

Bob questioned if this would include performance bonuses, Paul noting that was not his intention.

Communications and Economic Development – Lisa Kidd, Communications and Economic Development Coordinator

Lisa Kidd, CEDC, noted the Communications and Economic Development Budget supports the Town's Strategic Plan and Community Initiatives.

Lisa noted that operating costs had increased for 2009 by 27% due to the transfer of projects due to PSAB requirements.

Lisa then noted that a contribution to the Collingwood Airport was not included for 2009 however \$25,000 was included for both 2010 and 2011.

Lisa then noted that grant funding had decreased to \$85,000 for the next three years, adding that the \$35,000 grant to the Georgian Triangle Tourist Association had also been included for the next three years.

Chair Gamble then asked if the GTTA would continue to operate out of the Depot, Lisa noting yes.

Bob noted the Chamber was considering a partnership with the GTTA to operate a Tourist Information Centre in the Chamber building, funded by the Town, Lisa noting an application had been received but no decision had been made on grants and donations as of yet.

Lisa then reviewed the Community Portal program, noting that work had begun in 2008.

Deputy Mayor McKinlay requested clarification about the website, Lisa noting the portal would be more of an electronic gateway about the Town.

Mayor Anderson then attended the meeting.

Lisa then reviewed the Inquiry Tracking Program.

Duncan questioned if an inquiry response policy would be developed and approved by Council, Paul noting the Senior Management Team had already started discussing a response policy.

Duncan then questioned if extra resources would be required, Paul noting no but it will become a top priority in everyone's daily business.

Councillor Kennedy questioned if this project used both Capital and Operating budget dollars, Lisa noting both are needed.

Darcy noted that a portion needed to be considered as operating but that the project will still run in 2010.

Chair Gamble questioned if there was some way of showing the total cost of a project such as this, Darcy noting further clarification can be provided in future years.

Councillor McGee noted the tracking system was a great idea but did not feel that it affected all employees, adding that it seemed like a lot of money for a few employees.

John then noted that it may be a project that could wait until we were a larger corporate body.

Mayor Anderson noted that many complaints were received on inaction by Council and Staff in past years. Ellen noted that it was important to become more efficient.

Cam noted concern with the cost of the project.

Bob questioned who will monitor the system and if additional resources would be required, Lisa noting no additional resources will be required when the system is operating.

CAO Paul Graham clarified that each department would be responsible for tracking their own inquiries.

Councillor McKean noted it would be a way of tracking complaints and keeping a log of what has taken place.

Lisa then reviewed the Economic Development Strategy Project, noting the project was a carryover from 2008.

Deputy Mayor McKinlay noted frustration with how the strategy works. Duncan questioned projections due to restrictions and regulations put in place by the County and Province, Lisa noting the Town would be looking for input from the grassroots residents and groups from the community.

Councillor Kennedy noted consultant fees seem high when it seemed that Staff could do the job, Paul noting the consultant acts as a futurist providing a long term direction for years to come.

Chair Gamble noted concern with the project, adding that parameters are often not clear with regard to what the consultant will do.

Duncan noted he was pleased to see the project was being integrated with the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan to keep people working in our community.

Lisa then reviewed the Laser Lighting program, noting the program will only proceed with donations made by the community partners.

Regarding the Collingwood Airport, Duncan questioned why the donation was being put off until 2010, Paul noting other budget challenges precluded supporting the airport. Paul noted it was hoped that the Economic Development Strategy would hopefully provide more direction.

Cam noted the Inquiry Tracking Program only included 10 users, Lisa noting more users could be added at a price.

Chair Gamble noted that he felt the Airport donation should be removed from both 2010 and 2011 budgets, adding that there was not enough information for Council to make a decision.

Duncan then noted that the donation could be removed at a later date, adding that he was hopeful that the Economic Development Strategy would provide more information. Duncan added that the donation could be considered in 2010.

Mayor Anderson noted her recollection was that the Town would not be financially tied to the Airport, adding that she felt that it would be worthwhile to leave in for now.

Human Resources – Tracey McKenna, Manager of Human Resources

Human Resources Manager Tracey McKenna reviewed the Operating budget.

Tracey noted that the Health and Safety budget would be used to improve departmental Health & Safety throughout the year.

Tracey then reviewed the OCI Project, noting this project would aid in performance improvements.

Deputy Mayor McKinlay requested that the Annual Salary Survey also include Council, Paul noting that could be considered.

Chair Gamble noted that it was important to keep staffing changes to a minimum due to economic times, Duncan noting organizational changes have been looked at many times over the years.

Paul noted that the Health and Safety Audit performed in 2008 yielded 44%, an increase over the 13% received in 2005. Paul added that the information and education was important for our people to work safely but more work needs to be done.

Cam noted he agreed with keeping the position in the 2009 Budget.

Ellen then voiced support for the Human Resources Budget.

Duncan then questioned if succession planning was part of Human Resources, Paul noting yes.

Police Services – Paul Graham, CAO

Paul reviewed the Police Services budget, noting the new building will open in Spring of this year. Paul noted that one new Constable was slated to join the force in 2010, as per the agreement. In addition, the officers would receive a 3% Cost of Living Adjustment in 2009, adding the year over year budget showed an increase of 3.9%.

Paul then noted that the budget continues to have a contribution for operations to the Town of Collingwood for the use of the Collingwood building.

Cam noted there should be a decrease in travel time for 2009, Paul noting the majority of the compliment will report to the Thornbury office.

Duncan questioned if the year to date amount was shy of budget, Director of Financial Services Rob Cummings noting the most recent stats had just been received and they were under budget to date.

Library – Carol Cooley, Library Chief Executive Officer

Chief Librarian Carol Cooley reviewed the Operating budget for the Library noting that it was intended to be a hold the line budget for 2009. Carol noted the Library would be open for one hour longer on Sunday's in response to feedback from users.

Carol noted there was no new staff proposed for 2009.

Carol then noted that books and materials were now a capital expense due to PSAB.

Chair Gamble noted a 0.5% decrease seemed misleading, Carol noting the real increase would come in 2011 with a book mobile service.

Bob then questioned the number of people that are benefitting from the increased service delivery, Carol noting there are over 3,400 members at the library.

Councillor McKean questioned the geographic range of library members, Carol noting that information could be provided.

Carol then reviewed the 2009 Capital summary.

Carol noted that a grant application had been submitted to the Trillium Foundation to cover the cost of an Assistive Technology workstation.

Councillor McGee questioned the service delivery model, wondering if it would be possible to partner with other communities, Carol noting the Library currently has reciprocal agreements with Grey Highlands and Meaford.

Carol then noted the Bookmobile and Library expansion would serve the needs of our residents.

Deputy Mayor McKinlay noted that the Library should pursue reciprocal agreement with the Town of Collingwood library.

Council, Financial Services, Corporate Administration – Robert Cummings, Director of Financial Services

Director of Financial Services Robert Cummings then reviewed the Council budget for 2009 noting that there was very little change over 2008. Rob noted that an election was coming in 2010 and that money has been set aside in reserves for the past 2 years and will continue to offset the budget impact in 2010. Rob then noted that Training and Travel and Salaries were brought in line for 2009.

Councillor Kennedy questioned the Corporate Events line in the budget, Rob noting that was the Staff Christmas Party.

Deputy Mayor McKinlay questioned if Council could attend conferences other than AMO and OGRA/ROMA, Rob noting there was definitely room for flexibility.

Rob then thanked staff for their presentations to Council. Rob then thanked all Financial Services Staff for preparing a budget Council can understand and follow.

Rob then reviewed the Budget Highlights for the Financial Services Operating Budget. Rob added that most operating areas have decreased for 2009.

Rob noted Audit Fees were quoted at \$46,000 for 2008 Year-end but did not include the PSAB and TCA audits.

Rob noted Consultants now included Town Wide Development Charges Background Study, Purchasing Consultant and Financial Information Software.

Chair Gamble then noted concern with the DC Study, questioning if the Town should be waiting, Rob noting now is the best time as the Town is now collecting DC's based on the old study. Rob also noted that the study and by-law must be completed before 2010 as it must be renewed every five years.

Capital Accountant Darcy Chapman noted the concern is that the longer the Town waits the further in the hole we get.

Darcy then noted that growth is decreasing and estimates are based on 2008 construction costs and the ten year growth cycle.

Rob then reviewed the Operating Summary for Corporate Administration.

Rob noted the increase in Consultant fees due to the Assessment consultant and Postal Identity Program.

Director of Building & By-law / CBO David Finbow then reviewed the Capital Project – Community Mailbox Program.

Rob then reviewed the decreases in Revenue for 2009.

Councillor Kennedy questioned the amount outstanding as interest on tax arrears, Rob noting generally about 10% of billable taxes.

David then reviewed the Town Hall Facility Capital Project.

David noted the building size had increased, therefore increasing the overall cost.

David noted the projected cost was now \$275 / square foot. David added that it was hoped to move forward on the project mid year.

Chair Gamble noted it would take a long time to pay for the project. David then noted that the Steering Committee was still working on a vision and more information would be coming back to Council.

Deputy Mayor McKinlay questioned if it would possible to require local trades work on the project, David noting it was not mandated in our Purchasing Policy but the Town could pre-qualify contractors. David then noted that local trades generally focus on low rise sector as do local suppliers, however local contractors would not be excluded from bidding.

Bob then questioned debt, David noting that numbers have gone up substantially. Darcy then noted that other capital projects have been held off to make way for the building.

Darcy noted costs would be debentured at 5.5% over 20 years.

David then noted the project costs included the land acquisition over the past 7 years.

Councillor Kennedy noted support for the project, indicating that the project should continue in the same manner to date.

Councillor McGee noted his agreement with Councillor Kennedy's comments. John then noted the size increase would include a civic centre as well as an area for office staff.

Bob then questioned improved functionality, noting consideration should be given to the multi purpose facility. John noted that the Town Hall would not replace the multi purpose facility but provide a different type of facility.

Mayor Anderson then noted that it would provide a sense of place to local residents, enabling them to know they own the building.

Councillor McKean questioned where plans stood on the Conceptual Drawings, David noting he had been speaking with design consultants. David noted the Steering Committee would bring a report back to Council before sharing the vision with the community, adding that a lot of community input was desired.

John then noted that the timeline seemed optimistic, David agreeing.

Bob then noted concern with volunteer organizations providing amenities, questioning if the wrong message would be sent that they would no longer require their facilities.

David noted that the Town Hall would have its own niche in the community and not try to compete with other facilities in Town.

Rob then reviewed the Town Hall Remedial Work Capital Project.

Paul then reviewed the Medical Clinic Capital Project, adding the negotiations were going well with the group working on the project. Paul noted Town money is proposed to be used for the purchase of land. Paul added that the arrangements are close to being finalized.

Bob questioned the waiving of taxes, Paul noting Staff were considering having the building declared a Capital Municipal Facility which would assist in making the project more viable.

Rob then reviewed the Conservation Authority levies for 2009 adding The Blue Mountains pays about 26% of the GSCA levy with a 9.8% increase over 2008.

Councillor McKean noted that the NVCA levy was up 6.6% over 2008.

Paul then noted that the GSCA was projecting a 4% COLA for staff.

Rob then reviewed the Health and Social Services budget, noting that 2009 was the last year for the contribution to the Meaford Hospital.

Regarding the Parks Budget reviewed previously, Deputy Mayor McKinlay noted support for inclusion of the backhoe attachment as part of the Capital Budget, Councillor McKean concurring.

C. Staff Reports

2009 Draft Budget Binder as previously circulated

D. Correspondence

None

E. New and Unfinished Business

None

F. Next Meeting Date

January 15, 2009

G. Adjournment

Moved by: Cameron Kennedy Seconded by: John McGee

THAT this meeting do now adjourn, Carried.