

Minutes - Special Meeting of Council



MEETING DATE: July 14, 2011
LOCATION: Town Hall, Council Chamber
PREPARED BY: Corrina Giles, Town Clerk

A. Call to Order

- Mayor Anderson called the meeting to order with all members in attendance save Councillor Ardiel absent due to a previous commitment.
- Also in attendance Manager of Human Resources Tracey McKenna, Director of Recreation Shawn Everitt, Capital Accountant Darcy Chapman, Financial Analyst Debbie Brown, Director of Finance and IT Robert Cummings, Director of Planning and Building David Finbow, Manager of Revenue Ruth Prince, Manager of Water and Wastewater Services John Caswell, Deputy Fire Chief AJ Lake, Chief Librarian Carol Cooley and Communications and Economic Development Coordinator Lisa Kidd
- Council then paused for a moment of Personal Prayer or Reflection.
- Approval of Agenda:

Moved by: R.J. Gamble Seconded by: John McKean

THAT the Special Meeting of Council Agenda of July 14, 2011 be adopted as circulated, including any revisions to be made, Carried.

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

B. Council Discussion

1. Council Discussion Re: Budget Procedures

Councillor Martin spoke regarding the 2011 budget discussions where Council directed Staff to perform service reviews at the Committee level.

Michael then referenced the suggestion that a Council task force be created to review the budget prior to the budget being presented to Council. Michael noted it is his preference that a budget committee be struck and that any revisions to the budget flow back through the committee to each department, prior to being presented to Council.

Mayor Anderson then questioned if Staff input would be considered if a task force is struck, Michael noted that much work has been completed for the 2012 budget already.

Councillor Ardiel then joined the meeting.

Director of Finance and IT Robert Cummings spoke noting the Finance Department is exploring the option of delivering the budget electronically and noted the Senior Management Team ("SMT") met yesterday to discuss a proposed timeline and electronic delivery of the budget. Rob noted Staff require direction from Council as to the form of the budget requested and terms for a budget taskforce.

Rob noted Staff are attempting to simplify the budget and are seeking parameters of Council as to how much detail Council would like to see in the budget.

Rob noted that a similar budget will be created for this year's budget, 3 year operating, prepared early, unless Staff are advised otherwise by Council.

Michael then noted Council are interested in discretionary expenses as Council is unable to do anything about hydro or insurance costs and further noted eliminating debate around non-discretionary expenses would save time. Michael questioned if a change in format would be helpful.

Ellen then questioned who would be appointed to sit on the taskforce, Michael suggesting the CAO and two members of Council.

Deputy Mayor McKinlay then spoke questioning if it is proposed that the taskforce would review the service delivery review before Council and if the taskforce would determine changes to be made based on its review of service delivery reviews. Michael replying yes this would be reviewed by the taskforce through each Department Director. Michael then noted service review provides an understanding of what each department is doing.

Duncan then recounted Grey County's budget procedures and questioned if reliance would be placed on each Department's Director with direction from Council. Duncan noted at the County, the Road Committee prepares its budget and that the Committee level proceeds through the Finance and Personnel Committee and if the Finance and Personnel Committee is satisfied that the budget would then proceed to Council.

Duncan noted Council needs to look at core services so that the Town is not leaving a deficit for future Council's to deal with. Duncan noted he would support a taskforce to provide a synopsis of its budget review to Council, further noting the taskforce would be faced with many meetings.

Councillor McKean then spoke referencing the different Committees, Infrastructure & Recreation, Planning & Building and Finance & Administration, have been conducting service delivery reviews at each department level. John noted this information should be reviewed and brought to Council.

Councillor Gamble spoke noting the 2011 budget was difficult, but noted his concern with striking a taskforce is that a budget could be developed and then turned down. Bob further noted that those Councillors that are interested in the budget need to be involved.

Councillor Ardiel spoke referencing the recent service reviews and noted one Committee member from each of the three standing Committees should be appointed to the task force so that each Committee member can advise the taskforce as to where cutbacks need to happen.

Councillor Halos then spoke noting the budget discussions need to start early and that he believes a budget review committee should be in place all year. Joe noted the budget is important and believes requires more effort and requires ongoing work all year long.

Duncan questioned if there are notes from the Infrastructure and Recreation Committee service review that could be reviewed by Council, Director of Finance and IT Robert Cummings, replying yes.

Mayor Anderson then spoke noting the taskforce is being struck in response to the amount of time spent on the 2011 budget. Ellen noted she recognizes Council needs improvement over the 2011 budget process. Ellen then reviewed the Grey County budget process, noting all committees forward their budgets to the Finance and Personnel Committee for review and once approved, the budget is forwarded to Grey County Council.

John then recounted the 2011 budget process, noting Staff provided Council with a budget with a 2% increase, as requested by Council, and it was Council that then requested enhancements to the budget. John confirmed it was Council that prolonged the budget process, not Staff.

Duncan spoke noting Council needs to agree on the budget process. Ellen spoke questioning if the Town could mimic the County process.

Councillor Ardiel then spoke questioning if a budget taskforce is created, if the entire budget process will have to be reviewed and if service reviews will cease, to be readdressed by the taskforce. Gail noted there has been much work done by each Committee to get to this point. Gail then noted she would not have a problem with the County process.

Bob then spoke noting the County process is similar to what is being done now. The Committee prepares a budget and it is then brought forward for review. Bob noted he does not believe a taskforce would improve the budget process.

John spoke noting the County budget process would work, and noted Council has many levels of expertise and collectively the Committee level system works.

Duncan then spoke noting Council has not made a lot of use of the Committees in preparation of the operating budget, Rob noting Staff focuses on the percentage increase provided by Council with each department having limited input into the budget. John spoke noting more budget work should be done at the Committee level, and reiterated that Council does not need another task force as it would create more work for Staff.

Michael then spoke noting budget could be a new role of the Committees and noted the Chair of each Committee could present the Committee's budget to Council in advance of the final budget document being prepared.

Duncan spoke noting a preliminary reporting should be provided to Council early seeking direction from Council as to the projects to include in the budget.

Joe then spoke noting he is satisfied with the County process.

Moved by: Duncan R. McKinlay Seconded by: Michael Martin

THAT the matter of an Annual Budget Taskforce be revisited, Carried.

Mayor Anderson then spoke confirming Council is directing that each Committee will work on its budget and that the Chair of each Committee will present the Committee budget through the Finance and Administration Committee.

Moved by: Michael Martin Seconded by: D.R. McKinlay

THAT the July 14, 2011 motion regarding preparation of a terms of reference for the Annual Budget Taskforce be withdrawn, Carried.

Deputy Mayor McKinlay then spoke questioning what would be a reasonable timeframe for the Chair of each Committee to come to Council, Rob replying that Staff would like information on exactly what Council is seeking, further noting he would like to see the service delivery information come to Council now. Rob confirmed that information regarding growth will not be available until late September.

Duncan then questioned if Committees should meet in August and discuss service reviews, Rob noted the Finance Department will bring a budget forward in mid-August and that the Committees should summarize service reviews and provide any enhancement or de-enhancement information to Finance. Rob then noted the Committees should meet at the end of September.

John spoke in response noting the end of September will work for him.

Gail spoke referencing the 2011 budget process noting it was a very time consuming process. Gail noted that when Planning and Building Committee has been reviewed that this Council should have clear direction.

Rob then advised Council that a Staff Report will be included on the next Finance and Administration Committee meeting regarding grants and donations.

Rob then questioned if Council is satisfied to move forward on a base budget, Michael replying that with each Committee's new role, it is important that the Committee report to Council on what is an enhancement or a cut and that public comment be received.

Michael then referenced the Economic Development budget and noted it should be three times what it is now. Michael noted that Council needs to lead and noted he is looking forward to receiving the draft Committee budgets.

Mayor Anderson then spoke noting at the County, the Finance and Personnel Committee receives all Committee budgets for approval, then once approved by the Finance and Personnel Committee, the Committee proceeds to County Council. Ellen noted this process could be repeated many times before Council actually sees the approved budget. Michael spoke in response, noting he is not in favour of a Committee budget flowing through the Finance and Administration Committee as the Committees need Council input. John then spoke concurring with Councillor Martin and noted that the Chair of each Committee should present straight to Council.

Duncan then referenced the service delivery review work and questioned if the results of the service deliveries have been provided to Rob, Rob replying that he has been provided with the same staff Report the Committee was provided with. Duncan noted he will work at the Committee level to provide a service level report and budget to Council.

Michael then spoke noting in the past, the Special Meetings of Council for the purposes of the budget have accomplished little. Michael then questioned where the debate on service levels will be, Duncan replying at the Committee level.

Duncan then spoke noting each Committee should report back to Council on service levels by September 1.

Moved by: Duncan R. McKinlay Seconded by: John McKean

THAT each Committee shall report to Council regarding service delivery review considerations and options by September 15, 2011; and

THAT each Committee shall prepare a draft budget for Council consideration, unanimously Carried.

B. Closed Session

Moved by: John McKean Seconded by: Gail Ardiel

THAT with regard to subsection 239.(3.1) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, this Council do now move into closed session in order to address matters pertaining to the educating or training of Council and at the meeting, members will not discuss or otherwise deal with any matter in a way that materially advances the business or decision-making of the Council, Committee or Local Board.

AND with regard to local water servicing extensions, Carried.

Council moved into closed session at 2:27 pm.

Council moved into public session at 3:31 pm.

C. Adjournment

Moved by: Joe Halos Seconded by: Duncan R. McKinlay

THAT this Special Meeting of Council does now adjourn at 3:32 pm, Carried.