

Minutes - Finance and Administration Committee



MEETING DATE: September 22, 2009,
LOCATION: The Blue Mountains Committee Room
PREPARED BY: Stephen Keast, Clerk

A. Call to Order

Chair Gamble called the meeting to order with all members in attendance save Councillor McGee, absent due to vacation.

Also in attendance was Director of Financial and Information Services Rob Cummings, Deputy Treasurer Liz Thompson, Manager of Revenue Ruth Prince, Director of Recreation Shawn Everitt and Fire Prevention Officer A.J. Lake.

The Committee then dealt with the following Resolution:

Moved by: John McKean Seconded by: Michael Martin

THAT the Agenda of September 22, 2009 be approved as circulated, including any items added to the Agenda, Carried.

No member present declared a potential pecuniary Interest with any matter as listed on the Agenda.

The Committee then dealt with the following Resolution:

Moved by: John McKean Seconded by: Michael Martin

THAT the minutes of August 25, 2009 and Special Committee of the Whole meetings of September 1 and 9, 2009 be approved as circulated, including any revisions to be made, Carried.

B. Deputations / Presentations

None

C. Staff Reports

C.1 False Alarm Fees and Charges, FIS.09.39

Ruth then reviewed the Report, noting the Town currently charges \$300 for response to a false alarm, now proposed to be no cost for a first response, \$300 for a second occurrence within 12 months and \$200 refunded if proof of repairs

or a solution to an identified problem is provided, \$300 for a third occurrence within 12 months and \$450 for a fourth and subsequent response within 12 months.

Councillor McKean then noted this would still not be cost recovery, A.J. replying no and if both halls respond to a residential call the cost could quickly approach \$1,000. A.J. then noted there is a great deal of back and forth contact with the landowner following an invoice for a false alarm response.

A.J. then estimated expenditures in the amount of \$55,000 in responding to false alarms to date this year, adding if he had a process where he could contact the landowner and come up with a solution to any alarm problem the responses could be greatly reduced, with contact proposed after the first response as to process.

John then questioned if there were any examples of multiple responses to a location, A.J. replying yes with some landowners not aware the alarms are going off, John noting the fourth response should be \$1,000.

A.J. noted the Department might respond to 10 false alarms at the Grand Georgian building over a six month period, with each a different scenario, whether contractor's working, mischief, etc.

Rob then noted the proposed regime is in line with area municipalities.

Chair Gamble then questioned if the charges could be added to taxes, Ruth replying yes but it involves a great deal of contact back and forth with landowners.

Bob then questioned how much had been billed this year for such charges, Ruth replying approximately \$8,000 year to date, A.J. noting the proposed program is intended to reduce false alarms. Bob then noted we need to keep revenues flowing and if the first two are free landowners may not change.

A.J. then noted under the proposed fee regime, he would send a letter to the landowner immediately following the first response explaining what will transpire in the case of subsequent false alarms, Bob noting perhaps \$500 for the third and \$1,000 for the fourth would be more appropriate.

A.J. then noted concern with such fees for commercial operators given the various scenarios that can result in false alarms, with the residential program meant for education purposes.

Bob then questioned if such charges would be covered by house insurance, A.J. replying probably not if the false alarm was a result of a lack of knowledge about the system.

Michael then noted he would like to see the first one at \$300 with \$200 refundable if problems are corrected with Fire Department officials able to waive the remaining \$100 if deemed appropriate.

The Committee then dealt with the following Recommendations:

Moved by: Michael Martin

THAT the following charges would apply to false alarm responses:

- 1st occurrence - \$300 with \$200 refundable with proof of repairs
- 2nd occurrence - \$300
- 3rd occurrence - \$450
- 4th occurrence - \$500

As the Motion did not receive a Secunder, the Motion was not considered.

Moved by: John McKean

Secundered by: Michael Martin

THAT Council does receive Staff Report FIS.09.39, "Fire False Alarm Fees and Charges" for information purposes;

AND THAT a Public Meeting to review proposed Amendments to By-law 2008-113 "Fees & Charges By-law", Schedule "D" – Fire Department Services, be held October 14, 2009;

AND THAT Schedule "D" be amended to show the charge for response to the 4th and subsequent false alarm occurrence within a 12 month period to be \$1,000, Carried.

Bob then questioned if the Town terminated the residential fire response charge, A.J. replying yes as there was increasing cases of people trying to do as much as they could to extinguish fires before calling 911 with fire damage greatly increased.

Bob noted the charges should be covered by insurance, A.J. noting people are encouraged to call the Department even if they believe a fire such as an oven fire is extinguished as there may be ongoing simmering within walls or under drywall.

As there were no further questions A.J. retired from the meeting.

C.2 Re-allocation of Capital Budget – Backup Generator – Fire Station #1, FD.09.02

Rob then reviewed the Report, noting it was recommended to access future development charges as a funding source and the fund will be in a negative position until the DC's come in.

Ron then noted the HST would now apply to legal costs, Liz noting it would also apply to real estate transactions.

Michael then noted the HST would encourage the underground economy.

The Committee then dealt with the following Resolution:

Moved by: Michael Martin Seconded by: John McKean

THAT Council consider the Resolution of the Town of New Tecumseh regarding concerns with the proposed Provincial Harmonization of Taxes, Carried.

2. Duncan Community Centre, Request for assistance

Chair Gamble then noted it is difficult to consider the request at present, John noting he believed a lot of Town residents use the Duncan facility, located just west of the Townline.

Rob noted the request might lend itself to the 2010 Grant and Donation Program in terms of timing.

Bob then noted the Town will have demolition costs regarding the Heathcote Hall which is also located on the Townline

The Committee then dealt with the following Recommendation:

Moved by: John McKean Seconded by: Michael Martin

THAT the request for assistance for the Duncan Community Centre be referred to the 2009 – 2010 Grants and Donations Program and the applicant be so advised, Carried.

3. Beaver Valley Outreach, Request for assistance

The Clerk then noted the BVO request for assistance for the annual Community Thanksgiving dinner was a form letter and the Town had previously authorized grant funding for the BVCC rental fee through the Grants and Donations Program and no further action was required regarding this item.

F. Adjournment

As there was nothing further before the Chair the Committee then dealt with the following Resolution:

Moved by: John McKean Seconded by: Michael Martin

THAT this meeting does now adjourn to meet again on October 20 at 2:00 pm, or at the call of the Chair, Carried.