

Minutes - Finance and Administration Committee



MEETING DATE: December 16, 2008, 2:00 pm
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 McKean, absent due to a previous commitment.

Also in attendance was CAO Paul Graham, Director of Financial Services Rob Cummings, assessment consultant Dennis Doyle and Director of Building and By-law Enforcement David Finbow.

The Committee then dealt with the following Resolution:

Moved by: John McGee Seconded by: Michael Martin

THAT the Agenda of December 16, 2008 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 McGee Seconded by: Michael Martin

THAT the minutes of November 18, 2008 be approved as circulated, including any revisions to be made, Carried.

B. Deputations / Presentations

None

C. Staff Reports

C.1 2009 Property Assessment for Ski Hills Update, FS.08.56

Rob then reviewed the Report, noting the magnitude of the assessment changes for the recreational ski resort properties.

Councillor McGee then questioned any differences to be expected in taxes receivable and how any appeals would be planned for.

Dennis then noted he had not calculated tax impact, adding reserves should be considered for loss of assessment, clarifying a previous 2008 Current Value Assessment was amended and only recently forwarded to resort property owners.

Dennis then noted it would be up to individual property owners to consider requesting reconsideration or appealing their assessments.

Dennis further noted a substantial reduction in assessment may result in the recreational properties versus other property classes, adding tax rates had been increased more in this class than others.

Rob then noted any reduction in assessment would be as a result of landowners making a Request for Reconsideration, Dennis noting the tax rates were all commercial with capping applied.

John then questioned if revenue projections would be impacted, Dennis noting the current total assessment may not last and any reduced taxation would be an estimate.

Rob then noted for budgeting purposes the Town considers total revenues required and then works backwards through the property classes, Paul noting the new figures had not been considered in the 2009 Budget as of yet.

Chair Gamble then questioned increases on the vacant Craigeith Development Limited parking lands, Dennis noting the main CDL property that increased at the commercial rate was the principal lands containing ski lodges and ski runs.

Bob then questioned if Niagara Escarpment Commission regulations on the lands would be a factor in an RFR, Dennis noting that has been a factor in the past.

Bob then noted an assessment increase on the ski resort lands would drive up the Town's portion of the County budget and may reduce the viability of some ski resorts.

Dennis then noted the Monterra golf course is a separate parcel, golf courses in general facing a 1 to 2% increase based on reduced income.

Chair Gamble then noted a 20% increase in total assessment and the subject lands may represent 10 to 12% of that increase, Dennis noting the 20% increase was based on the initial 2008 assessment.

Rob then noted there is statutory phasing of any assessment increase over a four year period.

Councillor Martin then noted of more concern is that property values based on 2008 are being applied for the taxation year of 2009 with the next reassessment to be taken in three years, with appeals made over those years perhaps requiring payback of tax monies.

Dennis then noted the valuation is a snapshot as of January 1, 2008 and unless the Assessment Review Board recognizes changes in the economy there may be no overall reductions but if all properties are at the same level there would be equity.

Rob then noted each assessed property may appeal in each year of the four year phased increases based on the 2008 valuation.

The Committee then dealt with the following Recommendation:

Moved by: Michael Martin Seconded by: John McGee

THAT Council receive Staff Report FS.08.56, "2009 Property Assessment for Ski Hills Update", for information purposes, Carried.

C.2 Monthly Financial Reports – November, 2008, FS.08.59

Rob then reviewed the Report, noting utility and winter control costs will increase with an early winter season and significant capital expenditures are outstanding.

Rob then noted November 26 was a Tax Due Date with tax receivables currently at 12.2%, 10% expected. Rob then noted the Town receivables were 9.9% at the end of 2007, the Provincial average 10.8%.

Rob then reviewed the Flash Reports, with supplemental taxes at \$350,000, better than expected but less than projected.

Rob then noted interest income has performed well to date but will reduce with rates in the future.

Rob then noted Landfill revenue continues to be strong with Building revenue off approximately 40%.

Rob then noted the Town will likely be looking at a deficit of approximately \$100,000 to \$200,000 due to winter weather and other factors.

Rob then distributed an update on capital expenditures to date, currently approximately \$5.9 million.

The Committee then dealt with the following Recommendation:

THAT Council receive Staff Report FS.08.59, "Monthly Financial Reports – November 2008", for information purposes, Carried.

C.3 2009 Budget Update

Rob then noted 2009 tax supported Budget binders would be available on December 19, noting 2010 and 2011 projections require more work and revised figures will be available in the future.

C.4 Assumption of On-site Sewage System Permits & Inspections, SRB.08.68

Director of Building and By-law Enforcement David Finbow then reviewed the Report, noting the matter was generated through the Service Delivery Review and with activity down it was a good time to offer the service.

Chair Gamble then questioned if the service could be offered with the current staff complement, David replying yes.

Bob then questioned if private systems were required to be re-inspected, David noting complaints of unsafe systems required inspection, any other inspection requirement to be discretionary through policy, in part based on source water protection issues.

Bob then noted there may be concern with older septic systems in the area of the water intake, David noting servicing was proposed for Cameron Street.

The Committee then dealt with the following Recommendation:

Moved by: John McGee Seconded by: Michael Martin

THAT Council receive Staff Report SRB.08.68 respecting the assumption of on-site sewage systems permits and inspections and do support the Town's assumption of same commencing January 10, 2010, Carried.

C.5 Building Permit Statistics, SRB.08.69

David then reviewed the Report, noting permits, dwelling units created and construction value are significantly reduced from 2006 with projected 2008 revenue to be \$430,000.

Bob then noted revenue appears to be down more than construction value, David noting custom single detached and non-residential construction are reduced and therefore permit value is down.

The Committee then dealt with the following Recommendation:

Moved by: Michael Martin Seconded by: John McGee

THAT Council receive SRB.08.69 – Building Permit Statistics for information purposes, Carried.

C.6 Amendment to By-law No. 2001- 88 – Fire Route By-law, SRB.08.70

David then reviewed the Report, noting Fire Routes are proposed in Keeper's Cove and Lora Bay Phase 3.

NOTE: Councillor Martin declared a pecuniary interest with regard to the Lora Bay Corporation and occasional employment of his spouse and did not take part in related discussion or voting on the Recommendation.

The Committee then dealt with the following Recommendation:

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

THAT this Council receive Staff Report SRB.08.70 and enact the amendment to the Fire Route By-law attached hereto, Carried.

C.7 Amendment to By-law No. 2001- 88 – Fire Route By-law, SRB.08.71

David then reviewed the Report, noting the private road north from Anne Heggveit Drive provides access to some private residences and the Blue Mountain Inn and it is proposed to retain the fire route but provide revised signage to remove same from the skiable terrain for liability purposes.

The Committee then dealt with the following Recommendation:

Moved by: John McGee Seconded by: Michael Martin

THAT this Council receive Staff Report SRB.08.71 respecting an amendment to the Fire Route By-law as it relates to the private road extending north from Anne Heggveit Drive at Blue Mountain Resorts and enact the amendment to the Fire Route By-law attached hereto, Carried.

C.8 Appointment of a Property Standards Officer – Brenda Hall, SRB.08.72

David then reviewed the Report, noting Brenda is now able to perform certain Property Standards By-law inspections following specialized training.

Chair Gamble then asked if Brenda enforced all other By-laws, David replying yes.

The Committee then dealt with the following Recommendation:

Moved by: John McGee Seconded by: Michael Martin

THAT Council receive Staff Report SRB.08.72 for information purposes respecting the appointment of a Property Standards Officer and enact the By-law attached hereto designating Brenda Hall as Property Standards, Carried.

C.9 Delegated Approvals, A.08.13

The Clerk then reviewed the Report, noting report of delegated approvals would be made on a more regular basis.

The Committee then dealt with the following Recommendation:

Moved by: John McGee Seconded by: Michael Martin

THAT Council receive Staff Report A.08.13, "Delegated Approvals" for information purposes.

In speaking to the Motion, Councillor McGee questioned if approvals for Town projects should go through a Council process for transparency, David noting many minor Site Plan Approvals are given at the Staff level and the Town projects are similar in nature to private projects that would be give Staff approvals.

John then noted perhaps a revised internal approval program for Town projects might be considered, David noting he believed the projects were sufficiently transparent, including Recreation Committee review of the Parks Operations building.

Councillor Martin then proposed Staff consider a fee for commenting on MNR Shoreland Work Permits, Staff to report back.

The Committee then voted on the Recommendation, Carried.

D. Correspondence

None

E. New and Unfinished Business

None

D. Correspondence

None

F. Next Meeting Date

January 20, 2009, 2:00 pm or at the call of the Chair.

G. Adjournment

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

Moved by: John McGee Seconded by: Michael Martin

That this meeting do now adjourn to meet again January 20, 2009, 2:00 pm or at the call of the Chair, Carried.