



Committee of the Whole Minutes

February 13, 2024, 7:00 p.m.
Council Chambers & Electronic Meeting

PRESENT: Mayor S. Goodmanson
Councillor K. Guiry
Councillor C. Harder
Councillor M. Morley
Councillor L. Szpak
Councillor M. Wagner
Councillor K. Yacucha - Remote

ATTENDING: D. Kiedyk, Chief Administrative Officer
B. Hutchins, Director of Corporate Services
M. Watmough, Deputy Director of Corporate Services
M. Baldwin, Director of Planning and Subdivision
M. Dillabaugh, Director of Finance
K. Balzer, Director of Engineering and Public Works
Y. Nielsen, Director of Parks, Recreation and Facilities
K. Dube, Senior Manager of Information Technology and GIS - Remote
D. Petrie, Senior Manager of Business Development and Events
S. Rose, Inspector, West Shore RCMP
C. Aubrey, Fire Chief
L. Fletcher, Manager of Community Safety and Municipal Enforcement
W. Robinson, Manager of Building Services
D. Yeo, Acting Senior Bylaw Enforcement Officer
B. Agland, System Administrator
C. Bell, FOI Coordinator

Meeting available by teleconference.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

2. TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Councillor Morley read the City of Langford's Territorial Acknowledgment.

3. MEETING CONDUCT RULES

M. Watmough, Corporate Officer, read the meeting rules of conduct.

4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOVED BY: GUIRY
SECONDED: HARDER

THAT the Committee approve the agenda as presented.

Motion CARRIED.

5. PRESENTATIONS

5.1 Presentation of Proposed 2024-2028 Five Year Financial Plan and Related Matters

M. Dillabaugh, Director of Finance; presented a short update. B. Hutchins, Director of Corporate Services, presented information regarding the YMCA and Pacific Football Club.

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

T.L. Renken-Sebastian Jacklin/Orono - The speaker inquired about Fire Rescue initiatives. The speaker inquired about RCMP expenditures. The speaker inquired about the relationship between community resources and the Bylaw department regarding the unhoused people health and wellness. The speaker inquired about the consequences of not having new hires.

Chief C. Aubrey responded - That at this time the Fire Department does not have budget requirements for new apparatus or vehicles. The Fire Department does explore grants or repurposing vehicles before purchasing new.

Insp. S. Rose, West Shore RCMP responded - That the RCMP collaborates with other agencies, not for profits and other provincial agencies to deliver services they provide.

L. Fletcher, Manager Community Safety and Municipal Enforcement responded - That the Bylaw Enforcement Department is engaging in specific training for officers with respect to unhoused, mental health issues. That they work with the RCMP to do wellness checks. Housing is a provincial mandated position, and the City has limited scope and ability to be involved.

M. Morton, Phelps Ave - The speaker expressed concern about a tax increase. The speaker inquired about the travel budget increasing. The speaker expressed concern about the lack of information regarding the need to support the YMCA. The speaker expressed concern regarding the cost of consultants. The speaker expressed concern regarding the increase of the cost of the event line item. The speaker expressed concern regarding the cost of using the Trolley for a library.

M. Dillabaugh, Director of Finance responded - Clarified that the travel budget from the Covid years was minimal travel. The addition of inflation has increased cost. They encouraged the resident to look through years 2019 and prior for better clarification. The events budget increase does not affect property tax increases. The use of consultants was for clarification of required departmental plans for the Council's strategic plan. The City is probably the only municipality that doesn't have a transportation plan, parks master plan, updated Official Community Plan. All of these cost money, more efficient to contract versus hiring permanent employees when its not a yearly process. They stated again that these costs do not affect taxation.

M. Wignall, Selwyn Rd - The speaker expressed concern regarding the cost of stadium seating. The speaker inquired if design build proposals would be an option. The speaker inquired about travel expenses; would virtual attendance be an option. The speaker inquired whether the cost for proposed upcoming plans could be spread out over time.

M. Dillabaugh, Director of Finance responded - They clarified that proposed department plans are being funded by surplus, not property taxation. Spreading it out would likely not make a difference. They also stated that the travel budget is being reduced in 2024 compared to 2023.

S. Rossander, Langford Resident - The speaker expressed gratitude that there is a plan of the possibility of the purchase of YMCA. The speaker inquired when the public could access the actuals for revenues and expenditures for the City. The speaker inquired about having some details regarding the line item FA08 admin property purchase for the 2024 capital budget. The speaker inquired having the 2023 operating reports for YMCA public.

M. Dillabaugh, Director of Finance responded - That the budget is earlier this year, 2023 actuals are not ready yet. They will meet the deadline of May 15, 2024. The current 5-year plan includes purchase of YMCA. They cannot disclose anything further on land acquisition as it is in camera. He also encouraged residents to go through the FOI process for further records.

S. Sifert, Langford Resident - The speaker inquired for clarification on when year end is. The speaker inquired about a tax decrease with the RCMP building removal. The speaker expressed concern regarding the travel budget. The speaker expressed concern regarding consultant fees.

M. Dillabaugh, Director Of Finance responded - They clarified the City is on a fiscal calendar year. That the RCMP expansion, the potential purchase of YMCA and asset management, was in last years 2023 budget plan. The tax increase was over a few years. Each year has a reduction of 1.75% with the removal of the RCMP building expansion.

L. Foxall, Langford Resident - The speaker expressed concern about a tax increase. The speaker suggested travel budget cost cuts by attending conferences electronically. The speaker expressed concern about the new proposed projects and the lack of information about them. The speaker expressed concern regarding the tax increase and the effect on renters. The speaker expressed concern about saving the Pacific Football Club without a referendum.

Councillor C. Harder - point of order - all speakers should speak through the chair.

R. Louie, Langford Resident - The speaker would like to see a property tax decrease. The speaker expressed concern about the tax increase effecting renters. The speaker inquired about the trolley being used for a library, The speaker inquired if it could be a grant program. The speaker inquired about the removal of either the proposed ebike program or compost program.

C. Legacy, Artesian Crt- The speaker was in favour of increasing the function general amenity fund. The speaker expressed gratitude regarding the resurfacing of the Centennial Park tennis courts and would like to see more added in future.

N. Johal, Langford Resident - The speakers inquired about having enough RCMP officers. The speaker expressed concern regarding the proposed ebike program. The speaker expressed concern regarding the increase of property taxes.

M. Dillabaugh, Director of Finance responded - That the 2024 budget will include the addition of 3 officers to maintain cop to pop ratio. 5 officers were originally requested, which may be a part of Councils deliberation.

L. Plomp, Whimfield Terr - The speaker expressed concern about the details of the new budget items. The speaker offered support for community gardens. The speaker noted that property taxes are still one of the lowest in region, along with inclusion of hiring Firefighters, RCMP Officers, and City staff. The speaker expressed gratitude for using the amenity funds for amenities, instead of lowering taxes.

M. Brooke, Langford Resident - The speaker expressed concern about tax increase and the effect on renters. The speaker expressed concern about playing catch-up from previous years of low increases.

Greg, Florence Lake Rd - The speaker expressed concern about tax increase and the effect on rental increases.

Mayor Goodmanson called for second time speakers:

T.L. Renken-Sebastian, Jacklin/Orono - The speaker spoke in favour of the funding of the HR consultants in regard to inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility at City Hall.

L. Foxall, Langford Resident - The speaker expressed concern about consultant fees. The speaker expressed concern about a tax increase. The speaker expressed concern regarding where the 16 million from province will go, why it's not in the financial plan. The speaker also expressed concern about suing the provincial government.

M. Dillabaugh, Director of Finance responded - Master plans costs are included in budget but through grant funding or surplus. If we removed or deferred any of the projects, it would not decrease taxes.

M. Morton, Langford Resident - The speaker inquired where does surplus come from.

M. Dillabaugh, Director of Finance responded - Generated by municipalities, retained earnings when revenues exceed expenses. Municipality has over 600 million dollars of assets. Noted the organization must have some surplus. Using some of that surplus to pay for some projects and plans, for example the Catholic church at Royal Roads University. No surplus = raised taxes for those projects. Surplus allows us to offset, and smooth out tax increase from year to year. Money sits at surplus before spending in a future year.

A. Rossander, Langford Resident - The speaker expressed concern about the tax increase. The speaker stated that the City should look at all possible ways to lower taxes.

B. Sahlstrom, Walfred Rd - The speaker requested some clarification on the purchase of the YMCA. The speaker expressed concern regarding the price and whether residents get a vote in how the money is spent.

M. Dillabaugh, Director of Finance responded - Anything the City buys becomes an asset of the municipality, all land acquisitions is in camera and kept confidential.

D. James, Dornier Rd - The speaker expressed concern about purchase of YMCA. The speaker spoke in favour of the ebike grant. The speaker is not in support of free libraries. The speaker stated there are already enough free libraries. The speaker stated they would like the ebike program expanded instead. Less cars on road equals less road maintenance.

M. Dillabaugh, Director of Finance responded - They encouraged the caller to watch the meeting video for earlier clarification on YMCA.

S. Sifert, Langford Resident - The speaker expressed concern about spending emergency funds on plans. The speaker stated they don't agree the City should be paying for consultants. The speaker is concerned about having a referendum for the stadium. The speaker stated there should have been a referendum for purchasing the YMCA. The speaker is concerned about the

budget amount for the Royal Roads University. The speaker expressed concern regarding the proposed ebike program.

B. Hutchins, Director of Corporate Services responded - That in 2019 the Council made a commitment to the Province. The funding is to be used to attract businesses and residents to the downtown core.

Nicholas Johal, Walfred Rd - The speaker inquired whether they are local or travel to assist with the budget. The speaker expressed concern regarding the cost of not using local consultants.

M. Dillabaugh, Director of Finance responded -There will be a selection process for hiring consultants, he cannot say whether they are local or not as they are not hired yet and is subject to budget approval.

R, Louie, Langford Resident - The speaker stated they would like to look at rebates in general versus ebikes only. The speaker expressed opposition to community garden to decrease taxes.

N. Johal, Langford Resident - The speaker expressed concern regarding ebike safety and fires. The speaker inquired about the cost of Mayor Goodmanson's desk. The speaker inquired if Chief Aubrey would support ebikes in the budget due to known fires.

Mayor Goodmanson responded - The item was on sale, does not have exact price.

M. Dillabaugh, Director of Finance responded - That the desk price information can be obtained from the Freedom of Information process.

Chief Aubrey responded - They cannot comment on the budget, but there have been known fires due to ebike batteries. They would discuss concerns with resident outside of chambers.

N. Johal, Walfred Rd - The speaker expressed support for libraries, believes the City could go about it differently to reduce taxes by requesting donations.

M. Wignall, Selwyn Rd - The speaker expressed concern about tax increase and projected increases. The speaker appreciates allocated funds. The speaker inquired why some of the projects can't be delayed.

Mayor Goodmanson called for third time speakers.

T.L. Renken-Sebastian Jacklin/Orono - The speaker expressed concern why the City isn't buying Emergency Support Services a new vehicle. The speaker inquired to department heads regarding not hiring additional staff, what are the effects on mental and physical wellness of current staff.

Chief Aubrey responded - They applied for a grant to fund trailer renovations. Emergency Support Services Directors are pleased with what we are able to provide for them.

B. Hutchins, Director of Corporate Services responded - That City Hall is a lean organization, any new hires are to provide current service levels to a growing community.

M. Morton, Phelps Ave - The speaker inquired about who is paying the rent for YMCA right now.

M. Dillabaugh, Director of Finance responded - That the City is currently paying 1.9 million dollars to the Westhills Land Corporation.

N. Johal, Langford Resident - The speaker inquired if 1.9 million dollars to the YMCA is for rent.

M. Dillabaugh, Director of Finance responded - That it is a lease payment.

N. Johal, Langford Resident - The speaker inquired if three RCMP officers are enough or should we have the five asked for in the budget.

Mayor Goodmanson responded - That three officers were brought forward from last years budget, became aware of 5 recently and it has not been deliberated yet.

L. Foxall, Langford Resident - The speaker inquired about what is being done to increase investments in Langford.

Mayor Goodmanson responded - That the speaker's inquiry is not a budget item.

M. Dillabaugh, Director of Finance responded - Current budget projects are similar or slightly higher revenues than last year.

L. Foxall, Langford Resident - The speaker inquired if health care initiatives are planned.

M. Dillabaugh, Director of Finance responded - Health care is a provincial jurisdiction, identified in Council's strategic plan to advocate on behalf of residents.

L. Foxall, Langford Resident - The speaker disagrees that it is Healthcare is provincial jurisdiction, as Colwood is helping with healthcare.

S. Rossander, Langford Resident - The speaker inquired if taxation is a surplus revenue source. The speaker inquired if a contract amendment is required to pay Westhills and not the YMCA. The speaker stated that the City is in violation of contract if paying more than the maximum of \$950,000 to be paid.

M. Dillabaugh, Director of Finance responded - That surplus generated when revenue exceeds expenditures. The second question it an operational matter and doesn't impact current budget discussion.

D. James, Langford Resident - The speaker supports a proposed staff increase. The speaker supports community gardens. The speaker inquired whether Council has considered about other services, food banks for example.

M. Wignall, Selwyn Rd - The speaker expressed concern about fees decreasing from permits and development in Langford. The speaker inquired if there is an opportunity to do a "plan b" should development drop off completely.

M. Dillabaugh, Director of Finance responded - The revenues and expenditures are budgeted conservatively. Budgets are monitored throughout the year; operational adjustments are made accordingly.

A. Rossander, Langford Resident - The speaker expressed concern about increase to population and permits and license fees should be increasing not decreasing yearly.

M. Baldwin, Director of Planning and Subdivision - The increase to population is a target in the Official Community Plan, a refreshed plan will address how we will accommodate the increase. We are not sure when the increase will happen, could be 25 years out.

Mayor Goodmanson responded - Population increase could be decades off, we are looking at the next five years only. The speaker can contact City Hall for further clarification.

S. Sifert, Langford Resident - The speaker inquired what is CRD budget compared to last year.

M. Dillabaugh, Director of Finance responded - That information is not available yet.

S. Rossander, Langford Resident - The speaker expressed concern that the 2023 actuals should be made public. The speaker stated how do we know what the surplus is when we don't know the actuals. Are we using unrestricted cash on hand.

M. Dillabaugh, Director of Finance responded - Surplus is accumulated over a number of years. Cash and surplus are two different things. We have a large cash balance, a fairly large portion of that is restrictive for certain purposes. The City doesn't treat cash as restricted or unrestricted.

Mayor Goodmanson called for 4th time speakers.

Councillor Harder inquired - Are we allowing 4th time speakers, is it in the procedure bylaw?

M. Watmough, Deputy Director of Corporate Services responded - The matter is not specific, it is at Council's discretion.

T.L. Renken-Sebastian Jacklin/Orono - Speaker inquired about the impacts of delaying transfers to reserves. Speaker expressed support for co-op students/graduate students working in the municipality and developing plans that can be completed by staff. Speaker noted RCMP officers are moving to other jurisdictions and wondered if the municipality could get a signing bonus payment as we trained these individuals.

Mayor Goodmanson responded - Langford fire volunteers are the ones being lost to paid positions elsewhere.

Chief Aubrey responded - Reimbursement can be challenging as many people are volunteering seeking experience to apply for career positions Challenging to get a reimbursement for someone who is volunteering their time.

B. Hutchins, Director of Corporate Services responded - The climate change position is completely funded through a grant program and co-op students are frequently hired.

M. Dillabaugh, Director of Finance responded - Transfers to reserves are to be used for capital purposes. Transfers to reserves help the municipality save for expenses upcoming and help level out tax increases.

C. Carlson, Saanich - Speaker expressed concern about the proposed property tax increase.

Mayor Goodmanson closed public participation.

MOVED BY: HARDER
SECONDED: WAGNER

THAT Committee of the Whole request that staff bring back a report to the next Committee of the Whole meeting with further information briefly outlining each proposed new budget item as listed in the presentation.

Motion CARRIED.

7. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY: GUIRY
SECONDED: WAGNER

THAT the Committee adjourn the meeting.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:17 pm.

Motion CARRIED.

Presiding Council Member

Certified Correct - Corporate Officer

DRAFT