MINUTES of the COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
Held Monday, March 1, 2021 @ 7:00 PM
2021-2025 Five Year Financial Plan Discussions – E-Town Hall
Zoom Webinar

PRESENT: Mayor S. Minions
Councillor R. Corbeil
Councillor D. Haggard
Councillor R. Paulson
Councillor H. Poon
Councillor C. Solda
Councillor D. Washington

VIRTUAL PARTICIPANTS: 12

A. <u>CALL TO ORDER & APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA</u>

MOVED and SECONDED, THAT the agenda be approved as circulated.
CARRIED

B. <u>ADOPTION OF MINUTES</u>

MOVED and SECONDED, THAT the minutes of the meeting held at 4:00 pm on February 16, 2021, be adopted.
CARRIED

C. <u>DELEGATIONS</u>

D. <u>UNFINISHED BUSINESS</u>

1. <u>"City of Port Alberni 2021 – 2025 Financial Plan Bylaw No. 5023"</u>

The Director of Finance provided members of the Committee with a verbal overview of the changes made to date and invited any further questions or requests for clarification from members of the Committee.

The following outlines questions from Members of the Committee and associated staff responses. Questions posed by Members of the Committee have been captured on the existing Q&A summary document.

Members of the Committee commented/questioned as follows:

- Clarify non-market change projected at 2.76%?
  Over the last few years non-market change has diluted the tax impact on single-family residential homes. Council still has the ability to amend historical practices. Council could possibly look at shifting and use non-market change to put into a reserve fund or reserves for future Capital. The current Plan identifies non-market change being applied in each class.
- COVID-19 Local Government Restart Grant funding. As there is a time limit and criteria on how funding is used, is there a possibility we won't use all of the funds?
- *The City utilized 1.2 million in 2020 and there is 2.3 million identified for use in 2021. The province has a plan for funding to be utilized in 2020-2021 and after that criteria will be*

very specific as far as expenditures related to this funding. The City anticipates the full use of these funds in 2021.

- Non-market change definition?
  Includes the values that we see from new properties that are constructed. i.e. vacant land or land that has been developed.
- Residents concerned when their property assessment has gone up that it is increased taxation revenue for City.
  An increase in assessments does not necessarily result in the City collecting more taxes.
- There is a 'Notice of Motion' to come forward at the March 8, 2021 Regular meeting regarding allocating funds for a new Aquatic Centre that could require an adjustment within the budget – Can it still be addressed?
  Yes, there is still time to make adjustments.
- What is the net financial impact based on the $790,419 reduction from the previous calendar year?
  Last year was a 1.9% increase year-over-year and this year we are currently at 3.95%. If we exclude non-market change it would be a drop of 2.72%.
- What is the value of non-market change on the industrial class versus the residential class? *Within the Completed roll from BC Assessment the increase in taxable values is $2,238,300 within light industry year-over-year and $35,899,800 in the entire residential class.*
- If we tax industrial at the existing rates that we tax everybody else, how many tax dollars would be brought in from those two classes of change?
  Answer will be provided on Q&A Summary.
- Last year $200,000 was set-aside for COVID-19 relief. Now that we have received Local Government Restart funding can we re-allocate that?
  The $200,000 would make up part of the overall surplus in 2020, the updated Financial Plan will reflect the current estimated surplus.
- In the Q&A Summary, Q51 – Summary of $70,000 for McLean Mill. The answer provided includes $70,000 annual budget (consisting of $60,000 to manage anticipated operational needs at a minimum required level, and an additional $10,000 per year to perform the required groundwater monitoring post Bunker C spill. Can you please provide further clarification for the $60,000 in operational funds?
  This is related to operational impacts. There was an increase in 2020 for on-site work and equipment costs.
- What is the projected surplus amount?
  Year-end reconciliations are scheduled to be complete on March 8th at which time a total can be determined with a review of balances. The updated Financial Plan will reflect the current estimated surplus.

- Suggestion that Councillors review the contract with the Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce for McLean Mill in regards to services and costs in advance of a discussion about contractor responsibilities at a future Council meeting.
  Staff to provide the agreement to Council for review.
- Mayor Minions and Councillor Paulson attended a recent Committee of the Whole meeting at the Alberni Clayoquot Regional District at which time next steps and pursuing a feasibility study was discussed with regards to a new Aquatic Centre. The Committee members recommended to the Board that both the study and public engagement move forward. The last feasibility study was completed 2011. More information is now required as demographics have changed and public input is required once again from the entire Valley. The Board voted unanimously to support this project.

E. PUBLIC INPUT/QUESTION PERIOD

Randy Fraser

Q: Need to consider the 5-year Financial Plan funding proposed for Connect the Quays project and the impact it would have on the proposed new pool and other projects/services in the City. Currently there is 4.6M allocated towards this project in the first three years. The Financial Plan reflects less than $800,000 on roadwork. People feel that a pool is a higher priority. Reserves are needed and useful when moving forward with a new pool with regards to both grant applications and the impact to tax payers.

A: There is still a lot of work and decisions to be made regarding the Connect the Quays project. Allocating those funds into the budget is a requirement for the submission of grant applications. Additionally, road work gets slotted in as needed, these are not final numbers. The 1.6M and $90,000 referenced are a combination of Parks and Recreation Reserve and Carbon Reserve.
The City must look at what options are available to undertake the project in order to show that there is funding options available within our Financial Plan when a grant submission is made.
Understanding that Council has the ability to make amendments in the coming years to use other funding source other than initially planned.

Susan Alverez

Q: It is not the year to raise taxes nor is there a need. The Housing Needs Assessment Survey conducted by the City and Alberni Regional Clayoquot District referenced rent increased while median income decreased. Increasing taxes will exasperate the issue for both home owners and renters. The BC Housing registry states there were 104 new homes registered in the Alberni Clayoquot Regional District in 2020. Property assessments as of July 1, 2020 increased 7%. Without increasing taxes, the City will still benefit from the assessment increase. Additionally, the Connect the Quays project is a good idea but it is not a good time to move forward.

A: Certainly housing affordability is a challenge. It is important to note that we do have 200 units of approved, designated housing units coming [funded by BC Housing]. For clarification, an increase in assessments does not necessarily result in the City collecting more taxes.

Joel Marriot
Q1: Is there a list of City-owned properties for those interested in building?

A1: Please contact the Director of Corporate Services or Director of Development Services for information.

Q2: Joel Marriott - Sent an email to Council regarding 'Fallen Feathers' crosswalk light program. Are there any projects/programs taking place in the City that are similar? [Note: email sent today, March 1, 2021]

A2: Haven't viewed the package at this time. The City is currently leading a pedestrian safety education program and are always open to partnering with a non-profit on projects. There is also a study to be undertaken by ICBC regarding crosswalk safety in the near future.

Diane Proctor
C: Does not feel now is the time to undertake the Connect the Quays project.

Email Submissions
Leslie and Gerry Walerius
Q1: Please provide additional information regarding the $790,419 adjustment from the 2020 budget?

A1: The tax rate was set higher than required based on the Vancouver Island Regional Library amount not being pulled out of the General Municipal Tax Requirements. Moving forward there will be a clear separation made so it does not occur again.

Q2: Grants in 2020 or earlier including:
i. Grants applied for (Federal, Provincial, Other).
ii. Amount of monies awarded to the City (Cost sharing amounts).
iii. Status of these Projects.

A2: Staff will reply via Q&A Summary.

Q3: Requesting information on outstanding (incomplete) Capital Projects.

Under review currently. Plan to assess year-to-date compared to actuals. Will be bringing forward additional information regarding those outstanding projects. Moving forward the City is looking at different ways to provide the public with information that is more transparent. Staff will provide a summary of funds and project statuses for Council.

C: Connect the Quays Strategic Capital Project
The budget reflects $7,536,822 of funding over a three-year period. As there is already a way to walk/ride from Quay to Quay, I would like to suggest that Council reconsider this extremely expensive C2Q project. As our community is subject to seasonal weather changes – hot in summer and rainy/cold in winter, Council should consider dusting off the 10-year-old aquatic centre study and build a pool and where the old pool is building an indoor walking/jogging track, fitness centre. Design suggestion https://www.athleticbusiness.com/rec-center/designing-walk-jog-tracks-for-recreational-users.html#lightbox/0/.

Carrie Thorpe
Q: I'm wondering what the City's plans are to increase the safety of crosswalks in town by improving lighting and installing pedestrian-controlled signals? There have been multiple fatalities at or near local crosswalks in recent years, and if you travel down lower 3rd Avenue/Stamp/Gertrude in the evening, it is very difficult to see pedestrians at any of those crosswalks.

A: Council has provided funding and in partnership with ICBC a network study will be undertaken. It will provide recommendation including the opportunity for increased pedestrian safety at high-risk crosswalks.

F. CORRESPONDENCE

1. The Director of Corporate Services summarized correspondence to Council as reflected in the Correspondence Summary dated March 1, 2021.

G. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED and SECONDED, THAT the meeting adjourn at 8:05 pm.
CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT

Mayor

Twyla Slonski
Corporate Officer