

MINUTES of the COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
Held Monday, February 3, 2020 @ 7:00 PM
In the City Hall Council Chambers – 4850 Argyle Street, Port Alberni, BC

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

Gallery: Approx. 20

A. CALL TO ORDER & APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

CARRIED

B. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED and SECONDED, THAT the minutes of the meeting held at 4:00 pm on January 20, 2020, be adopted.

CARRIED

C. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Five Year Financial Plan Bylaw 2020-2024, Bylaw No. 5003

Council gave 1st Reading to the City's "Five Year Financial Plan Bylaw 2020-2024, Bylaw No. 5003" at its Regular Meeting of Council held January 13, 2020. Now that the bylaw has been formally introduced, ongoing discussions continue with the following being considered:

Acting Director of Finance provided an overview of changes made to the City's five-year financial plan since Council gave 1st reading to the bylaw at its Regular meeting held January 13, 2020, as follows:

- 5.3% proposed tax increase to the average single-family home
- \$80,000 previously identified in capital 2020 - road sewer/water projects for 4th Avenue [Bruce to Melrose project] has been reallocated to general operating
- a substantial increase in the City's insurance premiums effective 2020 noting the increase is due, in part to a review of the City's past claims history as well as

a new statement of values which captured City assets not included in previous appraisals.

Members of the Committee expressed concern over the increase in the City's insurance premiums and suggested that the City explore insurance coverage with the Municipal Insurance Association [MIA].

MOVED and SECONDED, THAT members of the Committee recommend that Council instruct staff to explore the City's options in obtaining insurance from the Municipal Insurance Association [MIA] and costs associated with same.

CARRIED

- a. Staff responses to questions raised at the Committee of the Whole meeting held January 20, 2020

The CAO provided a review of the spreadsheet summarizing questions previously asked by the Committee at its Committee of the Whole meeting held January 20, 2020 and the responses from staff. The CAO also brought to the Committee's attention an amended expense summary outlining the City's 2020 expected expenses for the McLean Mill [operator/expense agreement; capital projects and the dam project] in the amount of \$400,000.

Members asked if it is intended that the mill will be running and if not, why proceed with dam work? Staff noted that the dam is significantly safer since stream diversion work was done but the dam requires additional works to ensure hold back of the log pond and to ensure protection of this historical asset.

Members also sought clarification regarding the proposed 3rd Avenue Beautification project, asking if it could be done in phases. The CAO advised that staff are actively working on this project and are moving forward with a detailed design. Staff will be in a better position to respond to a possible phased approach once the design work has been completed. Staff will also be looking to utilize city resources for some of the work and in an effort to reduce overall project costs. While a recommendation that Council instruct staff to place half of the proposed project costs in a contingency fund in the year 2020 and the remaining half allocate to 2021, the recommendation was withdrawn until additional project information is provided by staff.

b. Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus

The Fire Chief addressed the Committee highlighting amendments made to the five-year financial plan in order to accommodate the purchase to replace the self-contained breathing apparatus. Staff were also looking to the Committee to authorize early approval [at Council's next RCM] to allocate \$55,000 from general capital towards the purchase of hydraulic rescue tools in the year 2021; and to allocate \$737,643 in 2021 for replacement of Engine #1.

Prior to the Committee moving forward with early approval requests, members would prefer to receive and review a more in-depth vehicle replacement schedule.

c. Vehicle Equipment Replacement Process/Equipment Replacement Reserve Fund [ERRF]

Acting Director of Finance spoke to the City's Equipment Replacement Reserve Fund highlighting replacement criteria used when considering the replacement of City equipment/vehicles. The City's Mechanical Services Superintendent, was also in attendance and provided Council with a more detailed overview of considerations made prior to equipment replacement and their practice of extending the life of the equipment whenever possible.

Additional questions/information/comments by the Committee:

- Reserve funds in general and what projects are planned and/or could be taken from these funds in order to offset general taxation. Staff will prepare a detailed report speaking to the City's reserve accounts and intended uses and report back to the Committee.
- 10th Avenue/Roger Street Traffic Controllers; Penny Lane bridge, furnace replacement and security camera replacement to be funded through the Parks & Recreation reserve fund if possible
- suggest that the city works facility relocation plan be moved from 2020 and reassigned to the year 2021. It was also suggested that the report prepared by the consultant be provided to the Emergency Planning Committee for their information and comment.

MOVED and SECONDED, THAT members of the Committee recommend that Council instruct staff to remove the city works facility relocation plan in the amount of \$50,000 from the year 2020 and reallocate to the 2021 calendar year.

CARRIED

- \$150,000 allocated for signage includes a 'welcome to Port Alberni' sign as well a number of wayfinding signage to be strategically placed throughout the City. The Committee may wish to consider allocating 75,000 this year and the remaining 75,000 in 2021.

MOVED and SECONDED, THAT members of the Committee recommend that Council instruct staff to reduce the funds currently allocated to the "Welcome to Port Alberni Signage Project" in the City's Five-Year Financial Plan 2020 – 2024, to \$75,000 [from \$150,000] in 2020 and place the remaining \$75,000 in the 2021 calendar year.

CARRIED

- the Committee requested a report from staff speaking to the City's total debt from borrowing

MOVED and SECONDED, THAT members of the Committee recommend that Council instruct staff to prepare a report that outlines the City's total debt from borrowing and to which project the debt was incurred. The report should also outline the methods that the debt is to be repaid including but not limited to [payments by property owners, user fees, etc.] and also include the debt per capita/per household] and the dates when the debt is scheduled to mature.

CARRIED

- commented on the status of the financial planning process; next meeting and public engagement opportunities, noting the next Committee of the Whole meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 18, 2020. As some members will be absent, members requested that staff review other possible dates to facilitate a meeting which would see all members present including conducting an e-townhall type meeting to allow for public input.

D. CORRESPONDENCE

1. Don Dunbar - email dated January 22nd requesting clarification around costs associated with the provision of recreational services and contributions on the part of residents & non-residents.
2. Peter Finch – emails dated January 29th & 30th commenting on employee wages & seeking clarification on the City's annual percentage increase/proposed projects etc.
3. Janine Dame – email dated January 29th requesting Council consider allocating monies in the financial plan to address invasive plants, particularly, Knotweed.

Members received the correspondence listed above. Staff to prepare responses to the letter writers. The Director of Parks, Recreation and Heritage will prepare a brief report speaking to the issue of Knotweed and whether it requires funding on the part of the City.

E. PUBLIC INPUT/COMMENTS

Mr. Pete Milliken commented as follows:

- inquired about the working agreements with the other fire departments [Beaver Creek; Cherry Creek etc.] and given these agreements, why do we require another fire truck?
- Port Alberni remains an industrial town and to remove two lanes of traffic along 3rd Avenue may not be a positive step, noting the City will still have trucks going through Town.
- costs associated with McLean Mill – could we not look to Ottawa for financial assistance.

Ms. Anne Gagnon [Catherine]

- asked Council how they could consider beautifying two blocks of the City when so many streets outside of the 2 blocks on 3rd Avenue also need work.
- improvements have been tried in the past with considerable cost to taxpayers
- if you want to encourage business in the Uptown District, we have to solve the crime problem, homelessness, mental health and drug addition

Mr. John Zoet

- looking at retirement in 5 years but may not be in a position given the tax increases proposed
- does not support 3rd Avenue Beautification project when potholes need repair throughout the City. Does not support parallel parking given the problems with the current [angle] parking
- income is going down and he can not afford to retire here. His parents are retired here and he doesn't know how they do it given their retirement income.

Ms. Jane Pfannenschmidt

- concerned with 3rd Avenue Beautification project and reducing traffic to two lanes and the impact this may have to emergency response vehicles and snow removal. The inconvenience current business owners will experience when works get underway – will the merchants be able to recover.
- prefers 3rd Avenue as it is now

Mr. Rob Jackson

- returned to Port Alberni approximately 2.5 years ago and noted the business his parents purchased in Port Alberni a number of years ago
- in his opinion, 3rd Avenue needs improvements
- over the years he has witnessed questionable behavior taking place in Gaiga square and the impacts this has in the Uptown area.

Mr. Michael Moore

- thanked the members for their work and supports the idea of revitalization for the Uptown district. Encouraged and hopeful that the City may tie in sewer/water works with the project.
- appreciates efforts to keep taxes in line but sees deferring costs to future years is not the solution -- not increasing taxes in future years is just as important.
- need to look at the City as a whole when considering improvements
- experiencing too much crime in the City and efforts need to be made on ways to improve this trend.

Ms. Anne Gagnon asked what the City paid the consultant for the 3rd Avenue Beautification Report? Ms. Gagnon also noted that while she rides her bicycle, she avoids Stamp Ave., Gertrude and Johnston as well as 10th Avenue. Proposing a bike lane for two blocks on 3rd Avenue is not the best use of monies when money could be better spent creating bike lines elsewhere in the City.

Debbie, a new resident of Port Alberni, commented that she recently purchased a house on 10th Avenue and moved to the City due to its affordability. She inquired what the City spends to help the clinic, homelessness or people who need counseling, etc.

Chair Minions thanked the public for their comments and took this opportunity to advise of the steps the City is taking in creating housing opportunities and its non-policing strategies to address the City's crime, homelessness and addition population.

F. ADJOURNMENT

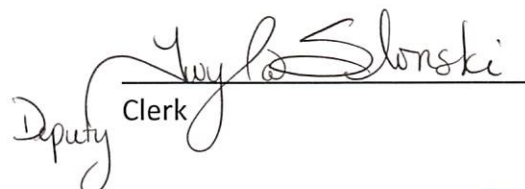
MOVED and SECONDED, THAT the meeting adjourn at 9:13 pm.

CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT



Mayor



Deputy Clerk