

**MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**  
**Monday, March 6, 2023 @ 6:00 PM**  
**In the City Hall Council Chambers | 4850 Argyle Street, Port Alberni, BC**

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**Present:** Mayor S. Minions  
Councillor D. Dame  
Councillor J. Douglas  
Councillor D. Haggard  
Councillor C. Mealey  
Councillor C. Solda

**Absent:** Councillor T. Patola

**Staff:** S. Smith, Director of Development Services | Deputy CAO  
D. Leurebourg, Director of Corporate Services  
A. McGifford, Director of Finance  
W. Thorpe, Director of Parks, Recreation and Heritage  
R. Dickinson, Director of Engineering and Public Works  
R. Macauley, Deputy Director of Finance  
P. Deakin, Manager of Economic Development  
W. Paterson, Deputy Fire Chief  
S. Darling, Deputy Director of Corporate Services/Recording Secretary  
J. Pelech, Manager of Information Technology

**Gallery:** 3

**A. CALL TO ORDER & APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM.

*MOVED AND SECONDED, THAT the agenda be amended to include an item under New Business G.1 | Committee of the Whole Meeting Structure and an item under Question Period H.1 | Aquatic Centre Lifeguard Staffing. The agenda was then adopted as amended.*

**CARRIED**

**B. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

*MOVED AND SECONDED, THAT the minutes of the meeting held at 6:00 pm on February 6, 2023 be adopted, as presented.*

**CARRIED**

**C. DELEGATIONS**

**D. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**1. "City of Port Alberni 2023 – 2027 Financial Plan Bylaw No. 5075, 2023"**

The Director of Finance provided members with an overview of the draft financial plan to date and invited further questions, clarifications or recommendations from members of the Committee.

The following outlines questions from Members of the Committee and associated staff responses. *[Note: Financial Plan questions posed by Members of the Committee have also been captured on the Q&A summary document and where answers are not provided, they will be addressed on the summary at the future meeting.]*

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Members of the Committee commented/questioned as follows:

- Explanation of Solid Waste decrease?  
*Two items contribute to the decrease, the ERRF contribution for 2023 was reduced by \$125,000 (one time) to enable a lower tax rate in 2023. Cost in the first year reflects the start of a new program and a higher level of effort by staff, that is lessened in following years.*
- Line 21229: Other Financial Management. Up 40%. Could you please provide justification for increase?
- *Software costs are now allocated to each department, no longer rolled up within 21261 - Information Technology. That accounts for approximately 75% of the increase year over year. Asset Retirement Obligation – Public Sector Accounting Standard is also budgeted in this line item for 2023.*
- Line 21259: Other Common Services. Up 8.79% to \$503,000. Could you please provide justification for increase?  
*City phone lines, internet, cable costs, recycling, shredding, office supplies. reconciliation, postage, advertising, etc. all have been seeing inflationary increases.*
- Line 21925 - Council Travel and Development Increase. Could you please provide justification for increase?  
*Estimated cost to provide the budget capacity to allow council to attend the UBCM, AVICC, FCM. Additional training for new Council. Estimated based on full return of normal travel.*
- Line 21660 - Police Building Maintenance. Could you please provide justification?  
*Floors, duct cleaning, pressure washing, electrical work, overhead doors. Hydro, Fortis makes up about 25%.*
- Line 22926 - Building Inspector Vehicle. Could you please provide justification for increase?  
*2nd vehicle purchased for 2<sup>nd</sup> Building Inspector staff position & increased fuel costs.*
- Line 23138 - Shop Overhead. Could you please provide justification for increase?  
*Regulatory requirements of inspections, coveralls, time allocated outside of general training and maintenance.*
- Line 23264 - Traffic and Roadway Signs. Could you please provide justification for increase?  
*Hydro, maintenance, staff wages.*
- Line 23264 - Budgeted \$10,000 actual was \$26,000. Is the overage out of the norm or will that be the new annual budgeted amount?  
*Not anticipated to be one time - this is likely ongoing given:*

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*Operations cost – 45% to hydro costs*

*Maintenance – contractors – flagging & electrical 45%*

*10% is staff time*

- Line 23333 - Storm Sewer Lift Station. Could you please provide justification for increase?

*Pump repairs and maintenance and associated staff time.*

- Line 27225 - Parks Vehicles, Equip. Repairs. Could you please provide justification for increase?

*Fuel costs have increased, regular maintenance.*

Line 28220 - Transfers to General Capital Reserves. Could you please explain this?

*Fund accounting utilized. General fund operational transfer to Capital from taxation in the current year to perform capital works.*

- Replacement of 2008 Ford Ranger \$83,000. What vehicle is being considered for the replacement?

*Staff review and assess the needs for the replacement asset and bring forward a recommendation based on what could be available in the market to provide the city a solution to our need. The market dictates what could be provided given certain criteria and based on the best value for tax payer dollars.*

- Road surfacing surplus? Why weren't works completed?

*Staffing capacity as it relates to operations versus capital project requirements.*

- Grant for Roger Creek Trail just received. Would we be better to use grant for infrastructure such as storm sewer lift station?

*Grant funding is received based on specific application criteria related to the proposed project that the City must meet in order to receive funds.*

- Is there a policy to review facility rental fees?

*Fees and services are captured by bylaw and could be amended as per Council direction.*

- Would the facility audit review support fees and services review?

*Line items and project accounting track expenditures by facility. Raw data could be provided to Council if requested. A Facilities Master Plan Audit and Review could be presented to Council for lifespan and value.*

- Roger Creek Connector Trail Project grant funding received. When will work start? Anticipated project completion and is there contingency funding?

*The project envisioned using consultants, i.e. fisheries, engineering, biology, etc. City crews are not anticipated to complete work. Grant funding expectations are that the project be completed by March 2024. Consultants were advised to take inflation into consideration during application process (October 2022).*

- City facilities that are rented to community organizations for minimal costs, will these be included in the Facility Audit?  
*Intent with audit is to include all City facilities regardless of tenant or occupant.*
- Is there a Recreation Services user fee review planned?  
*Should Council direct, the fees and charges bylaw could be reviewed.*
- Is there a plan to raise building permit fees and development cost charges?  
*Development Services is working on a draft building bylaw which includes permit fees that will be brought forward to Council in April or May.  
Development Cost Charge amendments are a much larger project and requires in-depth engineering studies. Staff are looking at the possibility of a minor modification in the interim to enable a small increase.*
- Is Somass Lands funding coming from land reserve and not affecting taxation?  
*Yes, the funding is coming from the Land Reserve*
- Tree planting, \$76,500 what does that include?  
*In the Capital Plan - there is a Project [line] number includes staff time, equipment, contract costs if used, advertisements, all aspects related to the cost of doing the work.  
Will the replacement of the Dakota Fire Services truck be a larger model?  
The replacement will be a half-ton truck in order to tow the trailer currently used and to enable more equipment to be transported.*

Councillor Dame exited at 7:00 pm and returned at 7:02 pm

- Solid waste collection trucks have experienced some recent mechanical issues. Are these fixable/ongoing? Replacement?  
*There are presently three trucks [2018 model]. New trucks will be purchased at staggered rates to assist in the timing of mechanical services requirements.*
- Does the Alberni Clayoquot Regional District contribute to the Parks, Recreation and Heritage Reserve?  
*The ACRD does not contribute funds directly to the PRH reserve. As the fund is replenished through a percentage of recreation user fees, some of these fees would include that of ACRD users.*
- What is the surplus amount for 2022?  
*The amount has not yet been finalized as reconciliations are still underway.*

Councillor Douglas exited at 7:09 pm and returned at 7:12 pm

- Are facility hot water tanks electric and is there the ability to move to on demand gas to allow for rebates and longer warranty.  
*The majority of City facilities require large industrial/commercial units. Staff evaluate and consider all options for each facility as required for the best solution and outcome.*

- Will there be road improvements made to Burde Street from 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Estevan Street when ongoing developments are completed?  
*The developments are scheduled to be completed by end of year. The City will then perform curb, sidewalk, and paving work in the area.*
- Will a traffic light be installed in the Burde Street area due to increased density?  
*A recent engineering study determined it is not warranted for another 10 years. General intersection improvements are being reviewed.*

Councillor Mealey and Haggard exited at 7:17 pm and returned at 7:18 pm

- Roadway lifespan and replacement costs – Master plan? \$150,000. Potentially use building grant for budget to complete that work earlier?  
*Staff will seek Council direction to populate this asset management work.*
- RCMP Emergency Reserve balance depleted. Will the RCMP Emergency Reserve Fund continue to be used for Community Policing?  
*Reserve will continue to be repopulated over time and it is Council's discretion as to how the funds are used. It is anticipated that repayment options will be provided for the \$1.2M in retro pay.*
- Would like to increase contingency fund from \$100,000 back to \$200,000.  
*Council may make the recommendation to add this back to the Financial Plan and set the amount at \$200,000.*
- \$800,000 for Public Works boiler and roof repair – what is the breakdown for the two items and is it feasible to fund future replacement?  
*Intention is to determine whether to relocate Public Works facility or replace roof and boiler. Potential to spend \$90,000 to repair in interim. Estimates are that the roof[s] are in the \$450K range whereas the boiler is in the \$350K range.*

#### **E. STAFF REPORTS**

##### **1. Current and Proposed Financial Reserves**

The Deputy Director of Finance provided members with information relating to reserve funds.

The following outlines questions from Members of the Committee and associated staff responses.

Members of the Committee commented/questioned as follows:

- Aquatic Centre Reserve Fund directed but not established?  
*Not a formal statutory reserve. Established a fund of \$30,000 for determinations.*
- How does Investment Income work?  
*Most reserves are in short term investments, usually 100 percent guaranteed for capital preservation. Most reserves state that interest to go back into the reserve for its intended usage. General Reserve interest may be used at the discretion of Council.*

*MOVED AND SECONDED, THAT members of the Committee recommend to Council that Council direct staff to prepare a report regarding the establishment of reserves based on the proposed reserves outlined in the staff report titled 'Current and Proposed Financial Reserves' and dated February 10, 2023.*

**CARRIED**

- What is the City's total borrowing debt including ACRD? When do you expect debt to be paid off and how much money can we borrow?

*ACRD debt is not the City's debt as a service area for the Regional Airport. As a member of the service we have an allocation of that debt. Various debts for different borrowings over the last 10-15 years, expires between 2031-2050. Does not include new debt anticipated to be undertaken this year of \$8.5M. At the end of 2022 just under \$13M on outstanding debt with the Municipal Finance Authority. Liability servicing capacity is calculated annually and at the end of December 2021 there was \$8.4M available.*

- If the ACRD raises taxes, how will it affect the City?

*MOVED AND SECONDED, THAT members of the Committee recommend to Council that Council direct staff to prepare a report regarding the increase of Development Cost Charges.*

- What is the City's credit rating?  
*The Municipal Finance Authority is representative of all local governments in the province and given because of the City's reporting and standards, we are receiving an excellent rate.*

**F. CORRESPONDENCE**

*The Director of Corporate Services summarized correspondence to the Committee as follows:*

- a. L. Walerius | Financial Plan Questions

**G. NEW BUSINESS**

1. Committee of the Whole Meeting Structure  
*To be discussed as part of the Council Procedures Bylaw amendment process.*

**H. QUESTION PERIOD**

**Councillor Mealey**

- Q. In relation to the Sunday Aquatic Centre closure, are staff working to train/hire Lifeguards.

*Staff are offering lifeguard leadership programming. There is a substantial commitment required for training/hiring lifeguards. Staff are working to reduce potential barriers to that process including a decreased fee for programming. Individuals interested in the leadership programs are encouraged to visit [www.playinpa.ca](http://www.playinpa.ca). Those who are certified and interested in applying can visit [Employment Opportunities | City of Port Alberni](#).*

**R. Smith**

- Q1. \$650,000 Somass Redevelopment is noted as coming from PRH Reserve, is that correct?
- Q2. Paving and Road Construction budget does not include the \$150,000. Would it not be prudent to include in order to continue required works?
- Q3. McLean Mill operating agreement – what was the amount of the 10% heritage fee for 2020/2021?
- Q4. McLean Mill operating agreement states the City will maintain effective signage related to 10% fee usage for the public – where is that info?  
*Haven't used funds for any projects as of yet.*
- Q5. How will delaying the funding for the Connect the Quays Pathway assist given inflation.  
*Council deferred the costs until such time that project plans are determined.*
- Q6. Update on Sanitary and Storm – Combined Sewer Overflow work completed for 2020, 2021, 2022 with approximately 57 kilometres remaining to be separated.  
*A report on capital project status including CSO work to be brought forward for Council's consideration.*
- Q7. Water Metre Replacement Program status?  
*Staff report scheduled for March 27<sup>th</sup> Regular Council meeting.*
- Q8. Reserve balance amounts?
- Q9. Debt servicing capacity clarification?
- Q10. RCMP Reserve – Capital expense for Public Safety Building outside reserve scope?  
*There are no restrictions on these funds, Council allocated the funds through the Financial Plan bylaws.*
- Q11. Number of RCMP officers funded as per contract versus budgeted amount?  
*The City commits to 34 municipal funded Officers annually, the budget reflects 32 Officers.*
- Q12. Internal borrowing repayment scheduled for pumper truck and ladder truck – being repaid not suspended?  
*One-time ERRF reduction to enable tax rate to not be impacted from Fire Services overage of \$300,000.*
- Q13. In 2017 Council direction was to increase major industrial taxation to provide for infrastructure renewal but this has not occurred. Does Council plan to increase taxes moving forward to support the required renewal?

**I. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOVED and SECONDED, THAT the meeting adjourn at 8:42 pm.**

**CARRIED**

CERTIFIED CORRECT

  
Mayor

  
Corporate Officer