

MINUTES of a meeting of the ESTIMATES COMMITTEE of the Municipal Council of The Corporation of the District of Oak Bay, held in the Council Chambers, Oak Bay Municipal Hall, 2167 Oak Bay Avenue, Oak Bay, B.C., on Wednesday, April 6, 2016.

PRESENT: Mayor N. Jensen, Chair
Councillor H. Braithwaite
Councillor T. Croft
Councillor M. Kirby
Councillor K. Murdoch
Councillor T. Ney
Councillor E. Zhelka

STAFF: Chief Administrative Officer, H. Koning
Acting Director of Corporate Services, M. Jones
Acting Deputy Director of Corporate Services, D. Schaffer
Director of Financial Services, D. Carter
Deputy Director of Financial Services, F. Pimentel
Chief Constable, A. Brinton
Fire Chief, D. Cockle
Deputy Fire Chief, T. Pearse
Director of Building and Planning, R. Thomassen
Acting Director of Engineering and Public Works, D. Brozuk

Mayor Jensen called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

The Mayor introduced the process by which the Estimates Committee would consider budget items and noted that the answers to questions raised at this meeting will be forthcoming at the April 13 meeting. He said this meeting is an opportunity to learn more about the day-to-day operations of the District's departments from the people directing those activities.

COMMUNICATIONS:

1. ***2016 Municipal Budget***

- Report: Director of Financial Services, April 5, 2016

The Director of Financial Services provided an overview of the 2016 budget as outlined in her memorandum to Estimates Committee. She noted that the budget presented represents a 3.19 per cent overall increase in municipal taxation; the average single-family residence will see a 2.57 per cent increase after considering solid waste charges. For the average house in Oak Bay, this would equate to an increase of \$82.44 over 2015.

Ms. Carter noted that assessment of individual properties is done by BC Assessment and that the District uses those values in its determination of the amount of taxation levied against each property. Following the long-standing direction of Council, the proposed tax rates were set to distribute equally between classes of property the increases required by the District for a balanced budget.

She said the District's reserve funds are in good shape and the District carries minimal debt. While there are uncertainties arising from union contracts which will be subject to negotiation, funds are being set aside as contingencies to deal with anticipated adjustments.

Discussion ensued regarding the state of the reserve funds and what would be done with surpluses identified or anticipated; whether or not the format of the information could be improved to make it more user-friendly for the public; how the Council strategic plan might impact budget considerations; and what sources of funding were being accessed for the various large projects on the District's agenda.

2. ***Strategic Priorities 2016***

- Report – Chief Administrative Officer, April 4, 2016

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) provided a presentation on the strategic priorities, reviewing the Council objectives, and lessons learned to date. Ms. Koning also provided comment on the distribution of staff work load and reviewed the status of current and upcoming strategic initiatives.

The strategic plan was discussed with regard to how well the budget reflects the strategic initiatives outlined therein. It was noted that the plan is meant to provide Council with an opportunity to constantly define and improve its strategic initiatives and consider whether new initiatives fit into the stated goals.

Discussion ensued regarding how to revisit and refine the plan over time and how to use it as a guidebook to inform decision making in every area of consideration; what the process might be to work with the plan and potentially make changes to the priorities; and how this reflects the need for information to be cycled back to Council in regard to communication between Council and the public.

3. ***Departmental Budgets (Operating and Capital)***

Oak Bay Police Department Operating and Capital Budget:

The Chief Constable was in attendance and responded to questions from Council on a number of issues, including changes to contracts with other Police Departments, the manageability of overtime, and the status of the building occupied by the Department.

MOVED and seconded: that it be recommended to Council that an expenditure of \$20,500 for building improvements be approved.

CARRIED

Oak Bay Fire Department and Emergency Program Operating and Capital Budget:

The Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief were in attendance and responded to questions regarding overtime, replacement of portable radios, laundering of turnout gear, funding requests for replacement of the exhaust extraction mechanism at the Fire Hall, and replacement of the Battalion 1 vehicle.

Building and Planning Department Operating and Capital Budget:

The Director of Building and Planning was in attendance and responded to questions from Council on a number of issues, including staffing levels, overtime budgets, consulting fees and the need for review of infill guidelines and policies, preliminary discussions regarding a potential development cost charges bylaw, and sea level rise planning. It was noted that

the enactment of the new Oak Bay Official Community Plan was driving a lot of the work being done in the department and a bylaw review will be necessary in the relatively near future.

Engineering and Public Works Departments Operating and Capital Budgets:

The Acting Director of Engineering and Public Works was in attendance and responded to questions from Council about salary and staffing levels, consulting fees and activities, and the status of several projects, including installation of bike lanes, completion of the Complete Street project, and the street-light replacement project.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD:

4. The following speakers addressed Committee during Public Participation Period:

James Sultanum, Oak Bay resident, addressed the Committee and noted a number of concerns about the strategic planning process, including whether it reflected the priorities of Council or those of individual Councillors, whether or not priorities had been ranked, and how priorities were added to the list presented at the beginning of the meeting. He further expressed concern about the use of consultants for large projects when considerable expertise exists in District staff and on the various committees that Council has appointed.

Esther Patterson, Oak Bay resident, stated that she would like the budget presented in a more graphic fashion to facilitate understanding by the public and to make for easier comparison with other municipalities. She wished for a clear number that could be tracked against inflation and benchmarked with other communities of similar size.

Andrew Stinson, Oak Bay resident, asked what the cost to run a by-election would be, in case a member of Council decided to run for provincial office in the next election.

5. *Summary of Adjustments*

There were no adjustments affecting the tax base made at this meeting.

MOVED and seconded: That the meeting of the Estimates Committee be concluded and review of the budget be continued at the next Estimates Committee meeting scheduled for April 13, 2016, at 5:30 PM.

CARRIED

ADJOURNMENT:

The Estimates Committee meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Chair

Acting Director of Corporate Services