

MINUTES of a meeting of 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 8, 2015.

PRESENT: Mayor N. Jensen (Chairman)  
Councillor H. Braithwaite  
Councillor T. Croft  
Councillor M. Kirby  
Councillor K. Murdoch  
Councillor T. Ney  
Councillor E. Zhelka

STAFF: Municipal Administrator, H. Koning  
Municipal Clerk, L. Hilton  
Municipal Treasurer, P. Walker  
Fire Chief, D. Cockle  
Deputy Fire Chief, T. Pearse  
Director of Building and Planning, R. Thomassen

Mayor Jensen called the meeting to order at 5:42 p.m.

COMMUNICATIONS:

1. MUNICIPAL TREASURER, April 4, 2015  
Re 2015 Municipal Budget

The Municipal Treasurer provided an overview of the 2015 budget as outlined in her memorandum to Estimates Committee. Overall, she noted, the budget as it stands represents an increase of 4.6% in the municipal portion of the property tax bill for the average residential property. With the solid waste charge included, the increase is 4.27%, she advised.

Ms. Walker drew attention to Council's long standing objective to distribute future property value tax increases equitably among the three main classes of property within the Municipality. The policy, therefore, is to adjust the tax rate ratios each year so that the increase on the average individual property is approximately the same for each of the main classes, she said.

The difference this year, Ms. Walker noted, relates to the Oak Bay Beach Hotel assessed values in the business class decreasing significantly. Should the policy regarding the setting of the tax rate ratios be followed, this could have a significant tax impact on other businesses in the Municipality in respect to raising the amount of taxes for the business class that would be required.

Concerns about the financial impact on, particularly, small businesses were raised, and following discussion, there was consensus that the Municipal Treasurer would bring back further information on options and impacts on various types of properties with a different tax ratio scheme to the next Estimates Committee meeting.

**Draft Council Strategic Plan:**

Attention was drawn to the draft strategic plan, the intention of which is to align with the budget and provide direction to staff on work priorities. The draft plan would, noted the Chief Administrative Officer, be placed before Council for formal consideration following the budget process.

**Municipal Archives:**

*Paid Archivist Position*

Jean Sparks, Volunteer Archivist, was in attendance in support of her request for an ongoing paid archivist, which it was noted is included in the Estimates Budget at this time starting September 1st. Ms. Sparks provided an overview of the reasons for the request, drawing attention to the contract work that had been provided in the Archives department over the years. She noted, however, that consistency in paid assistance would be desirable in helping to recruit and maintain volunteers, and in obtaining professional guidance in areas like the accession of documents for the Archives program.

Ms. Sparks noted that the number of hours required is relatively small at seven to 15 hours per week.

It was noted that the Committee could return to the request later in the budget deliberations process.

**Fire Department and Emergency Program Operating and Capital Budget:**

Chief Cockle and Deputy Chief Pearse were in attendance and answered questions from the Committee regarding the operating and capital budgets.

*Emergency Program Manager*

The Fire Chief provided an overview regarding a request to change the Emergency Program Manager from three-quarter time to full time. It was noted that the 2015 cost was included in the Estimates Budget, however, it was agreed further discussion in this regard, if required, could occur when the rest of the budget items had been considered.

**Building and Planning Department Operating and Capital Budget:**

Following review of the Fire Department operating and capital budgets, the Building and Planning Department budgets were reviewed.

*Clerical Support*

The Director of Building and Planning provided an overview of the related budgets, drawing attention to the request for an additional clerical position, which is included in the Estimates Budget for a potential start date of July 1, 2015, answering questions from the Committee in this regard.

Noting that if a new position was approved it would likely be beyond July 1 before a recruitment and hiring process could be completed, it was agreed to adjust the budget at this time to assume a potential September 1 start date.

**Summary of Adjustments:**

Description	Increase to Taxes	Decrease to Taxes
Oil Tank Permit Costs		\$10,000
Building and Planning Clerical Position		\$9,354
Sub-Total	\$0	\$19,354
Net Impact on Levy	\$(19,354)	
Pre-Meeting General and Debt Levy	\$20,171,946	
Revised General and Debt Levy	\$20,152,592	
% Change from Prior Year Levy	4.99%	

The Municipal Treasurer noted that given the potential changes to the business class tax rate ratio, the calculation of the overall increase for the average house was indeterminable at this point.

There was consensus to conclude the meeting and continue review of the budget at the next Estimates Committee meeting scheduled for April 15, 2015.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Certified Correct

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Municipal Clerk

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Chair