

SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP**MINUTES****Monday, November 1, 2021****Meeting held electronically and open to public attendance
in Council Chamber, City Hall****PRESENT:**

Mayor Jonathan Cote
Councillor Patrick Johnstone
Councillor Jamie McEvoy
Councillor Chuck Puchmayr
Councillor Mary Trentadue

ABSENT

Councillor Chinu Das
Councillor Nadine Nakagawa

STAFF PRESENT:

Ms. Lisa Spitale	Chief Administrative Officer
Ms. Jacque Killawee	City Clerk
Ms. Emilie Adin	Director of Climate Action, Planning and Development
Mr. Mike Anderson	Acting Manager of Transportation
Mr. Todd Ayotte	Manager, Community Arts and Theatre
Mr. Rupinder Basi	Supervisor of Development Services
Mr. Gabe Beliveau	Acting Manager of Engineering Operations
Mr. Curtis Bremner	Acting Fire Chief, New Westminster Fire and Rescue Services
Ms. Susan Buss	Deputy Chief Librarian
Mr. Jorge Cardenas	Chief Librarian
Mr. Rod Carle	General Manager, Electrical Utility
Mr. Blair Fryer	Manager, Communications and Economic Development
Mr. Richard Fong	Director of Human Resources
Mr. Dean Gibson	Director of Parks and Recreation
Mr. Dave Jansen	Chief Constable

Ms. Lisa Leblanc	Director of Engineering Services
Ms. Lorraine Lyle	Senior Manager of Finance
Mr. Craig MacFarlane	Manager of Legal Services
Ms. Erika Mashig	Manager, Parks and Open Space Planning, Design and Construction
Mr. Rob McCullough	Manager, Museums and Heritage Services
Ms. Jackie Teed	Senior Manager of Climate Action, Planning and Development
Ms. Harji Varn	Chief Financial Officer and Director of Finance
Ms. Nicole Ludwig	Assistant City Clerk

1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Mayor Cote opened the meeting at 1:30 p.m. and recognized with respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsurrendered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. He acknowledged that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. He recognized that, as a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on

2. CONSENT AGENDA

If Council decides, all the recommendations in the reports on the Consent Agenda can be approved in one motion, without discussion. If Council wishes to discuss a report, that report is removed from the Consent Agenda. A report may be removed in order to discuss it, because someone wants to vote against the report's recommendation, or because someone has a conflict of interest with the report. Any reports not removed from the Consent Agenda are passed without discussion.

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT Council adopt the recommendation for item 2.1 on consent.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

2.1 Budget 2022: Responses to Council Questions from October 4th Workshop

An informational report to provide Council with staff responses to several outstanding questions posed by Council at the October 4th Capital Budget Workshop.

THAT Council receive the November 1, 2021, report entitled "Budget 2022: Responses to Council Questions from October 4th Workshop" for information as part of the Budget deliberation process.

Adopted on Consent.

3. PRESENTATIONS

3.1 Budget 2022: Proposed 2022 Operating and Utility Budgets

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with detailed information on the 2022 Proposed General Fund Operating and Utility Budgets. The report also provides the proposed 2022 rate increases for the Electric, Water, Sewer and Solid Waste Utilities and will provide a high level rate projection for Property Taxes before Service Enhancements. Staff is providing Council with all pertinent operating budget information, even information that is more preliminary in nature, so that Council has a fulsome picture of the budget. The expectation is that Council will provide staff with feedback at the November 1st Operating Budget Workshop that will set the direction for the November 29th Draft 2022 Capital and Operating Budget and 5 Year Financial Plan Workshop.

Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer, introduced the draft budget and members of the Senior Management Team (SMT), Senior Managers, and Managers, as follows:

- Lorraine Lyle, Senior Manager of Finance – Financial Principles and Operating Budget Overview;
- Jackie Teed, Senior Manager of Climate Action, Planning and Development – Affordable Housing and Child Care
- Rob McCullough, Manager, Museums and Heritage Services – Reconciliation, Inclusion and Engagement;
- Erika Mashig, Manager, Parks and Open Space Planning, Design and Construction – Environment and Climate
- Mike Anderson, Acting Manager of Transportation – Sustainable Transportation;
- Blair Fryer, Manager of Communications and Economic Development – Culture and Economic Development;
- Tobi May, Manager, Civic Buildings and Properties;
- Richard Fong, Director of Human Resources – Resiliency and Corporate Support;

- Curtis Bremner, Acting Fire Chief – COVID Response: the City's Task Forces; and,
- Susan Buss, Deputy Chief Librarian – Equity Framework.

The following staff provided updates and future initiatives for the topics listed:

- Rod Carle, General Manager, Electrical Utility – Electrical Operations Core Services; and,
- Gabe Beliveau, Acting Manager, Engineering Operations – Solid Waste, Water, and Sewers

Harji Varn, Director of Finance and Chief Financial Officer, presented on how utility funds are used, an overview of the proposed 2022 Electrical, Solid Waste, Water, and Sewer Utilities Rates, and three scenarios for the 2022 property tax increase.

In response to questions from Council, some of the above-noted staff, along with Mayor Cote and Lisa Leblanc, Director of Engineering Services, provided the following additional information:

- The last two years have been very challenging for the Q to Q Ferry, particularly with reduced sailing capacity due to the COVID-19 pandemic; staff are promoting the ferry to the public as capacity ramps up again;
- 80% of the City's revenues come from stable sources, and only 20% from the Casino; because of this ratio, the City was able to weather the effects of the pandemic;
- The eMobility strategy will come to Council before the end of the year at which point an in-depth conversation can take place;
- Refinement of enhancement requests will take place at the November 29, 2021 meeting; and,
- It is possible to toggle the capital levy contribution between reserves and debt year by year and
- There will be an opportunity for Council to discuss the Police budget with the Police Board on Thursday, November 3, 2021, during their meeting.

In discussion, Council members noted:

- The charge for charging electric vehicles (EVs) may contribute to less use of the City's charging stations;

- This is a good first glimpse of some of the proposed staffing enhancements;
- Need to look closely at insurance costs as they are a significant driver in the operating budget; and
- Concerns if the property tax increase is more than 6% and a desire to keep it closer to 4%.

Council requested additional information on the following topics:

- Progress filling staff vacancies;
- How revenue loss relates to reducing services;
- Whether capital spending has an impact on costs; and,
- Options on how to phase proposals in and further understanding of requested enhancements.

4. END OF THE MEETING

The meeting ended at 3:37 p.m.

Jonathan Cote
MAYOR

Jacque Killawee
CITY CLERK