



## **Minutes**

### **Corporate Services Committee**

**March 25, 2021, 5:30 p.m.**

**City Hall - 808 2nd Avenue East - Council Chambers**

#### **MEMBERS**

##### **PRESENT:**

Chair Travis Dodd  
Mayor Ian Boddy  
Member Jean Paul Caron  
Councillor Marion Koepke  
Member Stephanie Sas  
Councillor John Tamming  
Member Bobb Todd

#### **MEMBERS**

##### **ABSENT/REGRETS:**

Councillor Brock Hamley  
Member Adriana Londono

##### **STAFF PRESENT:**

Tim Simmonds, City Manager  
Kate Allan, Director of Corporate Services  
Pam Coulter, Director of Community Services  
Dennis Kefalas, Director of Public Works and Engineering  
Nelly Morrow, Deputy Treasurer/Manager of Accounting  
Michelle Palmer, Manager of Purchasing, Risk, and Asset Management  
Christine Gilbert, Manager of Revenue  
Briana Bloomfield, City Clerk  
Sheyenne Hooghiem, Customer Service Facilitator

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#### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Dodd called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

#### **2. CALL FOR ADDITIONAL BUSINESS**

There was no additional business.

Chair Dodd noted that Councillor Merton was present via WebEx to participate in the Strategic Plan Refresh discussion.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

4.a Minutes of the Corporate Services Committee meeting held on February 25, 2021

CR-210325-001

Moved by Councillor Koepke

**"THAT the Corporate Services Committee approves the minutes of the meeting held on February 25, 2021."**

Carried.

**5. DEPUTATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS**

There were no depositions or presentations.

**6. PUBLIC QUESTION PERIOD**

There were no questions from the public.

**7. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FOR WHICH DIRECTION IS REQUIRED**

There were no correspondence items presented for consideration.

**8. REPORTS OF CITY STAFF**

8.a City Manager

8.a.1 Report CM-21-007 from the City Manager Re: Strategic Plan Refresh - Proposed Priorities and Key Results

The City Manager shared a presentation outlining:

- Strategic Plan Refresh project timeline;
- The Strategic Plan Refresh process;
- Objectives and key results;
- Themes and Council priorities;
- Corporate Services Committee takeaways; and
- Next steps.

Mr. Simmonds noted that the six key themes/Council priorities are: Safe City, Prosperous City, Green City, A City that Moves, City Building, and Collaborative City. The two themes for corporate priorities are: Clear Direction and Service Excellence.

The Corporate Services division has eight key results which they will take the lead on. The Director of Corporate Services, along with other members of the Senior Leadership Team, will work on actions associated with each of these key results. These actions will be reported back to Committee on a quarterly basis, reported to Council every six months, and will be reported publicly through a dashboard by the end of the year.

Mr. Simmonds advised that each key result will either be quantifiable (associated with a percentage) or verifiable (able to determine if the result was/was not achieved). He confirmed that the benchmarks were established in consultation with other areas within the City (i.e. Owen Sound Police) and through the City's prior experiences. He noted that some benchmarks may be refined and revised as the Strategic Plan Refresh process continues.

Mr. Simmonds noted that the actions associated with the key results are not long-term; they will be taken in the next three - six months. After these actions have been achieved, new actions will be established. The first set of actions will be brought back to Committee in May, with the quarterly reporting to begin in September.

Mayor Boddy joined the meeting at this time.

CR-210325-002

Moved by Member Caron

**"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CM-21-007 respecting Strategic Plan Refresh: Draft Priorities and Key Results, the Corporate Services Committee recommends that City Council receive the report for information purposes."**

Carried.

## 8.b Taxes and Revenue

### 8.b.1 Report CR-21-021 from the Manager of Revenue Re: Optional Small Business Property Sub-Class and Vacancy Rebate Reform

The Manager of Revenue provided an overview of the report.

The Director of Corporate Services provided additional background on the report. Ms. Allan noted that originally the removal of the Vacant Unit Rebate program had to be done at the County level. Municipalities would have to petition to the County and then submit an application to the Province. The City was prepared to do this; however, based on feedback received, it was decided that a decision would not be made until after construction of the 10th Street Bridge was complete. During this time, the Provincial legislation changed and it is no longer a County decision.

Municipalities are able to remove the Vacant Unit Rebate program without County or Provincial approval by passing a by-law.

Ms. Allan noted that with the Small Business Sub-Class, the recommendation is not that the City never proceeds with this sub-class, but instead that the City does not implement it right away. It is important to have time to build policy and objectives surrounding this before it comes into effect.

Ms. Allan also commented on the Vacant Property Sub-Class component of the report. She advised that currently, if there is a piece of land with no building on it, it is assessed based on how it is zoned. If it is zoned as commercial, it is assessed as commercial and will receive a 30% tax discount at the levy level. While this is technically still a decision that is made at the County level, the County is recommending that this rebate program be removed. Ms. Allan advised that she will be bringing an Annual Tax Policy report to Council in April that will provide further details on tax policies.

Mayor Boddy confirmed that earlier that day, the County unanimously voted to recommend that all municipalities pass a by-law to remove the Vacant Unit Rebate program.

The Director of Corporate Services noted that while it is unlikely that the 30% tax discount is enough to incentivize a property owner to keep a unit vacant, the removal of this discount may encourage them to put in extra effort to rent the property or to sell it to someone who is able to rent it out.

The Manager of Revenue noted that the Vacant Buildings Expansion/Conversion Grant under the CIP Program is meant to assist in the small-scale conversion of existing vacant space into a new or more suitable commercial use or mixed use. This grant will provide up to 50% of eligible costs, up to a maximum of \$10,000, to help commercial property owners make necessary upgrades to fill the vacant unit.

CR-210325-003

Moved by Mayor Boddy

**"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CR-21-021 respecting Vacancy Rebate Reform and Optional Small Business Property Tax Subclass Review, the Corporate Services Committee recommends that City Council direct staff to bring forward a by-law to eliminate the City's vacancy rebate program, beginning with rebate applications for the 2021 tax year."**

Carried.

8.b.2 Report CR-21-022 from the Manager of Revenue Re: Grant Policy

The Manager of Revenue provided an overview of the report.

The Director of Corporate Services clarified that she stays informed on which Provincial grants are available through the Province's grant portal. Other grants through Federal agencies are often sent to the City through monthly association emails. Ms. Allan encouraged members of Committee to bring forward grants they see that may be applicable to the City or suggest ideas for projects that may be applicable through grant funding.

Chair Dodd noted that this policy will add an additional layer of accountability and transparency. It will also help the City to better align resources with the Strategic Plan as efforts can be focused on projects/grants that are priorities in the Plan.

CR-210325-004

Moved by Councillor Koepke

**"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CR-21-022 respecting a Grants Policy, the Corporate Services Committee recommends that City Council direct staff to bring forward a by-law to adopt the Grants Policy attached to the report."**

Carried.

8.b.3 Report CR-21-028 from the Director of Corporate Services Re: 2020 Year End Report

The Director of Corporate Services provided an overview of the report.

Ms. Allan advised that the \$40,000 deficit would be funded from the tax stabilization reserve.

The City Manager thanked the Director of Corporate Services, the Finance Team, Management, and Staff for their efforts over the past year. He noted that 2020 was one of the hardest years from a Municipal perspective and in mid-2020 the City was predicting to end the year with over a \$1 million deficit, which has since been decreased to \$40,000.

Chair Dodd commented that the tax stabilization reserve should be reserved for a serious issue that the City is facing. Those funds are not necessarily meant for regular, one-off spending. This reserve is in place so taxpayers do not have to incur a large tax increase at the end of the year to pay for an emergency issue. He also noted the importance of the capital reserve and that more consideration needs to be given to ensure enough money is being put into the capital side of the budget.

The Director of Corporate Services provided a brief initial update on Q1 financial results, noting that transit continues to be impacted by COVID-19; however, it is fully funded through a special COVID-19 program. Facility bookings continue to fall short compared to the projected revenue, although some of this is offset by COVID-19 funding. Ms. Allan noted that a lot of the upfront costs of COVID-19 (initial PPE, education, modifications to facilities, etc.) were incurred last year; however, a close eye will be kept on reduced revenue and continued COVID-19 related expenses.

CR-210325-005

Moved by Member Sas

**"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CR-21-028 respecting 2020 Year End Report, the Corporate Services Committee recommends that City Council:**

- 1. Accept the Treasurer's statement with regards to compliance with the *Development Charges Act*;**
- 2. Direct staff to fund the operating deficit from the tax stabilization reserves; and**
- 3. Approve all transfers to and from reserves as presented in the report."**

Carried.

## **9. MATTERS POSTPONED**

There were no matters postponed.

## **10. MOTIONS FOR WHICH NOTICE WAS PREVIOUSLY GIVEN**

There were no motions for which notice was previously given.

## **11. CORRESPONDENCE PROVIDED FOR INFORMATION**

- 11.a Report CR-21-018 from the Deputy Treasurer/Manager of Accounting Re: 2020 BMA Study

The Deputy Treasurer/Manager of Accounting provided an overview of the report.

The Director of Corporate Services noted that the County funded the ability for all Grey County municipalities to participate in the study. Ms. Allan noted that this is a very useful tool to provide comparison to what other municipalities are doing.

**"THAT in consideration of correspondence provided for information purposes listed on the February 25, 2021 Corporate Services Committee agenda, the Corporate Services Committee recommends that City Council receive Item 11.a for information purposes."**

Carried.

**12. DISCUSSION OF ADDITIONAL BUSINESS**

There was no additional business.

**13. NOTICES OF MOTION**

There were no notices of motion.

**14. ADJOURNMENT**

The business contained on the agenda having been completed, Chair Dodd adjourned the meeting at 6:51 p.m.