



Minutes

Corporate Services Committee

April 11, 2024, 5:30 p.m.

City Hall - 808 2nd Avenue East - Council Chambers

MEMBERS

PRESENT:

Chair Melanie Middlebro'
Vice Chair Carol Merton
Member Kelly Carmichael
Councillor Travis Dodd
Deputy Mayor Scott Greig
Member Neil McCutcheon
Member Joel Pennington
Member Bobb Todd

MEMBERS

ABSENT/REGRETS: Member Stephanie Sas

STAFF PRESENT:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager
Kate Allan, Director of Corporate Services
Phil Eagleson, Fire Chief
Michelle Palmer, Senior Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Operational Effectiveness
Bradey Carbert, Manager of Corporate Services
Staci Landry, Deputy Clerk
Carly McArthur, Communications Advisor
Sierra Patino, Corporate Services Facilitator

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Middlebro' called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

2. CALL FOR ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

There was no additional business.

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 March 7, 2024

CS-240411-001

Moved by Councillor Dodd

"THAT the Corporate Services Committee approves the minutes of the meeting held on March 7, 2024."

Carried.

5. DEPUTATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

There were no deputations 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 General

8.a.1 Report CR-24-012 from the Communications Advisor Re: Website Transformation

The Communications Advisor provided an overview of the report.

In response to a question from Committee, the Communications Advisor noted that the City has the ability to track demographic data on website use, which was not captured in this report, but will be included in a future website use report to Committee at the end of the year.

CS-240411-002

Moved by Vice Chair Merton

"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CM-24-012 respecting City Website Transformation, the Corporate Services Committee recommends that City Council receive the report for information purposes."

Carried.

8.b Clerks

8.b.1 Report CR-24-038 from the Deputy Clerk Re: Animal Control 2023 Year in Review

The Deputy Clerk provided an overview of the report.

In response to a question from Committee, the Manager of Corporate Services advised that there have been capital projects completed to the interior of the animal shelter in the past 12 to 18 months. These include the kennel flooring replacement due to an order from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), exhaust fan replacements, and tree removal and yard maintenance. Coming up in 2024 or the beginning of 2025 is the roof replacement, specifically of the kennel overhang. The interior upgrades to the reception area have been postponed until the animal services RFP process is complete to allow for consultation with the successful animal services vendor.

In response to a comment from Committee, the Director of Corporate Services advised that it would be recommended, and is being investigated, to build in language to the agreement around a capital contribution for the animal shelter, from the municipalities it serves. This would be negotiated through the serviced municipalities and the animal shelter, on the City's behalf.

In response to a question from Committee, the Deputy Clerk advised that the animal services contractor reported three dog bite investigations in 2023. She noted that the City does not have specific information on these reports, however, the Grey Bruce Health Unit follows up on any dog bite cases and would most likely have the year-over-year comparative data.

In response to a question from Committee, the City Manager advised that the City is moving to an online pet licensing service which aims to make animal licensing much more convenient to residents and should increase the number of pet licences issued.

In response to a question from Committee, Ms. Landry advised that the City's agreement with the shelter does not stipulate that other municipalities must licence pets. These licensing requirements would be based on the individual municipality's licensing by-laws. She noted that most municipalities the shelter services do require licences for dogs, while some do not for cats.

In response to a question from Committee, Ms. Landry advised that as per the current agreement, the contractor is to complete door to door sales of animal licences. She noted that the City is looking into adding a requirement of reporting door to door sales in the new agreement.

"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CR-24-038 respecting Animal Control 2023 Year in Review, the Corporate Services Committee recommends that City Council receive the report for information purposes."

Carried.

8.c Accounting

8.c.1 Report CR-24-030 from the Director of Corporate Services Re: 2023 Year End Financial Report

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

In response to a question from Committee, Ms. Allan advised that the Art Gallery debt payment has been removed from the approved 2024 operating budget, however the year end report is seeking Council approval to utilize the surplus to fund the balance of the unfunded liability. She noted that whether this debt is reduced by the surplus or an alternative source, the City is still in the same financial position. When asked if this funding decision could be referred to Service Review Ad Hoc Committee, she added that this is a financial transaction and does not relate to Service Delivery or finding efficiencies that the Service Review Committee is focused on.

In a follow-up, Ms. Allan advised that currently the Art Gallery debt is recorded as an unfinanced liability on the City's financial statements. If a portion of the surplus is utilized to fund the balance, the unfunded liability will be eliminated, and the reserve reduced. She added that the benefit of paying off the debt now is that the City can utilize the 2023 surplus, rather than collecting additional funds from taxpayers in future years to pay this off, and that it is staff's opinion that this funding strategy is in the best interest of the taxpayer.

In response to a question from Committee, Ms. Allan advised that the tax write-offs recorded in 2023 were higher than anticipated due to the Assessment Review Board (ARB) issuing a tax write-down for a large commercial property. In prior years, the City had already decreased the taxes for this property due to an ARB decision and was under the impression a new appeal could not be made within a certain period based on the requirements, however, the property owner had changed, and therefore they were able to process a re-appeal. She noted that the supplemental taxation was more than sufficient to offset this unpredicted

reduction, and the City was still in a surplus overall for tax adjustments in 2023.

In response to a question from Committee, Ms. Allan advised that Transit Fare and Pass revenue is up \$88,000 year over year and is all internal City transit. She noted that the inter-community transit fund is recorded separately from this.

In response to a question from Committee, Ms. Allan explained the Summary of Debt report on page 105. The left-hand column outlines the debenture instruments, the original amount, and the specific projects funded by the fund. In the right-hand column are the outstanding balance and annual payments, along with when the anticipated final payment will be made.

In response to a question from Committee, Ms. Allan clarified that the Tax Stabilization Reserve was created in the last decade to stabilize budgets over time and move to a "middle of the road" budget. She highlighted an example of winter control where there are volatile seasons. Rather than budgeting for a worst-case scenario winter, where the City cannot fund it, it is preferred to run in the middle, with the assumption that some years the City will run surpluses, and some years, deficits. In the years the City runs surpluses, the surplus goes to the Tax Stabilization reserve, to offset deficit years, anticipating there will be heavy winter years with deficits. Ms. Allan noted that in years when the City is in a deficit, the taxpayer realizes more benefit for what they have paid in taxes for the year. Ms. Allan also noted that another goal of the Tax Stabilization Reserve, as per policy, is to grow it to at least 3% of the gross levy, as the Ontario Disaster Relief Program only offset disaster recovery costs over and above the three percent of gross Municipal levy. She advised that this reserve is currently sitting at roughly 2% of the tax levy.

In response to a question from the Committee, Mr. Simmonds advised that the City should not use funds from the City's reserves, such as the Tax Stabilization Reserve, which come from tax levies to fund homelessness, as municipalities are not provided any funding from the upper-level governments to support these initiatives. Municipalities need to look to the Counties, Province, and Federal government. He noted that we do participate on various task forces and committees with other levels of government and make deputations to support this, as it is a much larger subject to be looked at.

CS-240411-004

Moved by Deputy Mayor Greig

"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CR-24-030 respecting 2023 Year End, the Corporate Services Committee recommends that City Council:

- 1. Accept the Treasurer's Statement with regard to compliance with the *Development Charges Act*;**
- 2. Direct staff to transfer the operating surplus to the tax stabilization reserve; and**
- 3. Approve all unbudgeted transfers to and from reserves as presented in the report and summarized in Appendix B."**

Carried.

8.d Corporate and Facility Services

8.d.1 Report CR-24-040 from the Manager of Corporate Services Re: Owen Sound Fire Building Condition Assessment and Pre-Design Study

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

In response to a question from Committee, the Fire Chief clarified that Fire Departments at the County level are Regional Fire Departments for single-tier municipalities. There have been no communications from Grey County to be a single-tiered municipality or to take on fire services. He did note that the County has contributed a substantial amount of funding to the Fire Department for projects in the past.

In response to a question from Committee, Mr. Carbert explained that under the City's Purchasing Policy, there are provisions for non-standard procurement, and in this case, it is a single source purchase, with the understanding the firm has already spent considerable time on the pre-phases of this project. He noted that the approval would be done by the Manager of Corporate Services, and the Treasurer since the budget has been approved by Council.

CS-240411-005

Moved by Vice Chair Merton

"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CR-24-040 respecting Owen Sound Fire Station Building Condition Assessment and Pre-design Study, the Corporate Services Committee recommends that City Council direct staff to proceed with a pre-design study for the renovation and possible expansion of the Owen Sound Fire Station."

Carried.

- 8.e Fire
None.
- 8.f Human Resources
None.
- 8.g Information Technology
None.
- 8.h Parking and By-law Enforcement
None.
- 8.i Taxes and Revenue
None.

9. MATTERS POSTPONED

- 9.a Report CR-24-023 from the Fire Chief Re: 2024 Fire and Emergency Services Work Plan

CS-240411-006
Moved by Councillor Dodd

"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CR-24-023 respecting the 2024 Fire and Emergency Services Work Plan, the Corporate Services Committee recommends that City Council receive the report for information purposes."

Carried.

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 Letter of Support Re: Prince Edward County Expanding Lifespan of Fire Apparatus

CS-240411-007
Moved by Councillor Dodd

"THAT in consideration of correspondence provided for information purposes listed on the April 11 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 Middlebro' adjourned the meeting at 6:53 p.m.