

Approved Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Council of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo held in the Council Chamber at the Municipal Offices in Fort McMurray, Alberta, on Wednesday, December 11, 2013, commencing at 9:30 a.m.

Present: M. Blake, Mayor
T. Ault, Councillor
G. Boutilier, Councillor
L. Bussieres, Councillor
J. Cardinal, Councillor
S. Germain, Councillor
K. McGrath, Councillor
P. Meagher, Councillor
J. Stroud, Councillor
A. Vinni, Councillor

Absent: J. Chadi, Councillor

Administration: B. Makey, Chief Operating Officer
S. Kanzig, Chief Legislative Officer
A. Hawkins, Legislative Officer

Call To Order

Mayor Blake called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m.

Arrival

Councillor A. Vinni joined the meeting at 9:43 a.m.

Adoption of Agenda

Moved by Councillor P. Meagher that the agenda be adopted as presented.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Presentations

1. Elsie Hutton, Chief Financial Officer, 2014 Budget and Financial Plan

E. Hutton, Chief Financial Officer, gave an overview of the budget review process which has occurred to date.

Arrival

Councillor G. Boutilier joined the meeting at 9:50 a.m.

E. Hutton spoke to the guiding principles used by administration in developing budgets; debt and debt service limits; fiscal management strategy compliance; personnel budgeting as well as the operating and capital budget trends between 2010 and 2014.

A lengthy discussion occurred specific to the 2014 personnel budgeting during which various topics were addressed such as:

- Internal process for employees to move up within the organization;
- Compensation process and employee development;
- Employee recognition/celebration process;
- Perception of consultants hired to replace employees;
- Opportunity for exit interview;
- Interaction between Council Members and municipal employees; and
- Basis for personnel/staffing levels.

Administration was requested to bring back information regarding the following:

- Number of contractors currently under contract;
- Number of severances which have taken place;
- Results of employee survey; and
- Result of Chief Administrative Officer's review of the Government Relations Division.

Exit

Mayor Blake left the meeting at 11:54 a.m., at which time Deputy Mayor G. Boutilier assumed the Chair.

The general discussion continued and the following topics were also addressed:

- Debt limit of 85%;
- Alternative Capital Financing; and
- Flood Protection requirements.

Administration was requested to provide a copy of the Alternate Capital Financing Policy and Procedure, which was distributed during the meeting.

Break and Return

A break occurred at 12:31 p.m. and the meeting reconvened at 1:22 p.m., at which time Mayor Blake returned to the Chair.

E. Hutton, continued with the presentation and spoke about the 2014 Operating Budget and 2015-2016 Financial Plan

Administration was requested to bring back information regarding the following:

- Operating and capital budget comparison with other municipalities;
- Comparison of provincial and federal grant funding received in comparison to other municipalities; and
- Confirmation that provincial MLAs are aware of what funding the municipality is receiving from the Province

2. 2014 City Centre Operating Budget

R. Taylor, Executive Director, Development, came forward to briefly outlined the mandate of City Centre and speak to the City Centre proposed operating budget.

The following topics were discussed at length:

- Personnel, contractors vs. staff;
- Requirement for clarification in terms of honorariums and what it entails;

- Design Review Panel Bylaw requirements;
- Bridge to MacDonald Island; and
- Rolling total deficit for City Centre initiative.

3. 2014 City Centre Capital Budget

R. Taylor, Executive Director, Development and Marc Fortais, Manager of Finance, City Centre, were present to discuss the proposed 2014 City Centre Capital Budget.

The proposed capital budget for City Centre was discussed at length. The following concerns/questions/issues were raised by members of Council:

- No response received to prior requests for information such as:
 - time saved when using existing trail to MacDonald Island vs. using the proposed bridge; and
 - breakdown for the Arts and Events – Construction project;
- Dismantling of existing Borealis Park;
- The amount of the budget for flood abatement from the Province;
- The amount earmarked for the Borealis Park location;
- Further clarification required relative to the parking analysis done relative to the proposed sports and entertainment centre;
- Borealis Park proposed move to Snye Point;
- Status on scheduled demolition of six homes in the lower townsite;
- Extension of McLeod Street to Franklin Avenue;
- The backup plan for the sports and entertainment centre in the event no RFP is acceptable or accepted when the deadline is reached in January, 2014;
- Better description for the Snye Park development project;
- Request for additional detail on the Streetscape project;
- Information request on the footprint of the proposed sports and entertainment centre; and
- Lack of confidence with information provided.

Moved by Councillor J. Stroud that approval of the 2014 operating and capital budgets be deferred to a later date and that an interim operating budget be approved.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

It was agreed that a meeting would be set up for early January, 2014 to further review the proposed Operating and Capital Budgets. In the meantime, Council members were asked to direct any question about the budgets through the Chief Administrative Officer's office for tracking purposes and making sure that questions are answered.

Moved by Councillor G. Boutilier that an interim 2014 operating budget be approved in the amount of 90% of the 2013 operating budget.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Reports

- 4. 2014 Operating Budget, 2015 and 2016 Financial Plan and**
- 5. 2014 Capital Budget, 2015 – 2019 Capital Plan**

These reports were not discussed at this time.

Adjournment

Moved by Councillor P. Meagher that the meeting be adjourned.
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The meeting adjourned at 4:26 p.m.

Mayor

Chief Legislative Officer