



**DISTRICT OF HIGHLANDS
MINUTES OF ELECTRONIC COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 8, 2021 @ 7:00 PM**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Ken Williams
Councillor Leslie Anderson
Councillor Ann Baird
Councillor Gord Baird
Councillor Marcie McLean
Councillor Karel Roessingh
Councillor Rose Stanton

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Administrative Officer Lorraine Hilton
Corporate Officer Deb Hopkins

Public Observation: 3

1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Moved Councillor Roessingh, Seconded Councillor McLean
That the agenda be approved as presented.

CARRIED

2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

2.1

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES – FEBRUARY 8, 2021

Moved Councillor Roessingh, Seconded Councillor Stanton
That the minutes of the February 8, 2021 Committee of the Whole meeting be adopted.

CARRIED

3. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

4. NEW BUSINESS

4.1

Presentation and Memorandum – Chief Administrative Officer, March 1, 2021 (1700.25)

RE: DRAFT FIVE YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN 2021-2025

The Chief Administrative Officer provided a presentation introducing the draft five-year Financial Plan 2021-2025. Ms. Hilton highlighted that proposed taxation increases for 2021 adhere to the District's policies for operations and infrastructure. She also provided an overview of the proposed and approved funds to be used from the COVID-19 Safe Restart Grant.

In response to questions concerning uses for the COVID-19 Safe Restart Grant, the Chief Administrative Officer advised that the Province has provided guidelines for permissible uses but has not included a time frame to use all of the funds. The grant money is not permitted to be used to directly reduce property taxes. Funds have been used to offset lost revenues and cover costs directly related to COVID-19 expenditures.

Discussion included the following:

- A general legal fund is included in the administrative budget.
- Administrative contingency is a fund for unforeseen expenses.

- District Office generator estimate includes associated costs for installation.
- Financial Stabilization Reserve levels over the next five years will be targeted for replenishment while also drawing down to fund special projects. This fund has more flexibility than statutory reserves.
- Contingency fund for potential increased RCMP costs.

The Mayor called for public input.

Scott Richardson, Highlands resident, commented that the OKI lands and quarry operations will have a significant impact on the District's ability to achieve carbon neutrality. Mr. Richardson suggested looking for creative ways to offset any additional costs and asked about approaching BC Assessment for a reclassification of the property given the intensity of the mining activities.

Mr. Richardson said that the reserve balances were impressive and suggested establishing a reserve for climate change mitigation or natural assets. He further commented that the District was understaffed and proposed adding more resources to allow staff to complete items contained in the Strategic Plan prior to the end of this Council's term.

The Mayor called a second time for public input. No additional members of the public wished to speak.

Council discussion followed regarding staff resources and the ability to complete Council's Strategic Priorities more expeditiously. Concern was expressed that a number of good ideas have been proposed, but there was insufficient capacity to act on them. It was acknowledged that staff are performing well, but are at capacity as indicated in the Activity Reports. It was suggested that adding capacity is necessary if Council wants to achieve its goals.

Moved Councillor Ann Baird, Seconded Councillor Gord Baird

That staff bring forward options to Council for adding a Planning staff member for consideration at the next budget meeting.

In response to questions from Council, the Chief Administrative Officer advised that additional resources are included in this budget for consulting services to assist in achieving Council's goals. Ms. Hilton advised that Council can change their Strategic Plan at any time by resolution and can provide direction on organizational resources. She asked for clarification on the type of position being proposed and noted that consideration of the impacts on the rest of organization will also need to be explored.

Discussion regarding allocating funds for staffing or consulting continued. Funding for either approach would come from taxation and would impact the draft tax increase included in this budget.

The Question on the motion was then called.

DEFEATED

With Councillors Anderson, Ann Baird, Roessingh, Stanton, and Mayor Williams opposed

Moved Councillor Anderson, Seconded Councillor Ann Baird

That staff be directed to bring forward to the next budget meeting information for including up to \$150,000 in the draft budget for staffing or consulting resources to progress the Strategic Priorities.

CARRIED

Moved Councillor McLean, Seconded Councillor Anderson

That further discussion on the draft Financial Plan be brought forward to a future meeting.

CARRIED

5. ADJOURNMENT

Moved Councillor Ann Baird, Seconded Councillor Gord Baird

That the Committee of the Whole meeting of March 8, 2021 adjourn at 8:36 pm.

CARRIED

MAYOR

CORPORATE OFFICER

DRAFT