



FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Thursday, January 14, 2021

A meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee was held on Thursday, January 14, 2021, at 9:30 a.m., at the County of Renfrew Administration Office, 9 International Drive, Pembroke, Ontario.

Present were: Chair Jennifer Murphy
 Warden Debbie Robinson
 Vice-Chair Brian Hunt
 Councillor James Brose
 Councillor Glenn Doncaster
 Councillor Michael Donohue
 Councillor Tom Peckett
 Councillor Robert Sweet

Staff Present: Paul Moreau, Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk
 Jeffrey Foss, Director of Finance/Treasurer
 Craig Kelley, Director of Development and Property
 Laura LePine, Director of Social Services
 Lee Perkins, Director of Public Works and Engineering
 Shelley Sheedy, Director of Long-Term Care
 Michael Nolan, Director of Emergency Services
 Chris Ryn, Manager of Information Technology
 Ginette Poole, Manager of Provincial Offences Administration
 Rosalyn Gruntz, Deputy Clerk
 Connie Wilson, Administrative Assistant, Finance Department

Chair Murphy called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. The roll was called, and no pecuniary interests were disclosed.

RESOLUTION NO. FA-C-21-01-01

Moved by: Councillor Brose

Seconded by: Councillor Hunt

THAT the minutes of the November 12, 2020 meeting be adopted. CARRIED.

Administration Report

Mr. Moreau overviewed the Administration Department Report which is attached as Appendix A.

Mr. Moreau overviewed the issue of accessibility and noted that many municipalities are finding it challenging to be in compliance with AODA standards and this issue will be discussed further with our local CAO's. Ms. Gruntz indicated that County of Renfrew administrative staff have had two training sessions within the past 3 months, one instructor had difficulty making a one page pdf letter accessible and the second instructor indicated that Microsoft Word and Adobe are not very compatible, therefore trying to convert a Microsoft Word document into an Adobe document to make it accessible is very difficult and time consuming.

Committee expressed their appreciation and thanks to the Communications team for their timely, informative and accurate communications during the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

Mr. Moreau overviewed the Council survey for electronic meetings and advised that an additional question will be added, #7 - Should the provisions relating to Council participation in electronic meetings only apply during a declared emergency? If any Elected Official has any other questions they would like included, please advise him or Ms. Gruntz by Friday, January 29, 2021.

RESOLUTION NO. FA-C-21-01-02

Moved by: Councillor Brose

Seconded by: Warden Robinson

THAT the Finance and Administration Committee recommend to County Council that the Social Services Committee be renamed the Community Services Committee, and that the terms of reference be amended to reflect this change. CARRIED.

RESOLUTION NO. FA-C-21-01-03

Moved by: Councillor Donohue

Seconded by: Councillor Hunt

THAT the Administration Department Report attached as Appendix A be approved. CARRIED.

Finance Department

Mr. Foss overviewed the Finance Department Report which is attached as Appendix B and the Addendum attached as Appendix C.

Mr. Foss advised Committee that there are no changes to the Canada Revenue Agency mileage rates for 2021, therefore the County of Renfrew rates will remain at 59 cents per kilometer for the first 5,000 kilometers and 53 cents over 5,000 kilometers.

Mr. Foss overviewed the 2021 insurance rates and advised that the County of Renfrew's increase is anticipated to be 21% and details of this item will be overviewed as part of the budget discussions. Committee noted that the County of Renfrew has been fortunate over the past five years to experience an annual premium increase of <1%.

RESOLUTION NO. FA-C-21-01-04

Moved by: Councillor Donohue

Seconded by: Chair Murphy

THAT the Finance and Administration Committee direct that Warden Robinson send a letter to the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) seeking clarification on the cost detail of their business and provide further details. CARRIED.

Mr. Foss overviewed the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) invoice for 2021 and Committee noted the minimal decrease of 0.57% over 2020. Committee noted that the onset of the pandemic in March 2020 has changed regular business activities for all organizations and noted that we do not receive a detailed cost breakdown of what is received for payment given the expectation of cost savings related to the deferral of all assessment activities.

RESOLUTION NO. FA-C-21-01-05

Moved by: Warden Robinson

Seconded by: Councillor Peckett

THAT the Finance and Administration Committee direct that Warden Robinson send a letter to the Renfrew County and District Health Unit seeking further details on the 8.5% increase or whether it is specifically related to programs and/or COVID related expenses and if they have reviewed any efficiencies within their organization over the past 12 months. CARRIED.

Committee discussed that in previous years the Renfrew County and District Health Unit would issue refunds for monies not spent in the previous year. Councillor Donohue noted that subsequent to that time (2015, 2016), the Board of Health has appropriately budgeted and utilized funding received on the health and well-being of the residents of Renfrew County.

Committee overviewed the original resolution H-CC-20-01-13 from the January 2020 County Council meeting that included the following bullet points:

- A detailed explanation for the dramatic cost increase;
- Confirmation that this money is only spent on eligible expenses as set out within the Health Promotion and Protection Act;
- An explanation of why municipal reserves are not being used to offset this increase;
- Estimates of the 2019 surplus and what it is being used for;
- An explanation of mitigation, efficiency and cost reduction strategies that have been put in place to reduce the burden on municipal taxpayers.

RESOLUTION NO. FA-C-21-01-06

Moved by: Councillor Donohue

Seconded by: Councillor Peckett

THAT the Finance and Administration Committee direct that Warden Robinson send a letter to the Honourable Sylvia Jones, Solicitor General seeking clarification on the substantive decrease in the number of fines being dispensed in the County of Renfrew during 2020. CARRIED.

Mr. Foss overviewed the Provincial Offences workload statistics, noting that there was a decrease of 20.3% in charges received for 2020 compared to 2019, and in 2019 there was a decrease of 18% in charges received compared to 2018. This is a significant ongoing annual reduction in charges received. Mr. Foss also noted that when the COVID pandemic was declared in March, direction was received

from the Chief Justice's Office to suspend all enforcement activities including driver's license suspensions.

Committee directed that for the February Committee meeting and County Council that staff are to provide a summary chart comparing the annual workload totals for the previous five years (2016 to 2020).

RESOLUTION NO. FA-C-21-01-07

Moved by: Councillor Brose

Seconded by: Councillor Doncaster

THAT the Finance and Administration Committee authorize Chair Murphy to sign the response letter to Scott Rosien Black and Locke, on behalf of this Committee. CARRIED.

RESOLUTION NO. FA-C-21-01-08

Moved by: Councillor Sweet

Seconded by: Councillor Peckett

THAT the Finance and Administration Committee recommends to County Council that the 2021 membership fee to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) in the amount of \$9,373.14 including HST be approved. CARRIED.

RESOLUTION NO. FA-C-21-01-09

Moved by: Councillor Brose

Seconded by: Councillor Peckett

THAT the Finance and Administration Committee approves for the Treasurer to continue to pay the Municipal Employer Pension Centre of Ontario (MEPCO) the 2021 Employer Municipal Contribution in the amount of \$3,357.80 (566 OMERS Employees x \$5.25/per employee) including HST. CARRIED.

RESOLUTION NO. FA-C-21-01-10

Moved by: Councillor Sweet

Seconded by: Councillor Doncaster

THAT the Finance and Administration Committee recommends to County Council that the 2021 membership fee to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) in the amount of \$20,800.81 including HST be approved. CARRIED.

Committee recessed at 10:38 a.m. and reconvened at 10:48 a.m.

2021 Draft Budget

Mr. Foss shared his screen and overviewed the Finance and Administration Committee budget.

Mr. Foss noted that the Cost of Living Allowance to non-union and salaries of Council members has been set at 1.5% as directed by Council.

Committee questioned whether the line item Advocacy/Delegations includes the VTAC advertising and Mr. Foss advised that all efforts related to COVID-19, including the VTAC advertising are coded and tracked under a separate COVID-19 account.

Mr. Foss overviewed the Finance Department Business case which is the transfer of the finance related functions/duties of the Emergency Services Secretary II into an Accounting Clerk I position within the Finance Department. At the request of the Director of Emergency Services the person currently in this position in Emergency Services is being transferred into another position within the provincially funded Paramedic LTC program. The change will be an additional staff person in the Finance Division as part of the Service Delivery Review to consolidate finance functions into Corporate Services, but the position is still funded under the Emergency Services budget, 50% of which is provincially funded.

Mr. Foss overviewed the Information Technology Budget.

Mr. Foss advised that for Human Resources, staff are actively recruiting for the Human Resources Manager position. During the transition, until that position is filled and trained, we are anticipating that there will be some additional costs associated with legal fees for adequate advice/guidance from labour lawyers for a variety of ongoing projects, any investigations, as well as 7 collective agreements that are expired and may require arbitration/mediation.

Committee recessed for lunch at 12:45 p.m. and reconvened at 1:15 p.m. with all members present.

Mr. Foss overviewed the capital and reserves budget. Within the capital budget, Committee questioned the line item Surplus Adjustment – SDIP Saving – Trf to TCA Reserve of \$169,149. Mr. Foss advised that this is the cost savings from the various departments that includes SDIP staffing reductions and leasing costs. Mr. Foss advised that the details will be provided in a slide that he will overview as part of the Budget Workshop.

Mr. Foss noted that the only budget pressure for the Finance and Administration Committee is a \$100,000 shortfall for insurance. Committee discussed the various options available such as reducing/reallocating the line item Council

Conventions, the line item Advocacy/Delegations, since there were minimal mileage, meals and/or hotels costs in early 2020 before COVID-19 and this will be the same for 2021. The Council mileage line item for Committee's and Council was also significantly less in 2020 and will be same for 2021 since we are utilizing Zoom for meetings. Committee noted they could also reduce the line item Wardens Banquet as there has not been an event in several years and won't be one in 2021 with the COVID restrictions.

Mr. Foss cautioned Committee about making significant reductions to the council budget or any departmental budgets (\$100,000 = 16.5%), as this will create a significant increase in the 2022 budget, just to return to the 2020 level of activity.

Committee noted Mr. Foss' caution, but advised that they would prefer to utilize these funds for the insurance shortfall knowing that the full budgeted amount in these line items will not be utilized in 2021, therefore they are not reducing but are reallocating these funds for 2021.

RESOLUTION NO. FA-C-21-01-11

Moved by: Councillor Donohue

Seconded by: Councillor Hunt

THAT the Finance and Administration Committee recommend to the Budget Workshop the following reduction in the Members of Council category within the 2021 Budget document:

1. Reduction in the Advocacy/Delegations line item of \$25,000;
2. Reduction in the Council Conventions line item of \$50,000;
3. Reduction in the Council Mileage line item of \$22,000;
4. Reduction in the Wardens Banquet line item of \$3,000;

for a total reduction of \$100,000 to finance the Insurance Budget Pressure;

FURTHER THAT the \$10,000 Budget pressure line item within the General - Administration category – Special Projects – EOWC can be removed as per budget confirmation received from the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus. CARRIED.

RESOLUTION NO. FA-C-21-01-12

Moved by: Councillor Brose

Seconded by: Councillor Hunt

THAT the Finance and Administration Committee recommends that the Draft 2021 Budgets for all departments reporting to this Committee be approved and forwarded to the January 18, 2021 County Council Budget Workshop for approval. CARRIED.

RESOLUTION NO. FA-C-21-01-13

Moved by: Councillor Brose

Seconded by: Councillor Donohue

THAT the Finance Department Report attached as Appendix B and Addendum attached as Appendix C be approved. CARRIED.

RESOLUTION NO. FA-C-21-01-14

Moved by: Councillor Hunt

Seconded by: Warden Robinson

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Finance and Administration Committee move into a closed meeting pursuant to Section 239 of the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended for the following reason(s): Personal matters about an identifiable individual, including municipal or local board employees. Time: 1:53 p.m. CARRIED.

RESOLUTION NO. FA-C-21-01-16

Moved by: Councillor Sweet

Seconded by: Councillor Peckett

THAT this meeting resume as an open meeting. Time: 2:01 p.m. CARRIED.

RESOLUTION NO. FA-C-21-01-17

Moved by: Councillor Donohue

Seconded by: Councillor Sweet

THAT this meeting adjourn and the next regular meeting be held on February 11, 2020. Time: 2:01 p.m. CARRIED.