

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE**

St. Clair Civic Centre
Sombra Room
Thursday, February 22, 2007
9:00 p.m.

This meeting of the Finance & Administration Committee was called to consider the initial draft of the 2007 municipal operating budget. Members present were:

P. Carswell-Alexander,	Chairperson, Finance & Administration
S. Arnold,	Mayor
P. Gilliland	Deputy Mayor
D. Randell,	Councillor
S. Miller,	“
P. Brown,	“
J. Agar,	“
Staff J. Rodey,	CAO
J. DeMars,	Director of Administration/Clerk
R. Kerr,	Director of Public Works
C. Quenneville,	Director of Finance/Treasurer
R. Dewhirst,	Director of Emergency Services
G. Hackett,	Director of Community Services

AGENDA:

1. Opening Remarks – John Rodey, CAO 9:00 – 9:30 a.m.
- Charles Quenneville, Treasurer
2. Operating Budget
 - (A) Fire Department presentation 9:31 – 10:00 a.m.
 - (B) Community Service presentation 10:01 – 11:00 a.m.
 - (C) Public Works, Water & Sanitary 11:01 – 11:45 a.m.
 - (D) Administration 11:46 – 12:00 noon
3. Operating Budget Wrap-up 12:00 – 12:30 p.m.

Chairman Carswell called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and the Committee was provided opening remarks by the CAO and the Treasurer detailing several preliminary aspects of the draft 2007 municipal operating budget. In response to the Committee's questions Mr. Quenneville advised that the 2006 operating financial position may be in a deficit if the OPP fifth quarter cost reconciliation is less than anticipated. The Chair called upon the Department Heads who detailed to the Committee the budget highlights for their Department.

DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY SERVICES:

Fire Chief Dewhirst explained to the Committee the equipment replacement needs for his Department for 2007, and as well as a proposal to provide possible improved accident coverage for the volunteer firefighters with a different policy that offers twenty-four, seven coverage including off duty. It is anticipated that this would cost an extra \$60.00 per firefighter for a total cost increase of \$10,000.00 above and beyond the current Cowan Insurance cost. Also, Chief Dewhirst proposes in his budget to increase the per call stipends from \$350.00 to \$400.00 per call.

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES:

Mr. Hackett reviewed to the Committee anticipated revenues and expenditures for all the cost centres of his Department including the arena, pool, health club, trailer parks and the former St. Clair Parks assets. In discussion of the operation of a community halls, Councillor Randell asked the Director to prepare a list of the number of groups using the various halls throughout the year, with detail on the volume of usage not necessarily the revenue that is generated.

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS:

Mr. Kerr detailed to the Committee, and led the Committee in a discussion of the anticipated reduction and the winter control budget due to the relatively mild winter of 2006 and 2007 to date. It was suggested that Council consider placing cost savings compared to budgeted amounts in a winter control reserve to level out financial impact and average low cost winters with heavier cost winters.

DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION:

Mr. DeMars reviewed to the Committee the expense categories for Animal Control, Weed Control, Building Department as well as the Coordinator of Planning's report on a comparison of Planning Fees with other comparable Lambton County municipalities. The Committee was generally in agreement with the recommendation to revisit the Building Permit fees to make them more cost and revenue neutral. An increase of the dog tag fees from \$10.00 per animal to \$15.00, a planning fee increase and an increase in the administration fee for weed control from the current 50% to 100% of the contractor cost.

Moved by S. Arnold

Seconded by S. Miller

Motion #1 That it be recommended to Council that the fees for planning services such as consent, minor variance, rezoning and official plan amendment be increased to the level charged by the municipality of Lambton Shores.

CARRIED

At the conclusion of the meeting the Committee discussed the status of the Corunna BIA. It was pointed out by the Treasurer that the BIA reserve funds have been depleted and that the activities of the Corunna Horticultural Society in downtown Corunna plantings and beautification have become a budget expense item for the municipality. Council deferred any decision on the continued support of the activities of the Corunna Horticultural Society.

Mayor Arnold also presented to the Committee a report from the recent meeting of the Moore Foundation at which time it was suggested and requested a municipal contribution of \$60,000. to the fund to increase the fund to approximately \$120,000. Renaming the Moore Foundation to the St. Clair Foundation and develop parameters where money could be donated by the Foundation for worthy local projects. The Committee did not make a decision on this request.

Also, the Committee reviewed a letter of request received from Ed Linton, a Courtright volunteer firefighter, for a donation in the amount of approximately \$2,500. to purchase training equipment. Council discussed the proposal with Chief Dewhirst and the general consensus was that if such equipment is needed it should be purchased as a piece of firefighter training equipment for use in all Township Fire Stations. The Committee referred the matter to Chief Dewhirst for further consideration and report.

Moved by S. Arnold

Seconded by S. Miller

Motion #2 That the initial draft of the 2007 operating budget be tabled for further discussion at the March 5th meeting of Council.

CARRIED

It was directed that this meeting of Council would be started at 6:00 p.m. as opposed to the traditional 7:00 p.m. commencement, and further staff was directed to review the initial draft of the 2007 operating budget for recommendation as to budget cost savings or revenue increases.

Moved by P. Brown

Seconded by P. Gilliland

Motion #3 That the meeting do hereby adjourn.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

P. Carswell,
Chairperson

J. DeMars
Secretary