

THE CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF LAMBTON SHORES

Special Council Meeting - Budget

Meeting No. 09-2011

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, March 9, 2011

Members Present: Mayor Bill Weber
Deputy Mayor Elizabeth Davis-Dagg
Councillor Dave Maguire
Councillor Doug Bonesteel
Councillor Lorie Scott
Councillor Ruth Illman
Councillor Martin Underwood
Councillor Doug Cook
Councillor John Russell

Staff Present: Clerk Carol McKenzie
Treasurer Janet Ferguson
Director of Community Services Peggy Van Mierlo-West

Media Present: Travis Pedwell – The Beach 104.9

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Weber called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. and asked for members to declare any pecuniary or conflict of interest and none were declared.

(Sections 3-5 of the agenda were not used as they did not apply to the budget meeting)

6. Consideration of Committee Minutes and Staff Reports

6.1 C.A.O. Report No. 13-2011 – Re: Status Report on Budget & Determination of Tax Increases

In Report No. 13-2011, Chief Administrative Officer John Byrne provided background information on municipal budgets and the various components that comprise the document. Details were provided on the three main factors in the increases over 2010, those being the 9.87 % increase in policing costs, 17% increase in Property and Liability insurance premiums, and the 3% increase in utilities and staffing costs. Increases in revenue included water and waste water rate adjustments, increases in municipal fees, and assessment increases due to growth.

Information was also provided on market value assessment, the tax rates, and the municipal cost savings measures that had been undertaken.

The fact that the current document does not include items that had been referred to the budget such as the recommendations from the Recreation Master Plan, Road Needs study, and Fire Board for capital acquisitions was also noted.

**11-0309-01 Moved By: Councillor Illman
Seconded by: Councillor Scott**

That C.A.O. Report No. 13-2011 Re: Status Report on Budget & Determination of Tax Increases be received for information.
Carried

6.2 C.A.O. Report No. 16-2011 Re: Travel Expenses – Lambton Shores Staff

In C.A.O. Report No. 16-2011, information was provided on the policies that had been established for compensating staff for travel costs incurred during the course of their work. Some of the costs can be attributed to the decision to retain offices in three of the former communities, which, while being more convenient for the residents, did result in more travel time for staff. In the past, in order to ensure equity in rates, a policy was passed that the mileage rate for travel would be the same as used by the County of Lambton, which is based on a province wide assessment of travel costs.

Mr. Byrne noted that the earlier proposal to purchase a vehicle for use by Community Services staff was an option to reduce staff mileage costs, however, he advised that staff would be pleased to review other cost savings initiatives and report back to Council, and in the interim, withdraw the recommendation to purchase a vehicle at this time.

Councillor Scott reported that she had contacted several municipalities that did not have a set travel allowance plus mileage for their staff and a discussion was held on the current provincial mileage rates and the rationale for the travel allowance.

**11-0309-02 Moved by: Councillor Scott
Seconded by: Councillor Russell**

That the allocation for a vehicle for the Community Services staff be removed from the budget.
Carried

Further discussions ensued on the issue of vehicle allowances and a report was requested on the issue, with information on the practices of other municipalities.

**11-0309-03 Moved by: Deputy Mayor Davis-Dagg
Seconded by: Councillor Russell**

That a survey of the staff vehicle allowance paid by local municipalities be investigated, and a report on the issue be prepared for review by Council.
Carried

A report on items referred to budget as proposed changes to the core was reviewed.

**11-0309-04 Moved by: Councillor Illman
Seconded by: Councillor Scott**

That the changes to the core as noted in the March 9th, 2011 agenda be received.
Carried

6.4 D.C.S. Report No. 15-2011 Re: 2011 Community Grants

The Community grant applications that have been received were reviewed, and several questions were raised regarding the applications, the items recommended to be deferred to the capital budget and the applications that did not meet the municipal criteria.

**11-0309-05 Moved by: Councillor Illman
Seconded by: Councillor Cook**

That the recommendations on the Community Grant applications as outlined in D.C.S. Report No. 15-2011 be approved, and that the capital items listed in the requests be referred to the capital budget discussions. Carried

Supplemental Agenda:

SA 1. D.C.S. Report No. 25-2011 Re: Former MTO Yards Closure – Highway 21 and Highway 83

Director of Community Services Peggy Van Mierlo-West advised Council that she had been notified by the County of Huron staff that, as of August 15, 2011, Lambton Shores would be asked to vacate the former MTO yard at the corner of Highways 21 and 83 currently used as the north area depot and sand/salt storage facility.

As Lambton Shores does not currently own a salt/sand storage facility, staff has made interim arrangements to purchase material from the County of Lambton for the 2011-12 season.

Discussions ensued on the departmental needs, the future plans to construct a salt dome in Northville and the possible move of the north area depot to the Klondyke Park. Other interim options were discussed.

**11-0309-06 Moved by: Councillor Bonesteel
Seconded by: Councillor Scott**

That the County of Huron be asked to extend the deadline for the move of the north area Community Services Depot from the facility at the corner of Highways 21 and 83, and that the County of Lambton be asked to consider exempting Lambton Shores from the practice of adding an administrative charge on the sale of salt and sand during this transition year, due to the extenuating circumstances. Carried

SA 2. Amendments to the Parking By-law to Add Timed Parking in Thedford

In CL Report No. 16-2011, Clerk Carol McKenzie advised of the improvements to the Village of Thedford “core” area, including the “Village Green” which, while being enjoyed

by the residents and visitors to the community, has eliminated a significant amount of parking.

The only time the commercial core is impacted by the reduction in parking spaces is when Council meetings are held, and all parking spaces are taken. In order to resolve the issue, it is recommended that 2 “30 minute” parking spaces be designated in front of the convenience store.

A copy of the proposed by-law was provided for Council’s consideration.

**11-0309-07 Moved by: Councillor Russell
Seconded by: Councillor Cook**

That the proposed amendment to the Municipal Parking By-Law 20-2002 to include timer parking spaces on Main Street Thedford, as outlined in CL Report No. 16-2011 is accepted as presented and By-law 23-2011 is approved. Carried

6.5 TR Report No. 13-2011 Re: Refer to Budget Items

In TR Report No. 13-2011, Treasurer Janet Ferguson provided details on the items that had been referred to the budget at the various Council meetings, and advised that any adjustments in the operating budget will affect the tax rate, with the exception of water and waste water items, and that an increase of \$80,000.00 in expenses represents an increase of 1% in the tax rate.

The “Refer to Budget” items were reviewed:

1. Recreation and Leisure Master Plan – as the document has not been approved by Council, the proposed items were deferred until 2012.
2. The Grand Bend Optimists had requested \$24,000.00 for enhancements to the park across from the TD Bank on 81 Crescent. These funds would be taken from the Capital reserve.

**11-0309-08 Moved by: Councillor Cook
Seconded by: Councillor Underwood**

That the request from the Grand Bend Optimists for a \$ 24,000.00 donation of matching funds for the park on 81 Crescent be approved. Carried

3. Signs for Glendale Beach were deemed to be part of the regular operating budget.
4. Cat Trapping

A discussion took place on the municipal role in trapping feral cats, and the possible ramifications and requests for additional services.

**11-0309-09 Moved by Councillor Illman
Seconded by: Councillor Russell**

That funds not be included in the 2011 budget for “cat trapping” services. Carried

5. Fire Board – Bunker Gear and SCBA Replacement

Council considered a report from the Fire Board at its last meeting, and it was discussed that as Lambton Shores had partnership agreements with neighbouring municipalities, it would be best to wait until 2012 to consider increasing contributions to the reserves, so that the partners can be advised accordingly.

It was also noted that the decision was made to proceed with a new tanker truck for Arkona in 2011, and defer the truck for the Forest Department until 2013.

The 10 year capital forecasting and capital allocations were explained by Treasurer Janet Ferguson.

6. Former Forest Arena

The future plans for the Forest Arena and grounds were discussed and it was suggested that the issue be reviewed during the Recreation and Leisure Master Plan consultations as there wasn't sufficient information at this time on options and community needs.

7. John Ross Letter Re: Grand Bend Main Street Suggestions

Previously, the letter sent by Mr. Ross outlining suggested improvements for the Grand Bend Main Street had been reviewed by Council. With respect to parking issues, it was noted that the rationale for establishing paid parking on the Main Street was to provide short term parking spaces for persons wanting to shop in the core area stores. The report from the Grand Bend By-law officer advised that the parking situation improved over the summer as people became more aware of the requirements.

The problems that would arise if one sector of the Lambton Shores community was provided parking passes was discussed, and the proposal was not adopted.

The amount of parking ticket revenue was discussed, and the possible counter productivity of encouraging tourism and issuing parking tickets.

Other options were discussed, such as waiving paid parking during special events, or commencing the paid parking later in the year, however the decision was to remain status quo for 2011.

**11-0309-10 Moved by: Councillor Underwood
Seconded by: Councillor Cook**

That the main street parking remain status quo for 2011, and the various issue pertaining to parking be refer to the strategic plan for future discussion. Carried

8. Grand Bend Chamber of Commerce

Previously, a delegation from the Grand Bend Chamber of Commerce had requested funds to assist in further developing tourism potential for the area. It was noted that these types of partnerships and how Lambton Shores should participate is a significant component of Economic Development and needs to be discussed further.

The importance of looking at the promotion of tourism and economic development for the entire community was discussed, as opposed to dealing with one community at a time, and the need to allocate funds in the budget for economic development initiatives.

**11-0309-11 Moved by: Councillor Russell
Seconded by: Councillor Bonesteel**

That \$ 20,000.00 be allocated in the 2011 budget for Economic Development. Carried

9. Council Conference/Training

A review of the current remuneration for Council, and a comparison with other municipalities was considered, and it was stated that the Lambton Shores remuneration had remained unchanged since amalgamation in 2001. A brief discussion ensued regarding the possibility of providing cell phones for the members; however the decision was for the policy to remain status quo for 2011.

**11-0309-12 Moved by: Councillor Bonesteel
Seconded by: Councillor Cook**

That the Council remuneration, communications and travel allocations remain unchanged in 2011. Carried

6.6 TR Report No. 17 -2011 Re: Tax Rate Impacts on the 2011 Draft Operating Budget

TR Report No. 17-2011 explained the current and proposed impacts of tax rates for Lambton Shores for 2011, and showed the impacts of the current draft operating budget (which includes funding the reserves) as it relates to the tax rate. The original draft budget showed a .95% tax rate increase over the 2010 level, and to bring the draft down to zero would require a reduction of \$79,000.00 dollars

The chart provided showed the tax change with the original budget and the revised budget, as well as the assessment change and the situation if the tax rate remained unchanged.

Minutes of the March 9, 2011 Special Council Meeting – Budget

The 2010 tax rate and assessment changes were discussed, as was the business unit method of budgeting, the increases in expenses, as well as the change attributed to growth and assessment changes.

Staff provided recommendations to bring the budget to a 0 percent increase in the tax rate, and the rationale and impact of the recommended changes were discussed.

11-0309- 13 Moved by: Deputy Mayor Davis-Dagg
Seconded by: Councillor Russell

That the recommendations in TR Report No. 17-2011 be approved
and reflected in the next draft of the budget. Carried

Councillor Reports:

Councillor Cook requested a copy of information provided by a member at the last meeting pertaining to a telephone conversation with the Ministry of the Environment.

Deputy Mayor Davis-Dagg requested a copy of the calculation and the background information on the analysis for the sewage treatment plant capacity.

Councillor Illman advised that the County of Lambton proposed Cultural Plan would be presented at a “focus group” meeting on March 15th from 7:00 – 9:00 at The Shores and in order to ensure the final document is not “Sarnia Centric” it is important there be a representation from the north end of the county.

Councillor Scott reported on a situation regarding a drainage issue in the vicinity of Gillespie Street and Ontario Street.

Deputy Mayor Davis-Dagg advised of an Economic Development workshop in Chatham on March 23 from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. that is hosted by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Councillor Russell reminded members of the “Meet and Greet” with the business community scheduled for March 31st at the Lambton Heritage Museum from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Discussion Period

Mr. Bob Sharen noted that there were several assessment appeals and changes in use of properties in the Grand Bend area that would cause a shift in assessment from commercial to residential.

Mr. Sharen also stated that he believed that the recording for the Sewage Treatment Facility on Page 3 of 17 in the capital section was incorrectly accounted for, as it should state the full cost for the plant. Also referenced was the information provided at the last meeting on the capacity of the plant and possible infiltration points.

Minutes of the March 9, 2011 Special Council Meeting – Budget

Mr. Ernie Lewis asked for clarification of the S-W trunk and future reserves, and was advised by the Treasurer that it is the West Bosanquet line and the costs will be collected from the benefiting property owners and from growth, and the costs are projected this way until it is confirmed that the system will proceed.

Clarification was also requested and received on the “administration allocation” which is included in both the operating and capital budgets, depending on how staff time is used.

A question was also raised on the Allen Street improvements and whether this was required for the Legacy Centre. Director of Community Services Peggy Van Mierlo-West provided the information on the issues raised, and noted that Allen Street had been scheduled for upgrading prior to the decision to reconstruct the Legacy Centre but the work was deferred until after the construction was completed.

Miss Erryn Sheppard. F.I.N.E. a Restaurant in Grand Bend presented correspondence for Council to consider at its next meeting.

Mr. Dick Matzka discussed staff compensation for mileage. He also noted that he had previously asked for information from the municipal solicitor which had not been received.

Mr. Barnsley questioned the average increase for the average homeowner, and was advised that as the budget is today, the average increase in the municipal rate would be 5.4%.

Mr. Jordy Speake spoke on the parking issues in Grand Bend and suggested that next year; a parking meter strategy for Lambton Shores be initiated to share the problem throughout the community. Mr. Speake also advised that he had a shop that the municipality could potentially lease for the salt dome.

Mr. Cam Taylor questioned the ownership of the salt dome on Highway 21 and whether or not the contractors would share the usage.

The next budget meeting was scheduled for Tuesday March 15th from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00p.m.

**11-0309-14 Moved by: Councillor Underwood
Seconded by: Councillor Cook**

That the special council meeting to discuss the 2011 budget
adjourns at 4:38 p.m. Carried