



The Corporation of the Municipality of Brockton

Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 16, 2024, 9:00 a.m.

Bruce County Council Chambers - 30 Park Street, Walkerton, ON

Council Present: Chris Peabody, Mayor
James Lang, Deputy Mayor
Mitch Clark, Councillor
Tim Elphick, Councillor
Kym Hutcheon, Councillor
B. Carl Kuhnke, Councillor
Gregory J. McLean, Councillor

Staff Present: Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer
Fiona Hamilton, Director of Legislative and Legal Services (Clerk)
Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer
Sarah Johnson, Deputy Clerk
Chris Wells, Director of Fire and Emergency Services
Sharon Bross, Brockton Child Care Centre Supervisor
Colleen Gillis, Director of Community Services
Brad Thomson, Parks and Facilities Coordinator
Nicholas Schnurr, Director of Operations
John Strader, Operations Manager
Dieter Wertz, Building and Planning Manager/CBO

1. Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Statement

2. Acceptance of Special Council Agenda

Resolution 24-02-01

Moved By: Gregory J. McLean

Seconded By: Kym Hutcheon

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton accept the Agenda for the Special Council Meeting to consider the 2024 Municipal Budget on January 16, 2024 as presented.

Carried

3. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof

4. Business Arising From Previous Minutes

4.1 Budget Consultation 2024 Feedback from September 26, 2023 Council Meeting

It was noted that the report was previously reviewed by Council on September 26, 2023 and was available for information.

5. Delegations

5.1 Brian Currie - Brockton Physician Recruitment and Retention Committee

Brian Currie and Kelly Fotheringham provided a brief history of the Brockton and Area Physician Recruitment and Retention Committee, and highlighted the success of the Committee. Mr. Currie and Mr. Fotheringham noted ongoing recruitment would be required to replace retirements, but emphasized that the focus had shifted to retention of existing physicians.

In particular, the Committee noted the need to make renovations at the hospital space to accommodate the physicians that had been recruited. It was noted that the total costs were not yet known, but were estimated to be approximately \$40,000.00 for Brockton's contribution. Mr. Currie responded to questions from Council about whether the hospital or the hospital foundation would also be contributing to the project.

Council thanked the Committee for their efforts in recruiting five (5) new physicians over the past year.

6. General Budget Overview

6.1 2024 Budget Overview Presentation

Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer, introduced the 2024 Budget and highlighted the areas of the Strategic Plan that influenced the creation of the 2024 Budget. Ms. Watson also summarized the major projects that were completed over the past year.

Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer, provided Council with an overview of the proposed process for the budget deliberations. Ms. Serratore noted that the initial budget included amounts required to sustain current operations, along with legislated and required increases for capital. Ms. Serratore confirmed that the County of Bruce tax rate was not yet available, and the province had also not yet set the education tax rates. Ms. Serratore noted that a 1% tax rate increase was equivalent to approximately \$117,000.

Ms. Serratore reviewed the reserve funds held by the Municipality of Brockton along with the increase in long-term debt over the past few years. Ms. Serratore reminded Council that each year the external municipal auditor emphasized the importance of maintaining a 1:1 ratio of long-term debt to funds held in reserve.

Ms. Serratore responded to questions from Council and confirmed the increase allocated directly to the reserve fund transfers.

6.2 Brockton Child Care Centre Staffing Request

Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer, responded to questions from Council and confirmed that given the funding model with the County of Bruce, only two (2) full-time positions were being proposed, with the goal of considering an additional two (2) full-time staff next year once funding through external sources was finalized.

Council discussed the need for a strong retention and recruitment strategy for staff at the Brockton Child Care Centre, and suggested that staff working full-time hours should be considered for promotion to full-time status.

Action: Staff were directed to include four (4) full time positions for the Brockton Child Care Centre rather than the two that had originally been proposed. Council confirmed the direction was to move forward with the two positions outlined in the motion, and add an additional two positions.

Resolution 24-02-02

Moved By: James Lang

Seconded By: B. Carl Kuhnke

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton hereby receives Report Number BCCC2024-01 – Brockton Child Care Centre Staffing Request, prepared by Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer and Sharon Bross, Brockton Child Care Centre Supervisor and in doing so accepts the recommendation of creating two (2) full-time Preschool Teacher Level 1 positions in the 2024 budget.

Carried

6.3 Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority Letter

Council discussed the letter provided from the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority in the context of the financial statements for the organization.

Councillor McLean, as the Council appointment to the Saugeen Valley Conversation Authority Board, noted that the Board was still considering many funding options to avoid a significant increase.

7. Council Discussion and Questions on Tax Supported Operating Budget

7.1 Council

Fiona Hamilton, Director of Legislative and Legal Services (Clerk) responded to an inquiry on the office supply budget, noting that much of the expenses were related to the Municipal Election.

Council discussed whether to consider a bulk target to transfer into reserves. Ms. Serratore advised that the total proposed contributions to reserves for 2024 was \$1.5 million dollars compared to approximately \$700,000 contributed in 2023.

Ms. Serratore suggested that Council review the reserve fund transfers Council directed staff to contribute to in 2023, being the capital repayment of the one-ton truck for \$75,000 and capital repayment for the street sweeper for \$125,000 over four years, as well as new transfers such as the Valleyside Cliff restoration for \$100,000 and the Hanover/Walkerton Landfill post-closure costs \$30,000. Ms. Hamilton noted the fluidity involved with the costs of the cliff erosion project.

Council discussed the reserve fund transfers, recommending support of transferring \$30,000 for the Walkerton/Hanover Landfill post-closure costs.

Ms. Hamilton responded to an inquiry on the engineering costs for the cliff erosion, noting the intention to set aside funding for capital projects associated with the erosion, estimating that \$60,000 has been budgeted to complete the EA process in 2024. Council suggested adjusting the reserve fund transfer to \$40,000 rather than \$100,000. It was noted that the engineers would provide an update in March 2024 and Council could reconsider how best to invest the reserve fund transfer at that time.

Council inquired on the life cycle of the street sweeper and suggested spreading out the cost of the loan over an eight (8) year period.

Council suggested spreading out the cost of the loan for the one-ton truck over a three (3) year period.

Action: Staff to make changes and bring back recommendations to Council on changes that could be made to the overall reserve fund transfers.

Council reviewed the summary of changes from the 2023 municipal tax levy to the proposed 2024 municipal levy.

Mayor Peabody discussed the BASWRA recycling contract, suggesting that BASWRA use funding from their reserves.

Council recommended removing the service provider review for police services.

Council discussed the cost of the Municipal Innovation Council (MIC) and the value for Brockton residents. Ms. Hamilton noted that there may be a process involved in terminating the contract with the MIC member municipalities. Council advocated to withdraw from the MIC. Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer advised that the MIC were holding a strategic visioning session on January 31, 2024 and if this was Council's intent a motion should be provided that would then be considered by the MIC in advance of staff's participation in this session.

Council discussed the Kleist land Environmental Assessment study and suggested that it could be delayed until the next year once other lots in the East Ridge Business Park had sold.

Council suggested terminating the agreement with the lobbyist as of April 1, 2024 as the Housing Accelerator Fund and other important grant outcomes would be available soon.

It was noted that the one-time transfer from the tax mitigation reserve would be taken from reserves for operations purposes in order to reduce the tax rate.

Council discussed the freeze on MPAC assessments at 2016 rates.

Resolution 24-02-

Moved By: Gregory J. McLean

Seconded By: Tim Elphick

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton does now hereby recess from the Open Session at 10:33 a.m.

Carried

Resolution 24-02-

Moved By: Mitch Clark

Seconded By: Kym Hutcheon

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton does now return to Open Session at 10:45 a.m.

Carried

7.2 General Government

Trish Serratore, CFO responded to questions from Council on building maintenance, noting the expenses for maintenance at Victoria Jubilee Hall and cost for renovations at the Municipal Office which were offset by reserve fund transfers to not impact the tax rate.

Ms. Serratore responded to questions from Council that the increase in service agreements was resulting from the lobbyist and rent at Victoria Jubilee Hall, and further that the decrease in user fees aligned with actuals from previous years.

7.3 Human Resources

Ms. Watson responded to an inquiry from Council on the service agreement budget, advising that Council authorized conducting a salary and compensation review in 2024, and staff will proceed with an RFP, noting that the review is

estimated to cost \$12,000 to involve a full review of job descriptions, salary and pay equity comparisons.

7.4 Economic Development

Council suggested reducing the funding of the façade grant program to \$15,000 as Spruce the Bruce funding would also be available to businesses. Ms. Watson noted that as a result of revamping the Municipality's Community Improvement Plan (CIP) area additional grants were available to businesses for various improvements.

Ms. Watson responded to an inquiry from Council on the studies budget, advising that marketing and promotions for the business community and Durham Street bridge closures are included in that budget.

7.5 East Ridge Business Park

It was noted that the budget for Kleist lands would be removed.

Ms. Watson advised that the revenue included was for the potential sale of 4.3 acres.

Ms. Serratore responded to an inquiry on reserve funds, noting that the proceeds from the sale of lands were offset to pay off the construction loan.

7.6 Tourism/Visitor Information Centre

Ms. Watson responded to an inquiry on programs and promotions, noting that monies are allocated for the Christmas Market, Summer Streetfest, and Shop Walkerton and Win. It was noted that as some events occurred later in 2023, not all the costs are allocated at this time to provide full actuals. Ms. Serratore noted that some recoveries are available for Shop Walkerton and Win which offset the expenses.

Ms. Watson responded to an inquiry on publications, advising that the Municipality is partnering with the Walkerton Herald Times on the 2024 Visitor Guide.

7.7 Public Works

Council inquired on the increase to transfers to reserve. Ms. Serratore advised that \$225,000 was intended to re-establish prior year reserves, and \$75,000 transfer for one-ton truck, and \$125,000 for the street sweeper which would be adjusted in the next budget revision.

Nicholas Schnurr, Director of Operations and John Strader, Operations Manager responded to an inquiry from Council on health and safety, noting that upgrades were being completed within the works shops, including the purchase of specific chains and lifting devices that must be tagged and inspected, and related training required for staff for health and safety purposes.

Ms. Serratore responded to an inquiry on wages, advising that wages are separated into separate accounts, and the figure may increase as year-end payroll processes are completed.

Mr. Strader responded to a question from Council explaining the cost of service agreements including payment of equipment. Mr. Schnurr further explained that the GPS units needed to be updated as the current software was becoming obsolete and provided the rationale for the system to monitor our fleet and support the minimum maintenance standards.

7.8 Streetlight

No further discussion or changes noted.

7.9 Brockton Child Care Centre

Council recognized the work of staff and proposal to offer four full-time status positions. Ms. Watson advised that the budget currently includes the two (2) new full-time staff positions. Ms. Serratore noted that the Municipality had a policy defining full-time hour status as a 35-hour work week.

Council advocated to recognize staff that were working full-time hours that were not provided the same benefits as full-time staff. Ms. Serratore advised that approximately \$20,000 was remaining in the child care reserve fund.

Action: Staff to include the cost of the additional two (2) full-time staff positions into the next budget draft.

7.10 Materials Management

Nicholas Schnurr responded to questions from Council about the term of the agreement with Brockton's curbside collection provider.

7.11 Fire Services

Council commented on the success of the Regional Fire Training Centre in collecting sufficient revenue to offset expenses.

7.12 Emergency Management

Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer, confirmed that the proposed reserve fund transfer was proposed to re-establish historic contributions.

7.13 Health and Safety

Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer, confirmed that some data from 2023 was not yet inputted, and that wage increases may include both step increases and policy increases attributable to CPI (consumer price index).

7.14 OPP and Brockton Police Services Board

Council discussed the introduction of the new Board that would be established under the Community Safety and Policing Act and noted that, due to the uncertainty, it would be best to consider the overall policing contract in 2025, once more details were available.

7.15 Animal Control/By-law Enforcement

Dieter Wertz, Building and Planning Manager responded to questions from Council about reviewing the amount set for licensing and permits within 2024. Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer, noted that some fees, such as dog tags fees, could not be changed at this time as those invoiced had already been processed and sent out to residents.

7.16 Cemetery

Fiona Hamilton, Director of Legislative and Legal Services (Clerk) explained that the increase in service agreements was to allow staff to investigate and obtain records for potential abandoned cemeteries within Brockton.

Resolution 24-02-

Moved By: Gregory J. McLean

Seconded By: Tim Elphick

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton recess from open session at 12:00 p.m. to resume in approximately half an hour.

Carried

Resolution 24-02-

Moved By: Mitch Clark

Seconded By: Tim Elphick

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton hereby returns to open session at 12:40 p.m.

Carried

7.17 Physician Recruitment

Mayor Peabody commented on the presentation made by the delegation earlier in the day, and expressed support for pooling resources with other local organization to support the strong efforts and successes of the Brockton and Area Physician Recruitment and Retention Committee.

7.18 Library

Colleen Gillis, Director of Community Services confirmed the increased building maintenance on the library facilities in 2023 was the result of the installation of the push-button accessible doors. Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer confirmed that she would reclassify the amount received from the County of Bruce as rents rather than donations.

7.19 Municipal Drains

Fiona Hamilton, Director of Legislative and Legal Services (Clerk) responded to questions from Council about the proposed Zettler Municipal Drain Improvements.

7.20 Planning

Dieter Weltz, Building and Planning Manager confirmed that \$40,000 was being proposed for the Official Plan and Zoning By-law update projects.

7.21 Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority

The letter was noted and further information is expected to come forward.

7.22 Heritage

Fiona Hamilton, Director of Legislative and Legal Services (Clerk) provided information to Council about the Doors Open 2024 Event the Committee was planning and confirmed the grant of \$30,000 provided to Victoria Jubilee Hall in 2023 for the new windows.

7.23 Recreation

Colleen Gillis, Director of Community Services, noted that staff could complete a review of the fees being charged for services. Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer confirmed for Council that the splash pad would be paid for through the insurance coverage and would hopefully be operational for the 2024 summer seasons.

Trish Serratore requested direction from Council about the donation request from Victoria Jubilee Hall for \$10,000.00, noting that only \$5,000 had been included in the budget, and the request from the Walkerton Capitals Jr. C Hockey Club for \$4,720.70 for the upgrades made to the dressing room.

Council directed staff to confirm the donation of \$5,000.00 to Victoria Jubilee Hall given the contributions last year and the new rental agreement that would provide the facility with stable revenue.

Deputy Mayor Lang and Councillor Elphick declared conflicts of interest in relation to the Walkerton Capitals Jr. C Hockey Club funding request due to their involvement with the Club.

Colleen Gillis, Director of Community Services, responded to questions from Council about the potential location and fencing for a dog park, as well as information about the day camp programming from children aged 4-5.

Resolution 24-02-

Moved By: Kym Hutcheon

Seconded By: Mitch Clark

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton refuse the donation request of \$4,720.70 from the Walkerton Capitals Jr. C Hockey Club for upgrades made to the dressing room at the Walkerton Community Centre.

Carried

8. Overview and Council Discussion of Capital Projects

Fire and Emergency Services

Chris Wells, Director of Fire and Emergency Services explained the need for additional SCBA, noting that the current bottles could not be recertified beyond the end of the year.

Action: Council directed staff to explore potential borrowing options for the equipment given that the SCBA would likely last a number of years and an outright purchase would drain the reserve fund for the department.

Public Works

Nicholas Schnurr, Director of Operations explained the capitals projects that were being proposed for the next year and responded to questions from Council about the terms of the expiring lease agreement for the plow truck and two graders.

Streetlights

John Strader, Operations Manager, responded to questions from Council about the proposed streetlights. Council discussed the balance in the Westario reserve fund that was being applied towards some of the streetlights. Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer, reviewed with Council which sets of streetlights would be funded through reserves and which would be tax rate funded.

Recreation

Colleen Gillis, Director of Community Services and Brad Thomson, Facilities and Parks Coordinator responded to questions from Council about the proposed purchase of a pick-up truck as part of the fleet for garbage collection and bathroom cleaning, etc.

Colleen Gillis, Director of Community Services, responded to questions from Council about the floor scrubber that would be used in various locations, and the proposal for downtown planters. Council discussed the planters and whether the hanging baskets were sufficient.

Action: Council directed staff to review the proposed planters and identify possible cost-saving strategies.

Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer, confirmed the capital projects that would be proceeding only if Brockton was successful in obtaining grant funding.

Council further discuss the pergolas and the commemorative plaques at the Heritage Water Garden in Walkerton. Council noted that some of the language on the plaques was dated and did not properly underscore the community's resilience.

Action: Council directed staff to remove the pergolas and the plaques with no replacement until such time as Brockton completed a broader analysis of what should be done to preserve the Heritage Water Garden.

Resolution 24-02-

Moved By: James Lang

Seconded By: B. Carl Kuhnke

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton recesses from open session at 2:10 p.m.

Carried

Resolution 24-02-

Moved By: Kym Hutcheon

Seconded By: Mitch Clark

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton returns to open session at 2:21 p.m.

Carried

9. Current Tax Rate Implications

It was noted that staff would require additional time to calculate the changes and current tax rate implication, such that Council proceeded to discuss the non-tax supported budget.

10. Non-Tax Supported Budget Overview

Trish Serratore, CFO provided an overview of the non-tax supported budget and associated capital projects.

10.1 Water and Wastewater

Council discussed the current agreement with Veolia which expires in 2026, and whether a new arrangement should be considered rather than extend the agreement with Veolia.

10.2 Building/Property Standards

It was noted that staff would prepare another budget draft based on Council's decisions from today's meeting and reconvene on February 6, 2024 with an updated budget being provided to Council prior to the meeting date.

Council discussed their preferences for the tax rate being under 10%.

11. Closed Session (if required)

A Closed Session was not held during this Council Meeting.

12. Confirmation of Proceedings

Resolution 24-02-

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton authorize that the following by-law be read, enacted, signed, sealed, and numbered as follows:

- By-Law 2024-006 - January 16, 2024 Confirmatory By-Law

Carried

13. Adjournment

Resolution 24-02-

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton does now adjourn at 3:34 p.m. to meet again virtually on January 23, 2024 for the regular Council Meeting and February 6, 2024 at 1:00 p.m. at the Cargill Community Centre for the Special Council Meeting to consider the 2024 Municipal Budget.

Carried

Mayor - Chris Peabody

Clerk – Fiona Hamilton