

**DISTRICT OF SECHLT**  
**MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING**  
**held via Zoom Online Meeting Platform**  
**Wednesday, March 24, 2021**

**PRESENT** Mayor D. Siegers; Councillors J. Kuester; T. Lamb; M. McLean; B. Rowe; E. Scott; A. Toth (Chair)

**STAFF** Chief Administrative Officer A. Yeates; Director of Engineering and Operations K. Dhillon; Director of Planning and Development Services A. Allen; Director of Financial Services D. Douglas; Human Resources Manager L. Roberts; Wastewater Supervisor C. Miller (partial attendance); Manager of Development Engineering and Sustainability M. Lee (partial attendance); Communications Manager J. Rogers (partial attendance); Corporate Officer J. Frank and Recording Secretary J. Chamberlain

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In accordance with the orders from the Provincial Health Officer regarding COVID-19, the March 24, 2021 Committee of the Whole meeting was conducted by electronic means.

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND DECLARATION OF CONFLICT**

Chair A. Toth called the Committee of the Whole Meeting to order at 3:01 pm and acknowledged the meeting was being held on the traditional territory of the shíshálh Nation.

Chair Toth asked for any Declarations of Conflict.

**2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**Recommendation No. 1**

**Moved/Seconded**

That the agenda be adopted, as presented.

**CARRIED**

**3. APPOINTMENTS AND DELEGATIONS**

None.

**4. NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**5. BUSINESS ITEMS**

**5.1 2021 General and Sewer Capital Requests – Deferred from the March 10, 2021 Committee of the Whole Meeting**

**Recommendation No. 2**

**Moved/Seconded**

That the report from the Director of Financial Services regarding New Capital Requests for 2021 and Business Cases be received.

**CARRIED**

Councillor Lamb joined the meeting at 3:05pm.

The Director of Financial Services noted that the attachments to his report were amended to reflect updates since the deferral date of the report, and will be amended again prior to becoming the final version presented to Council. The Director of Financial Services provided an overview of the 2021 General and Capital projects and Capital Plan.

In discussion it was further noted:

- A grant application has been submitted for full funding of the Hackett Park Playground and Adult Fitness Equipment project, but should the District be unsuccessful in the grant, it has been included in the capital reserve list for consideration for 2021.
- The proposed Hackett Park projects would be worked into the existing footprint and landscaping of the park.
- The Efficiency Upgrades to Justice Services Building and District Office Including Control Boards Software would create a significant savings to energy costs.
  - There was some concern expressed with funding municipal hall upgrades with the Public Safety Reserve.
- The electrical upgrade requested in the business case for Seaside Centre Enhancements is for a new sound equipment power unit; most funding requested is for the Art Walls.
  - The audio-visual system upgrades to municipal hall's council chambers and for Seaside Centre will be coming forward to Council for consideration to use the Covid-19 Safe Restart Grant funds.
- The District has applied for some grants for road paving improvements, and if successful, staff will bring a report to Council on road priorities.
  - The McElhanney Engineers' Report is dated and staff anticipate a road condition assessment will need to be done to create an updated pavement management strategy.

- The Hackett Park Amphitheater is envisioned as a tiered amphitheater made of concrete and soil with a natural slope of Hackett Park; if grant funding is successful, there may be the opportunity to develop lighting options.
  - This project must go through a community engagement process and be Covid-19 conscious.
- An additional project that has come up for inclusion in the 2021 budget is \$200,000 for replacement of a raised portion of the steel roof for the RCMP station.
- There were residential concerns with the previously proposed solution for the Marine Way Retaining Wall and staff are determining if there are other options available.
- There are some carry forward projects due to limited staff capacity.
- Vehicle Replacement Unit #47 is a Ford F-450, fitted with a plow and box.
- The Trail Avenue Construction from Anchor to Turnstone Roads is a multi-year project that is dependent on grant funds; funds outlined in the Capital Plan are for the hypothetical grant funding split between 3 years.
- If grant applications for certain projects are unsuccessful, staff will come forward with a formal project request for another funding source and amend the 5-year Financial Plan bylaw.
- If grant funds are successfully obtained for a project previously identified in the 5-Year Capital Plan, Gas Tax money would not be spent, but re-allocated into a reserve.
- Once a grant has been applied for, the grant funding has to be identified within the Capital budget list.

The Director of Financial Services and the Wastewater Supervisor provided an overview of the new Sewer and Septage Capital projects and funding.

In discussion it was further noted:

- The business case titles outlined in the staff report attachment for Additional Membrane Filters and Ultrafiltration Unit Replacement are incorrectly switched.
- Depending on further testing, additional membrane filters may be required by late 2021 for upgrades to the bottleneck flows.
- MFA Financing for the Water Resource Centre Chemical Storage Facility would come from sewer fees, and would have an approximate annual principle payment of \$70,000.
- If sewer upgrades or expansions are required due to growth, Development Cost Charges can be used.
- Lift Station Telemetry – System Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) programming is a contracted service that would allow for a quicker service call outs and provide data on lift stations pumps and flows, which will assist with a sanitary model.
  - There have been discussions with SCRD on collaborating SCADA requirements in the short term, with the long-term plan of having an internal SCADA technician.
- There is a potential to combine future maintenance hole replacements into one project cost to save with bulk costs and project management, and pay through MFA Financing.
- The business case amount for Sewer Outfall Consultation & Design should read \$220,000.

- The SCRD are looking into bio-covers as part of the landfill closure plan, which could allow for a potential collaboration for reduced costs for the next needed septage disposal.
- Staff are looking at feasible options to deal with septage solids in the future.
- Geotubes require 2 years to dry, which could have an impact on the Septage Closure Plan timeline.
- The line item for Sewer Outfall – Construction is considered a placeholder for the 5-Year Capital Plan.
- The Mackenzie Marina Lift Station Rebuild line item includes inspection and twin pipe lines to the Water Resource Centre (WRC).
- The Wakefield Lift Station is more complex than others, due to its location.
- Staff have had ongoing discussions with external waste management organizations on processes and new technologies to optimize the WRC.

## **5.2 General Requests and Sewer One-Time and Ongoing Costs**

### **Recommendation No. 3**

#### **Moved/Seconded**

That the report from the Director of Financial Services regarding General and Sewer One-Time and Ongoing Costs for 2021 be received.

**CARRIED**

The Director of Financial Services provided an overview of the New Ongoing or One Time General Fund Operating and Sewer Fund Operating Costs.

In discussion it was noted:

- In approximately 2010, the community had said they needed a cultural facility; The Needs Assessment must be updated and a Feasibility Study would be needed to qualify for grants for the construction of a cultural facility.
  - Many festivals and events need bigger facilities to host their type and/or size of events for the community.
  - There could be potential grant opportunities for the Feasibility Study once the Needs Assessment has been updated.
    - There have been no grant opportunities available for the Needs Assessment.
- The business case for the Hackett Park Tennis Court Resurfacing should read the funding source as coming from taxation.
- The current Transportation Master Plan is outdated and a new comprehensive plan needs to be developed that outlines the vision of arterial and collective roads for future new development proposals.
  - Staff will review whether the District-wide Transportation Planning Study could be partially funded through general surplus or a reserve rather than through taxation.

- RCMP have requested a Soundproofing meeting room, but have not yet determined the quote on costs; if the costs have not been determined in time for final budget deliberations, the item will be removed.
- Septage haulers have requested additional hours of operations for the septage receiving site on Dusty Road.
  - Staff will have discussions with septage haulers on their input for the potential of increasing septage receiving fees for increasing operational hours of Dusty Road septage receiving.

RECESS: The Chair recessed the meeting at 5:30pm.

RECONVENE: The Chair reconvened the meeting at 5:40pm.

### **5.3 2021 Staffing Request and Five-Year Projection**

#### **Recommendation No. 4**

#### **Moved/Seconded**

That the report from the Human Resources Manager regarding 2021 staffing requests and five-year projection be received.

**CARRIED**

The Human Resources Manager provided an overview of the 2021 staffing requests and the 5-year projected staffing plan for the Administration, Engineering and Operations, Planning and Development and Finance departments.

In discussion it was further noted:

- The 2021 staffing costs outlined in the report include the wage lift for 2021, and benefits.
  - The total additional staffing costs for 2021 would be approximately \$357,913.
- The RCMP Community Safety Coordinator position could potentially be funded through the Strengthening Communities Grant.
- A 1% tax increase would be approximately \$96,000.
- Since 2015, less than 10 new staff members have been hired, with majority of new hire positions for the Water Resource Centre.
- Staffing is an investment for the community. There is a need to look at the District's organizational requirements, the community's needs and service level expectations.
- The expectations of local governments have increased. The District is currently undertaking or providing support in addressing local issues like the housing crisis and childcare needs.
  - In comparison with other municipalities of similar size, the District is understaffed.
- Additional engineering staffing would provide the ability to work on capital projects and to take a preventative and proactive approach to infrastructure and asset maintenance.

### **Recommendation No. 5**

#### **Moved/Seconded**

That staff be requested to report back with information on District staffing growth since 2014, staffing examples from other municipalities of similar size, the financial and incremental increases and annual costs for previous years' implementation of new positions and the municipal portion of tax rates for similar sized municipalities.

**CARRIED**

### **5.4 2021 Estimated Reserve Summary**

### **Recommendation No. 6**

#### **Moved/Seconded**

That the report from the Director of Financial Services regarding 2021 Estimated Reserve Summary be received.

**CARRIED**

The Director of Financial Services provided an overview of Capital Reserve options and the statutory, non-statutory, sewer and Development Cost Charges (DCC) reserves.

In discussion it was noted that:

- In accordance with the *Community Charter*, if a reserve is determined and proven as no longer required, the funds can be transferred out and the reserve account can be closed.
- The use of reserves should be explored to fund budget items in lieu of taxation.
- The RCMP contract expired in 2019, with no increases in salaries since. Wage backpay will be requested in the future with the new contract.
- The Public Safety Reserve must have a retained balance of at least \$248,000 for known liabilities.
- Staff recommend having a base amount of approximately \$750,000 to \$1Million in the sewer accumulated surplus account for emergencies before transferring funds into reserves.
- As the DCC's are a variable revenue, there have not been additions put into the DCC reserves.
- There will be a Special Committee of the Whole meeting on March 31, 2021 at 3pm to further review the 2021 budget.

**Recommendation No. 7**

**Moved/Seconded**

That staff explore options for spending and closing non-statutory reserve accounts where possible.

**AMENDED BY THE FOLLOWING:**

**Recommendation No. 8**

**Moved/Seconded**

That the recommendation be amended to include, “or to combine reserve accounts, where appropriate”.

**CARRIED**

**Recommendation No. 7**

**Moved/Seconded**

That staff explore options for spending and closing non-statutory reserve accounts where possible, or to combine reserve accounts, where appropriate.

**CARRIED**

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

**Recommendation No. 9**

**Moved/Seconded**

That the Committee of the Whole meeting of March 24, 2021 be adjourned at 7:13 pm.

**CARRIED**

Certified Correct:

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Alton Toth, Chair

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Jo-Anne Frank, Corporate Officer