

CAPE BRETON REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
Special Council Meeting – Minutes
BUDGET SESSION 2023-24

Tuesday,
April 4, 2023
9:36 a.m.

Council Chambers
2nd Floor, City Hall
320 Esplanade, Sydney, NS

Mayor Amanda M. McDougall-Merrill called the meeting to order.

Present: Mayor Amanda M. McDougall-Merrill
Councillor Gordon MacDonald
Councillor MacMullin
Councillor Cyril MacDonald
Councillor Eldon MacDonald
Councillor Glenn Paruch
Councillor Parsons
Deputy Mayor Edwards
Councillor Ken Tracey
Councillor O'Quinn
Councillor Green

Staff:	Marie Walsh	Ray Boudreau
	Jennifer Campbell	Paul MacDonald
	John MacKinnon	Francis Campbell
	Deborah Campbell Ryan	Chris March
	Demetri Kachafanas	Matthew Viva
	Wayne MacDonald	Bruce Hardy
	Michael Ruus	Adam MacNeil
	John MacKinnon	Bruce Hardy
	Robert Walsh	Paul MacDonald
	Michael Seth	Chris March
	Kirk Durning	Sharon MacSween
	Deanna Evely	

Absent: Councillor Steve Gillespie (Regrets)
Councillor Darren Bruckschwaiger (Leave of Absence)

Summary of Decisions

Land Acknowledgement

Roll Call

1. Approval of the Agenda:

Motion to approve the April 4, 2023, Special Council Agenda and Addendum as presented. **Carried.**

3. DRAFT Operating Budget 2023-2024:

The Proposed Operating Budget for 2023-2024 was presented.

A **Point of Order** was raised by Councillor Parsons requesting that a vote on each line item recommendation take place.

Motion to right-size the transit rate by expanding to all commercial properties in service area in addition to increasing the transit rate by \$.018/\$100 of assessment. **Carried**

Motion to implement the transit pilot and the fee structure in the service area to ensure route is fully funded. **Carried.**

Motion to implement tipping fees for all vehicles entering the landfill. **Carried.**

Motion that heavy garbage be included in the 2023-2024 operating budget. **Carried.**

Motion that the tax base rate remain the same. **Carried.**

Motion of the deferral of Transit Supervisor (EPW-Transit). **Defeated.**

Motion to suspend police recruitment pilot. **Defeated.**

Motion of the deferral of Business Services Manager (Police). **Defeated.**

Motion of the deferral of Labour Relations Specialist (Human Resources) **Carried.**

Motion of the deferral of Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator **Defeated.**

Motion of the deferral of Bylaw enforcement officer. **Defeated.**

Continued...

DRAFT Operating Budget 2023-2024 (Cont'd):

Motion to eliminate Mayor's staff position. *Defeated.*

Motion to defer tax collection staff. *Defeated.*

Motion to defer reinstatement of Financial Services Clerk for Facilities operations.
Defeated.

The meeting recessed for the day at 4:26 p.m.

Land Acknowledgement

Roll Call

1. Approval of the Agenda:

Mayor McDougall-Merrill recommended to first review the Operating Budget then the Capital Budget for an opportunity to find balance. Council **agreed**.

The Mayor stated that a \$3 million capital grant was announced by the Provincial Government on March 3 and the funds will be incorporated it into the capital budget and specific requirements are tied to the grant.

Mayor McDougall-Merrill advised that through the rapid housing initiative (RHI) process, staff and CMHC had conversations to determine eligibility of various projects that CBRM has submitted. RHI applications have been added to the agenda for April 5th.

Motion:

Moved by Councillor Green, seconded by Councillor Cyril MacDonald, to approve the April 4, 2023 Special Council Agenda and Addendum as presented.

Discussion:

It was **agreed** that Council have discussion prior to the Budget Presentations.

Motion Carried.

3. DRAFT Operating Budget 2023-2024:

CFO Campbell presented the Proposed Operating Budget. She reviewed the proposed expenditure summary and expenditures by department.

Following the presentation by CFO Campbell, Council discussion took place.

*At this point in the meeting, it was **agreed** to relax the speaking rules for the meeting.*

Discussion took place regarding:

- Library
- Centre 200
- Fuel costs and estimates
- Travel costs vs virtual meetings
- Police recruitment and business manager
- Transit, transit rates and pilot project
- Heavy garbage and residential tipping fees

Continued...

DRAFT Operating Budget 2023-2024 (Continued):

- Derelict buildings and safety hazards
- Tax receivable and tax collection positions
- Costs associated with Fiona
- Sidewalks
- Grants to organizations
- Insurance and liability costs
- Anticipated MOU with RCMP for policing 100 series highways, positions and cost recovery regarding fines
- Emera Centre staffing
- Staff overtime costs and vacancies
- CPI increase
- Municipal grant from the province has been frozen
- Street lights, fees and policy
- Ball field rates and policy update

Council recessed for Lunch at 11:55 a.m.

Council resumed at 1:13 p.m.

Mayor McDougall-Merrill welcomed everyone back to the afternoon session.

Council continued discussion regarding:

- Assumptions
- Gas tax
- Reserve for infrastructure funding
- Comparison of other Nova Scotia municipalities regarding general public tipping fees for waste greater than 50 kg, flat rate and tonnage fee including billing mechanisms for contractors
- Illegal dumping
- Heavy garbage and cruise ship season
- Charge fees for criminal record checks up front due to those being processed and not picked up and challenges around providing proof of income to waive fees for low income earners
- Solid waste challenges as a result of debris from Fiona
- Access to operational reserve funding
- Staffing, funding for positions previously within the Mayor's Office, vacancies and overtime

A **Point of Order** was raised by Councillor Parsons requesting that a vote on each line item take place.

Continued...

DRAFT Operating Budget 2023-2024 (Continued):

- \$518,244: Right-size the transit rate by expanding to all commercial properties in serviced areas, in addition to increasing the transit rate by \$.018/\$100 of assessment (increase from \$1.07 to \$1.25)

Motion:

Moved by Councillor Cyril MacDonald, seconded by Councillor Paruch, to right-size the transit rate by expanding to all commercial properties in service area in addition to increasing the transit rate by \$.018/\$100 of assessment.

Motion Carried

- \$700,000: Defer transit pilot, or include the service area in the tax structure to ensure route is fully funded

Motion:

Moved by Councillor MacMullin, seconded by Councillor Green, to implement the transit pilot and the fee structure in the service area to ensure route is fully funded.

Discussion:

The Director of Engineering and Public Works noted that once a new route is implemented and the rate is in place, the route would become permanent.

Motion Carried.

- \$600,000: Implement tipping fee for all vehicles entering landfill

Motion:

Moved by Councillor Paruch, seconded by Councillor Cyril MacDonald, to implement tipping fees for all vehicles entering the landfill.

Discussion:

During discussion, Councillor Green raised concern that implementing tipping fees for all vehicles will create a traffic bottle neck at the landfill entrance.

The Manager of Solid Waste advised that it is estimated that these tipping fees will generate approximately \$1 million per year. He further advised that every vehicle that presently enters the landfill is weighed, and implementing tipping fees may eliminate some of the residential traffic for those who tend to bring their household garbage to the landfill rather than leaving it at their curb.

Motion Carried.

Continued...

DRAFT Operating Budget 2023-2024 (Continued):

- \$330,000 Suspend heavy garbage collection for 1 year given landfill capacity/processing issues post-Fiona

Motion:

Moved by Councillor Green, seconded by Councillor Gordon MacDonald, that heavy garbage be included in the 2023-2024 operating budget.

Discussion:

During discussion, the Director of Engineering and Public Works advised that staggering heavy garbage collection by district would cost CBRM more.

Motion Carried.

- \$135,280: Elimination of Platoon Chief Rank through attrition

This item was discussed earlier in the meeting, noting that it was removed as an option from the list of recommendations.

- \$1,942,021: Base rate adjustment to balance

Motion:

Moved by Councillor MacMullin, seconded by Councillor Parsons, that the tax base rate remain the same.

Motion Carried.

Discussion took regarding departmental travel, training and education including increase in costs and:

- Active transportation
- Accessibility
- Housing
- Wastewater and water
- Technology
- Overtime management and associated challenges
- Port profits and royalties
- Increase \$1.1 million for fuel based on consumption
- Transit costs and the base rate
- Call to haul
- Equalization and provincial funding formula
- Costs associated with Fiona
- Cost of living and CPI

Continued...

DRAFT Operating Budget 2023-2024 (Continued):

At this point in the meeting, CAO Walsh called on Directors to allow an opportunity for them to speak to the positions.

Staffing considerations:

The Clerk suggested to Council that if they did not agree with a proposed staffing consideration, to introduce a motion with the recommendation as presented, and vote against it.

- \$121,607: Deferral of Transit Supervisor (EPW – Transit)

Motion:

Moved by Councillor O’Quinn, seconded by Councillor Eldon MacDonald, deferral of Transit Supervisor (EPW-Transit).

Motion Defeated.

- \$122,000: Suspend Police Recruitment Pilot (No impact – funded by reserve)

Motion:

Moved by Councillor MacMullin, seconded by Councillor Cyril MacDonald, to suspend police recruitment pilot.

Motion Defeated.

- \$104,254: Deferral of Business Services Manager (Police – no impact unless eliminating staff sergeant position)

Motion:

Moved by Councillor Green, seconded by Councillor O’Quinn, deferral of Business Services Manager (Police).

Motion Defeated.

- \$103,632: Deferral of Labour Relations Specialist (Human Resources)

Motion:

Moved by Councillor Cyril MacDonald, seconded by Councillor Parsons, deferral of Labour Relations Specialist (Human Resources).

Motion Carried.

Continued...

DRAFT Operating Budget 2023-2024 (Continued):

- \$91,033: Deferral of Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator (result in OT, environmental and system issues)

Motion:

Moved by Councillor Cyril MacDonald, seconded by Councillor Paruch, deferral of Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator

Motion Defeated.

- \$84,385: Deferral of Bylaw enforcement officer (partially offset by \$50K in additional revenue – will affect ability to enforce new signage bylaw)

Motion:

Moved by Councillor Parsons, seconded by Councillor Cyril MacDonald, deferral of Bylaw enforcement officer.

Motion Defeated.

- \$84,170: Eliminate Mayor’s staff position (L’nu advisor/communications officer)

Motion:

Moved by Councillor Green, seconded by Councillor O’Quinn, to eliminate Mayor’s staff position.

Motion Defeated.

- \$77,089: Defer tax collection staff (\$100,000 reduction in allowance unlikely to be achieved)

Motion:

Moved by Councillor Cyril MacDonald, seconded by Councillor Parsons, to defer tax collection staff.

Motion Defeated.

Continued...

DRAFT Operating Budget 2023-2024 (Continued):

- \$70,374: Defer reinstatement of Financial Services Clerk for Facilities operations (will result in additional overtime requirements)

Motion:

Moved by Councillor Parsons, seconded by Councillor Eldon MacDonald, to defer reinstatement of Financial Services Clerk for Facilities operations.

Motion Defeated.

The meeting recessed for the day at 4:26 p.m.

Cecil P. Clarke
Mayor

Christa Dicks
Municipal Clerk
/slm