THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MINUTES

COTW 2-2021
Thursday, July 8, 2021
Council Chamber / Video Conference
Regional Headquarters, Campbell West
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Thorold, ON

Committee Members Present in the Council Chamber:	Bradley (Regional Chair), Insinna
Committee Members Present via Video Conference:	Butters, Bylsma, Campion, Chiocchio, Darte, Diodati, Disero, Easton, Edgar, Fertich, Foster, Gale, Gibson, Greenwood, Heit, Huson, Ip, Jordan, Junkin, Nicholson, Redekop, Rigby, Sendzik, Steele, Ugulini, Villella, Whalen, Witteveen, Zalepa
Absent/Regrets:	Bellows
Staff Present in the Council Chamber:	T. Harrison, Commissioner/Treasurer, Corporate Services, M. Lewis, Client & Support Advisor, A.-M. Norio, Regional Clerk, K. Smith, Chief/Director, Emergency Medical Services, B. Zvaniga, Acting Chief Administrative Officer/Interim Commissioner, Public Works
Staff Present via Video Conference:	D. Barnhart, Executive Officer to the Regional Chair, H. Chamberlain, Director, Financial Management & Planning/Deputy Treasurer, D. Giles, Acting Commissioner, Planning & Development Services, Dr. M. M. Hirji, Acting Medical Officer of Health, B. Landry, Manager, Economic Research and Analysis, G. Spezza, Director, Economic Development, H. Talbot, Financial & Special Projects Consultant
Others Present via Video Conference:	Fire Chief (retired) J. Boutilier, Niagara Falls Fire Services, Deputy Chief B. Fordy, Niagara Regional Police Service, Fire Chief B. Lymburner, Pelham Fire Services, Fire Chief J. McCormick, St. Catharines Fire Services, Fire Chief J. Zambito, Niagara Falls Fire Services

---

1. CALL TO ORDER

Regional Chair Bradley called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Moved by Councillor Diodati
Seconded by Councillor Redekop

That the order of the agenda **BE AMENDED** to consider Other Business prior to Presentations.

Carried

2. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

See Minute Item 7.1.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 Canadian Borders and COVID-19

Councillor Chiocchio declared a direct pecuniary interest with respect to the discussion regarding Canadian borders and COVID-19 as he is an employee of the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission.

Councillor Diodati requested clarification respecting the comments made in the media by Dr. Hirji, Acting Medical Officer of Health, regarding the continued closure of the federal borders that is in contrast to the opinions expressed by Dr. Isaac Bogoch, a member of the federal COVID-19 Testing and Screening Expert Advisory Panel, who indicates that fully vaccinated visitors pose a low risk. Dr. Hirji advised that the media had asked him about a re-opening of the border, and not exceptions for fully vaccinated travellers, and that his comments were to that effect. The media often reach out as a result of Niagara being a border community and that he provided his professional assessment of the public health risks of COVID-19 in the event of the re-opening of the border.

Moved by Councillor Redekop
Seconded by Councillor Insinna

Whereas the border between Canada and the United States has been closed to all but essential travel for nearly 16 months;

Whereas the Minister of Security has indicated that the border restrictions will be eased based on health and science criteria in a gradual, staged and sectoral basis, attended by appropriate protocols, including fully vaccinated individuals;

Whereas the number of Canadians who have received first and second doses of a COVID-19 vaccine is continuing to increase; and

Whereas the federal government has yet to reveal to the public a plan for easing border restrictions leading to the eventual reopening of the border.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the Government of Canada **BE REQUESTED** to release immediately its plan to ease restrictions and reopen the border between Canada and the United States; and

2. That this resolution **BE CIRCULATED** to the Prime Minister of Canada, the federal Minister of Security, and MP's and MPP's in Niagara.

The following friendly ***amendment*** was accepted by the Regional Chair, and the mover and seconder of the motion:

2. That this resolution **BE CIRCULATED** to the Prime Minister of Canada, the federal Minister of Security, ***Premier of Ontario*** and MP's and MPP's in Niagara.

The Regional Chair called the vote on the motion as amended and declared it,

Carried

3. PRESENTATIONS

3.2 The Future of Work is Now

Cara Krezek, Director, Co-op, Career & Experiential Education, Brock University, provided information on the Future of Work is Now. Topics of the presentation included:

- The Future of Work – Pre-Pandemic
- Returning from Abrupt Disruption
- The Future of Work – Accelerated
- War on Talent and Labour Market Shortages
- Work Life Integration
- Do What You Love…
- Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive Workplaces
- The Workplace: Key to Health & Well-being

3.1 Economic Overview - Seventh-Inning Stretch

Benjamin Tal, Deputy Chief Economist, CIBC World Markets Inc., provided information respecting Economic Overview-Seventh-Inning Stretch. Topics of the presentation included:

- US GDP Forecast
- US tops Canada in 2021 Stimulus
- US Will Eliminate Economic Slack Ahead of Canada
- Subsequent Waves Less Destructive to Canadian Economy
- Households are Sitting on Excess Cash
- Spending On Services Will Swamp Pullback on Goods Purchases
- Inflation
- Money Makes the World go Round…
- Supply Constraints Causing Growing Pains for Economies
- The Rising Effectiveness of Canadian Monetary Policy
- Not Commuting? Need Space? Buying in the 'Burbs
- Many Employees Should Expect To Head Back to Office

4. DELEGATIONS

There were no delegations.

5. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

5.1 PHD 8-2021

Consolidation of Niagara's Emergency 911 Communication Services

Chief Kevin Smith, Niagara Emergency Management Services provided information respecting Dispatch Consolidation Update. Topics of the presentation included:

- Objective
- Recommendations Summary
- Opportunity for Consolidation?
- Pathway to Consolidation
- Voice Radio Network
- Facilities
- Governance - Service Delivery Structure Options
- Consolidation Approach

Moved by Councillor Sendzik
Seconded by Councillor Fertich

That Report PHD 8-2021, dated July 8, 2021, respecting Consolidation of Niagara's Emergency 911 Communication Services, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED:**

1. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to proceed with a fulsome investigation into a consolidated dispatch model to include but not limited to:

    - Detailed capital budget necessary for the procurement of all assets for the complete delivery of a regional fire communications service;
    - Detailed operational budget necessary for the delivery of a regional fire communications service;
    - Detailed budget analysis on impacts, positive or negative, to the existing budgets for the 911 Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP), Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS) and Niagara Emergency Medical Services (NEMS);
    - Governance structure to best provide effective and efficient delivery of consolidated 911 communications services;
    - Future facility review for the development of a Public Safety Communications Service primary dispatch centre for all agencies;
    - A recommendation to Council for decision on whether and how to advance the consolidation of emergency dispatch services to be operational no later than March 31, 2024 and that the aforementioned report is completed by the end of Q4 2021.

2. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to request the City of St. Catharines that should a decision to consolidate dispatch be approved by the end of 2021, that they will enter into agreements to continue to provide dispatch services to their respective Niagara jurisdictions and contract customers until such time that the consolidated dispatch is made operational, no later than March 31, 2024.

The following friendly ***amendment*** was accepted by the Regional Chair, and the mover and seconder of the motion, to add the following clause:

3. ***That staff BE DIRECTED to seek commitment from the respective Niagara jurisdictions to remain contract customers of St. Catharines Fire Services until such time that the consolidated dispatch is made operational, no later than March 31, 2024.***

The Regional Chair called the vote on the motion as amended, as follows:

That Report PHD 8-2021, dated July 8, 2021, respecting Consolidation of Niagara's Emergency 911 Communication Services, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED:**

1. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to proceed with a fulsome investigation into a consolidated dispatch model to include but not limited to:

    - Detailed capital budget necessary for the procurement of all assets for the complete delivery of a regional fire communications service;
    - Detailed operational budget necessary for the delivery of a regional fire communications service;
    - Detailed budget analysis on impacts, positive or negative, to the existing budgets for the 911 Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP), Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS) and Niagara Emergency Medical Services (NEMS);
    - Governance structure to best provide effective and efficient delivery of consolidated 911 communications services;
    - Future facility review for the development of a Public Safety Communications Service primary dispatch centre for all agencies;
    - A recommendation to Council for decision on whether and how to advance the consolidation of emergency dispatch services to be operational no later than March 31, 2024 and that the aforementioned report is completed by the end of Q4 2021.

2. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to request the City of St. Catharines that should a decision to consolidate dispatch be approved by the end of 2021, that they will enter into agreements to continue to provide dispatch services to their respective Niagara jurisdictions and contract customers until such time that the consolidated dispatch is made operational, no later than March 31, 2024; and

3. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to seek commitment from the respective Niagara jurisdictions to remain contract customers of St. Catharines Fire Services until such time that the consolidated dispatch is made operational, no later than March 31, 2024.

Carried

Councillor Information Request(s):

Provide information respecting the number of mutual aid events that have occurred in Niagara over the last five years. Councillor Redekop.

Provide information respecting if a municipality can be forced to participate in the consolidation agreement. Councillor Redekop.

Ensure that future reports identify all potential risks regardless of the recommendation. Councillor Redekop.

6. CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

There were no consent items for information.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 5, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

9. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:28 p.m.

Jim Bradley
Regional Chair

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk