

**THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
BUDGET REVIEW COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MINUTES - OPEN SESSION**

**BRCOTW 2-2021
Thursday, January 21, 2021
Council Chamber / Video Conference
Niagara Region Headquarters, Campbell West
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Thorold, ON**

Committee Members Present in the Council Chamber: Insinna, Zalepa (Committee Chair)

Committee Members Present via Video Conference: Bradley (Regional Chair), Butters, Bylsma, Campion, Darte, Diodati, Disero, Easton, Edgar, Fertich, Foster, Gale, Gibson, Greenwood, Heit, Huson, Ip, Jordan, Junkin, Nicholson, Redekop, Rigby, Sendzik, Steele, Ugulini, Villella, Whalen (Committee Vice Chair)

Absent/Regrets: Bellows, Chiocchio, Witteveen

Staff Present in the Council Chamber: H. Chamberlain, Director, Financial Management & Planning/Deputy Treasurer, T. Harrison, Commissioner/Treasurer, Corporate Services, M. Lewis, Client & Support Advisor, M. Murphy, Associate Director, Budget Planning & Strategy, A.-M. Norio, Regional Clerk, T. Potts, Senior Budget Analyst, C. Sportel, Supervisor, Corporate Budgets, R. Tripp, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

Staff Present via Video Conference: E. Amirault, Associate Director, Financial Operations & Systems, D. Giles, Acting Commissioner, Planning and Development Services, S. Hendrie, Chief Information Officer, Dr. M. Hirji, Acting Medical Officer of Health, A. Jugley, Commissioner, Community Services, F. Meffe, Director, Human Resources, M. Robinson, Director, GO Implementation Project, C. Ryall, Director, Transportation Services, K. Smith, Chief/Director, Emergency Medical Services, G. Spezza, Director, Economic Development, M. Steele, Associate Director, Reporting and Analysis, M. Trennum, Deputy Regional Clerk, D. Woiceshyn, Chief Executive Officer, Niagara Regional Housing, N. Wolfe, Director, Construction, Energy, and Facilities Management, B. Zvaniga, Interim Commissioner, Public Works

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Committee Chair Zalepa called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

2. **DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST**

See Minute Item 5.1.

3. **PRESENTATIONS**

There were no presentations.

4. **DELEGATIONS**

There were no delegations.

5. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

5.1 **CSD 5-2021**

2021 Levy Operating Budget

Moved by Councillor Bylsma

Seconded by Councillor Whalen

That Report CSD 5-2021, dated January 14, 2021, respecting 2021 Levy Operating Budget, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the 2021 net levy budget relating to the Niagara Regional Departments of \$208,777,440, as consolidated in Appendix 1 of Report CSD 5-2021, **BE APPROVED** including the following in accordance with the 2021 budget planning strategy:
 - 1.1 That an increase of \$2,038,765 or 1.0% over the 2020 departmental operating budget **BE APPROVED** to support operating expenses; and
 - 1.2 That an increase of \$2,046,918 or 1.0% over the 2020 departmental operating budget **BE APPROVED** to support pay-as-you-go capital financing;
2. That a contribution of \$18,808,401 from the Taxpayer Relief Reserve, which includes Safe Restart Funding, **BE APPROVED** to fund the net pressures related to the COVID-19 pandemic of \$17,196,924 for Regional Departments, and \$1,611,477 for the Agencies, Boards and Commissions COVID-19 pressures, as detailed in Appendix 2 of Report CSD 5-2021, for a net taxpayer impact of \$0;

3. That an additional 1.44%, or \$5,664,748 of assessment growth, **BE APPROVED** to costs, as detailed in Appendix 3 of Report CSD 5-2021, in alignment with section 4.7 of By-law No. 2019-79 Budget Planning By-law;
4. That the 2021 net levy operating budget, including the Niagara Regional Departments of \$214,402,632 and Agencies, Boards, and Commissions of \$195,217,203 for a total \$409,619,835, **BE APPROVED**;
5. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to prepare a report for the Corporate Services Committee respecting establishment of a 'Hospital Contribution Reserve'; and
6. That the necessary by-law **BE PREPARED** and **PRESENTED** to Council for consideration.

Moved by Councillor Huson
Seconded by Councillor Disero

That the budget **BE INCREASED** to 3% from 2.9% to increase the contribution to the hospital funding reserve by \$392,570.

Councillor Steele declared an indirect pecuniary interest with respect to the amendment to the motion respecting hospital funding reserve budget increase and all matters related to Regional contributions to hospital projects, as his wife is employed by Niagara Health.

At this point in the meeting, Councillor Insinna assumed the Chair.

Councillor Redekop declared an indirect pecuniary interest with respect to the amendment to the motion respecting hospital funding reserve budget increase and all matters related to Regional contributions to hospital projects, as his daughter conducts contract work for Niagara Health.

At this point in the meeting, Committee Chair Zalepa assumed the Chair

Councillor Gale declared an indirect pecuniary interest with respect to the amendment to the motion respecting hospital funding reserve budget increase and all matters related to Regional contributions to hospital projects, as his daughter is a member of the hospital board, and his son is employed by Niagara Health.

Councillor Sendzik declared an indirect pecuniary interest with respect to the amendment to the motion respecting hospital funding reserve budget increase and all matters related to Regional contributions to hospital projects, as a member of his family is employed by Niagara Health.

The Committee Chair called the vote on the amendment, as follows:

That the budget **BE INCREASED** to 3% from 2.9% to increase the contribution to the hospital funding reserve by \$392,570.

Recorded Vote:

Yes (8): Bradley, Bylsma, Disero, Foster, Heit, Huson, Insinna, Jordan.

No (14): Butters, Darte, Easton, Fertich, Gibson, Greenwood, Ip, Junkin, Nicholson, Rigby, Ugulini, Villella, Whalen, Zalepa.

Defeated

Moved by Councillor Huson

Seconded by Councillor Butters

That the Smarter Niagara Incentive Program (SNIP) funding of \$300,000 **BE REMOVED** from the budget.

Defeated

The Committee Chair called the vote on clause 1 of the motion, as follows:

1. That the 2021 net levy budget relating to the Niagara Regional Departments of \$208,777,440, as consolidated in Appendix 1 of Report CSD 5-2021, **BE APPROVED** including the following in accordance with the 2021 budget planning strategy:

- 1.1 That an increase of \$2,038,765 or 1.0% over the 2020 departmental operating budget **BE APPROVED** to support operating expenses; and
- 1.2 That an increase of \$2,046,918 or 1.0% over the 2020 departmental operating budget **BE APPROVED** to support pay-as-you-go capital financing.

Carried

The Committee Chair called the vote on clause 2 of the motion, as follows:

2. That a contribution of \$18,808,401 from the Taxpayer Relief Reserve, which includes Safe Restart Funding, **BE APPROVED** to fund the net pressures related to the COVID-19 pandemic of \$17,196,924 for Regional Departments, and \$1,611,477 for the Agencies, Boards and Commissions COVID-19 pressures, as detailed in Appendix 2 of Report CSD 5-2021, for a net taxpayer impact of \$0.

Moved by Councillor Sendzik
Seconded by Councillor Insinna

That the motion **BE AMENDED** to add item 2.1 as follows:

That an additional \$4,319,211 draw from the Taxpayer Relief Reserve **BE APPROVED** to reduce the 2021 net levy operating budget to 1.8%.

Recorded Vote:

Yes (15): Bradley, Campion, Diodati, Easton, Fertich, Gale, Gibson, Insinna, Jordan, Junkin, Redekop, Sendzik, Ugolini, Villella, Whalen.

No (14): Butters, Bylsma, Darte, Disero, Edgar, Foster, Greenwood, Heit, Huson, Ip, Nicholson, Rigby, Steele, Zalepa.

Carried

The Committee Chair called the vote on clause 2 of the motion, as amended, as follows:

2. That a contribution of \$18,808,401 from the Taxpayer Relief Reserve, which includes Safe Restart Funding, **BE APPROVED** to fund the net pressures related to the COVID-19 pandemic of \$17,196,924 for Regional Departments, and \$1,611,477 for the Agencies, Boards and Commissions COVID-19 pressures, as detailed in Appendix 2 of Report CSD 5-2021, for a net taxpayer impact of \$0.

2.1 That an additional \$4,319,211 draw from the Taxpayer Relief Reserve **BE APPROVED** to reduce the 2021 net levy operating budget to 1.8%.

Carried

The Committee Chair called the vote on clause 3 of the motion as follows:

3. That an additional 1.44%, or \$5,664,748 of assessment growth, **BE APPROVED** to costs, as detailed in Appendix 3 of Report CSD 5-2021, in alignment with section 4.7 of By-law No. 2019-79 Budget Planning By-law.

Carried

The Committee Chair called the vote on clause 4 of the motion as follows:

4. That the 2021 net levy operating budget, including the Niagara Regional Departments of \$214,402,632 and Agencies, Boards, and Commissions of \$195,217,203 for a total \$409,619,835, **BE APPROVED**.

Carried

The Committee Chair called the vote on clause 5 of the motion as follows:

5. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to prepare a report for the Corporate Services Committee respecting establishment of a 'Hospital Contribution Reserve'.

Carried

The Committee Chair called the vote on clause 6 of the motion as follows:

6. That the necessary by-law **BE PREPARED** and **PRESENTED** to Council for consideration.

Carried

Councillor Information Request(s):

Provide information respecting the potential to outsource talent acquisition services at a future Corporate Services Committee meeting. Councillor Huson.

Include the reserve policy on a future Corporate Services Committee agenda and provide options to replenish the taxpayer relief reserve. Councillor Rigby.

6. CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Moved by Councillor Rigby
Seconded by Councillor Fertich

That the following items **BE RECEIVED** for information:

BRC-C 5-2021

Councillor Information Request Regarding 2021 Fees and Charges By-law

BRC-C 6-2021

Councillor Information Request from January 14, 2021 Budget Review Committee of the Whole

Carried

7. OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 Financial Program and Services Review

Councillor Foster requested information be provided at a future Corporate Services Committee meeting respecting the initiation of a complete financial review of the Region's programs and services.

8. CLOSED SESSION

Committee did not resolve into closed session.

9. BUSINESS ARISING FROM CLOSED SESSION

9.1 Confidential CAO 1-2021

A Matter concerning Personal Matters about Identifiable Individuals under s. 239(2) of the Municipal Act, 2001 – Status of Medical Officer of Health Staff Compliment and Medical Division Structure

That Confidential Correspondence Item CAO 1-2021, being a memorandum from R. Tripp, Acting Chief Administrative Officer, dated November 14, 2021, respecting A Matter concerning Personal Matters about Identifiable Individuals under s. 239(2) of the Municipal Act, 2001 – Status of Medical Officer of Health Staff Compliment and Medical Division Structure, **BE RECEIVED** for information.

10. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, June 17, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

11. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:13 p.m.

Councillor Zalepa
Committee Chair

Matthew Trennum
Deputy Regional Clerk

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk