

**THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA  
BUDGET REVIEW COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
MINUTES**

**BRCOTW 15-2023**

**Thursday, December 14, 2023**

**Council Chamber - In Person and Electronic Meeting  
Niagara Region Headquarters, Campbell West  
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Thorold, ON**

- Committee: Bateman, Bradley (Regional Chair), Champion\*, Chiocchio, Craitor\*, Davies, Easton, Foster, Gale, Grant\*, Heit, Huson, Ip, Junkin\*, Kaiser, Morocco, Redekop (Committee Chair), Rigby, Seaborn, Siscoe, Sorrento\*, Steele\*, Ugulini, Villella, Whalen (Committee Vice-Chair)
- Absent/Regrets: Diodati, Ganann, Insinna, Jordan, Secord, Witteveen, Zalepa
- Staff: D. Barnhart, Chief of Staff, Governance\*, A. Basic, Legislative Coordinator, B. Brens, Associate Director, Budget Planning & Strategy, D. Carnegie, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, H. Furtado, Director, Financial Management & Planning/Deputy Treasurer, J. Gess, Associate Director, Facilities Management, Customer Service & Security\*, D. Gibbs, Director, Legal & Court Services\*, T. Harrison, Commissioner/Treasurer, Corporate Services, K. Lotimer, Deputy Regional Clerk, A.-M. Norio, Regional Clerk, T. Ricketts, Commissioner, Public Works, M. Sergi, Commissioner, Growth Strategy & Economic Development, G. Spezza, Director, Economic Development, D. Szymkow, Senior Budget Analyst, F. Tassone, Director, Transportation Services, R. Tripp, Chief Administrative Officer
- Others Present: C. Stout, General Manager, Niagara Transit Commission\*

\* indicates members who participated electronically, all other members participated in person

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Committee Chair Redekop called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

**2. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST**

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

**3. PRESENTATIONS**

There were no presentations.

#### 4. **DELEGATIONS**

Moved by Councillor Bateman  
Seconded by Councillor Ip

That Diane Foster, resident, City of St. Catharines, **BE PERMITTED** to appear as a delegate respecting the 2024 Proposed Niagara Transit Commission Budget (BRC-C 35-2023 (Agenda Item 5.1)).

**Carried**

##### 4.1 2024 Proposed Niagara Transit Commission Budget (BRC-C 35-2023, Agenda Item 5.1))

###### 4.1.1 Herb Sawatzky, 50by30Niagara

Herb Sawatzky, 50by30 Niagara, appeared before Committee to urge Committee members not to increase transit fares as a mitigation effort to reduce the 2024 Niagara Transit Commission budget, to reject the Niagara Transit Commission's request for a 5.7% levy increase and instead approve a transit levy increase of at least 6.7%.

###### 4.1.2 Lindsay Taylor, St. Catharines Downtown Association

Lindsay Taylor, appeared before Committee on behalf of the St. Catharines Downtown Association, in support of the original 2024 budget proposed by the Niagara Transit Commission, and urging consideration for extending transfer times, creating partnerships with key stakeholders in the region and exploring creative funding solutions such as grants.

###### 4.1.3 Diane Foster, Resident, City of St. Catharines

Diane Foster, resident, City of St. Catharines, appeared before Committee to highlight the inefficiencies of the current specialized transit system, express concern with the proposed transit fare increase and encouraged Committee members to approve the Transit Commission's initial proposed budget in order to improve the system.

**5. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

5.1 BRC-C 35-2023

2024 Proposed Revised Operating and Capital Budget Submission and Requisition - Niagara Transit Commission

Moved by Councillor Siscoe

Seconded by Councillor Whalen

That Correspondence Item BRC-C 35-2023, being a letter from M. Siscoe, Board Chair, Niagara Transit Commission, dated December 13, 2023, respecting 2024 Revised Proposed Operating and Capital Budget Submission and Requisition - Niagara Transit Commission, **BE RECEIVED**; and

1. That Regional Council **APPROVE** the Niagara Transit Commission 2024 gross operating budget submission of \$82,246,767 and Special Levy of \$58,121,710 for an increase of \$3,068,760 or 5.57%, which net of assessment growth for 2024 reflects an overall 2024 budget increase of 3.91%; and
2. That the Special Levy of \$58,121,710 **BE APPORTIONED** between the local municipalities as determined in accordance with the methodology approved in PW 55-2021 and based on final 2023 current value assessment.

Moved by Councillor Ip

Seconded by Councillor Steele

That the motion **BE AMENDED** to remove the proposed fare increase as approved by the Niagara Transit Commission.

Recorded Vote:

Yes (16): Bateman, Chiocchio, Craitor, Davies, Easton, Huson, Ip, Junkin, Kaiser, Morocco, Rigby, Seaborn, Siscoe, Sorrento, Steele, Villella.

No (8): Champion, Foster, Gale, Grant, Heit, Redekop, Ugulini, Whalen.

**Carried**

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

That Correspondence Item BRC-C 35-2023, being a letter from M. Siscoe, Board Chair, Niagara Transit Commission, dated December 13, 2023, respecting 2024 Revised Proposed Operating and Capital Budget Submission and Requisition - Niagara Transit Commission, **BE RECEIVED**;

1. That Regional Council **APPROVE** the Niagara Transit Commission 2024 gross operating budget submission of \$82,537,767 and Special Levy of \$58,351,710 for an increase of \$3,298,760 or 5.99%, which net of assessment growth for 2024 reflects an overall 2024 budget increase of 4.33%; and
2. That the Special Levy of \$58,351,710 **BE APPORTIONED** between the local municipalities as determined in accordance with the methodology approved in PW 55-2021 and based on final 2023 current value assessment.

**Carried**

**6. CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

Moved by Councillor Huson  
Seconded by Councillor Siscoe

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

BRC-C 38-2023

Correspondence Item from S. Waziruddin, Resident, City of St. Catharines, respecting Cuts to Transit Budget

BRC-C 39-2023

Correspondence Item from R. Taylor, resident, City of St. Catharines, respecting Cuts to Transit Budget

BRC-C 40-2023

Niagara Transit Commission Revised 2024 Budget

**Carried**

**7. OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no items of other business.

8. **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, July 25, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Regional Headquarters.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

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Councillor Redekop  
Committee Chair

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Kelly Lotimer  
Deputy Regional Clerk

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Ann-Marie Norio  
Regional Clerk