

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

BRCOTW 4-2024

Thursday, November 7, 2024

**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*, Foster, Gale, Ganann, Grant, Heit, Huson, Insinna*, Jordan, Junkin*, Kaiser, Morocco, Redekop (Committee Chair), Rigby, Seaborn, Secord, Siscoe, Sorrento*, Steele, Ugulini, Villella, Whalen (Committee Vice-Chair), Witteveen*, Zalepa*

Absent/Regrets: Diodati, Easton, Ip

Staff: D. Ane, Senior Program Financial Specialist, D. Barnhart, Chief of Staff, Governance*, A. Basic, Legislative Coordinator, B. Brens, Associate Director, Budget Planning & Strategy, J. Brunet, Associate Director, Water Operations Maintenance, D. Carnegie, Acting Commissioner, Corporate Services/Treasurer, C. Courteau, Associate Director, Water Wastewater Integrated Systems, S. Dunsmore, Director, Infrastructure Planning & Development Engineering*, D. Gibbs, Director, Legal & Court Services*, M. Iafrate, Financial & Special Projects Consultant, P. Lambert, Director, Water Wastewater Services, P. Maposa, Director, Asset Management*, D. Morreale, Director, Growth Management & Planning*, R. Muzzell, Manager, Program Financial Support, A.-M. Norio, Regional Clerk, T. Ricketts, Commissioner, Public Works, M. Sergi, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, J. Spratt, Legislative Coordinator, M. Steele, Associate Director, Reporting & Analysis, A. Thomson, Legal Counsel, R. Tripp, Chief Administrative Officer

Others Present: C. Stout, General Manager, Niagara Transit Commission

* indicates participants who attended the meeting electronically, all others participated in person

1. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Redekop called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

2. **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT**

Councillor Ganann read the Land Acknowledgement Statement.

3. **DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST**

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

4. **PRESENTATIONS**

There were no presentations.

5. **DELEGATIONS**

There were no delegations.

6. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

6.1 **CSD 48-2024**

2025 Budget – Water and Wastewater Operating Budget, Rate Setting and Requisition

Beth Brens, Associate Director, Budget Planning & Strategy, provided information respecting the 2025 Water and Wastewater Operating budget, Rate Setting and Requisition. Topics of the presentation included:

- Key Drivers
- Operating Budget Highlights
- Multi-Year Budget
- Budget Variance Risks
- Requisition to Municipalities
- Next Steps

Moved by Councillor Bateman
Seconded by Councillor Huson

That Report CSD 48-2024, dated November 7, 2024, respecting 2025 Budget – Water and Wastewater Operating Budget, Rate Setting and Requisition, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the 2025 Water & Wastewater net operating base budget increase of \$5,751,426 (or 3.72%) plus \$11,160,869 (or 7.22%) for capital financing over the 2024 operating budget **BE APPROVED**;
2. That an increase of \$2,053,502 (or 1.33%) over the 2024 operating budget **BE APPROVED** to support additional staffing resources for service delivery;

3. That the 2025 Water Operations gross operating budget of \$57,615,260 and net budget in the amount of \$57,071,267 for the Water Budget, Rates and Requisition **BE APPROVED**;
4. That the proposed fixed water requisition shown in Appendix 3 of Report CSD 48-2024, based on 25% of the Region's water net operating budget for the year and divided by 12 to determine the monthly charge, to be billed to each of the serviced Local Area Municipalities starting January 1, 2025, apportioned based on their previous three year's average water supply volumes, **BE APPROVED**;
5. That the Region's proposed 2025 variable water rate of \$0.751 shown in Table 2 of Report CSD 48-2024, to be effective January 1, 2025 and calculated by taking 75% of the Region's water net operating budget and dividing by the estimated supply volume, to be billed on a monthly basis to each serviced Local Area Municipality based on the previous month's metered flows, **BE APPROVED**;
6. That the 2025 Wastewater Operations gross operating budget of \$121,023,619 and net budget in the amount of \$116,477,200 for the Wastewater Budget, Rates and Requisition **BE APPROVED**;
7. That the proposed 2025 fixed wastewater requisition as shown in Appendix 5 of Report CSD 48-2024, based on 100% of the Region's net operating budget for the year and divided by 12 to determine the monthly charge, to be billed to each of the Local Area Municipalities starting January 1, 2025, apportioned based on their previous three year's average wastewater supply volumes, **BE APPROVED**;
8. That the 2025 wastewater monthly bills **INCLUDE** the reconciliation for the 2023 net requisition allocation based on actual wastewater flows versus the estimated flows, as shown in Appendix 6 of Report CSD 48-2024;
9. That the necessary by-laws **BE PREPARED** and **PRESENTED** to Council for consideration; and
10. That a copy of Report CSD 48-2024 **BE CIRCULATED** to the Local Area Municipalities.

Carried

Councillor Information Request(s):

- Provide a list of efficiencies that were accomplished last year, and which ones are currently underway.
- Provide a summary of the number of watermain breaks per municipality, including the volume of water lost.
- Provide an outline of how the volume of water lost during a watermain break factors into the flows use to set the requisition for each municipality.
- Provide a summary of charges laid against the Region by the Ministry of Environment.
- Provide additional information on the 5-year trends on rate requisitions by municipality.
- Provide information on the flows by plant for each municipality,.

6.2 BRC-C 2-2024

A letter from M. Siscoe, Chair, Niagara Transit Commission, dated September 23, 2024, respecting 2025 Proposed Operating Budget and Special Levy Requisition - Niagara Transit Commission

Moved by Councillor Siscoe
Seconded by Councillor Steele

That Correspondence Item BRC-C 2-2024, being a letter from M. Siscoe, Chair, Niagara Transit Commission, dated September 23, 2024, respecting 2025 Proposed Operating Budget and Special Levy Requisition - Niagara Transit Commission, **BE RECEIVED**; and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the Niagara Transit Commission proposed 2025 base gross operating budget submission of \$85,306,542 and net base Special Levy of \$60,488,929 for a net increase of \$2,137,219 or 3.66% **BE APPROVED**;
2. That the 2025 net special levy include additional capital financing of \$2,166,667 or 3.71% over 2024 net special levy **BE APPROVED**;
3. That the net Special Levy of \$62,655,596 (inclusive of recommendations 1 and 2 above) **BE APPORTIONED** between the local municipalities as per Appendix 2 of Report NTC 28-2024 determined in accordance with the methodology approved in Report PW 55-2021 and based on final 2024 current value assessment; and
4. That the necessary by-laws **BE PREPARED** and **PRESENTED** to Regional Council for consideration.

Recorded Vote:

Yes (21): Bradley, Campion, Chiocchio, Foster, Ganann, Heit, Huson, Jordan, Junkin, Kaiser, Morocco, Rigby, Seaborn, Siscoe, Sorrento, Steele, Ugulini, Whalen, Witteveen, Zalepa, Redekop.

No (8): Bateman, Craitor, Davies, Gale, Grant, Insinna, Secord, Villella.

Carried

7. CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

CSD 59-2024 was considered separately.

7.1 CSD 59-2024

Water and Wastewater Rate Methodology Review

Moved by Councillor Huson
Seconded by Councillor Morocco

That Report CSD 59-2024, dated November 7, 2024, respecting Water and Wastewater Rate Methodology Review, **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Carried

Moved by Councillor Steele
Seconded by Councillor Ugulini

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

BRC-C 3-2024

Niagara Transit Commission Additional Budget Information

CWCD 2024-172

Councillor Information Request Related to Legal Obligations of Council regarding the Safe Drinking Water Act

BRC-C 4-2024

Correspondence from S. Richards-Haynes, dated November 6, 2024, respecting Niagara Region Transit Budget Consideration

Carried

8. OTHER BUSINESS

8.1 Budget Meeting Schedule

Councillor Bateman enquired whether a budget meeting schedule is provided to residents. Beth Brens, Associate Director, Budget Planning & Strategy, confirmed that a meeting schedule is available on the Niagara Region website, along with hyperlinks to all of the corresponding documents.

9. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, November 14, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Regional Headquarters.

10. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

Councillor Redekop
Committee Chair

Azra Basic
Legislative Coordinator

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk