

# Minutes

## Committee of the Whole

December 8, 2023

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### Call to Order

Grey County Council met on the above date at the County Administration Building. Warden Milne assumed the Chair and called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

### O Canada

The members of Council were invited to stand for O Canada.

### Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge with respect, the history, spirituality, and culture of the Anishinaabek, Six Nations of the Grand River, Haudenosaunee, and Wendat-Wyandot-Wyandotte peoples on whose traditional territories we gather and whose ancestors signed Treaties with our ancestors. We recognize also, the Metis and Inuit whose ancestors shared this land and these waters. May we all, as Treaty People, live with respect on this land, and live in peace and friendship with all its diverse peoples.

### Roll Call

The Clerk called the Roll with all members present. Councillors Nielsen and Bordignon participated electronically.

Kim Wingrove, Chief Administrative Officer; Tara Warder, Clerk; and Sarah Goldrup, Deputy Clerk were also in attendance.

The following staff members were also participating:

Randy Scherzer, Deputy CAO; Anne Marie Shaw, Director of Community Services; Jennifer Cornell, Director of Long-Term Care; Kevin McNab, Director of Paramedic Services; Mary Lou Spicer, Director of Finance; Pat Hoy, Director of Transportation; Savanna Myers, Director of Economic Development, Tourism & Culture; Scott Taylor, Director of Planning; Jody MacEachern, Director of Information Technology; and Robert Hatten, Manager of Communications.

### Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

## **Items For Direction and Discussion**

### **CAOR-CW-22-23 2024 Proposed Spending Reductions**

CAO Kim Wingrove presented to the Committee and reviewed the report's proposed budget reductions.

In response to questions from the Committee, staff discussed healthcare initiatives funding and the removal of the budgeted increase to the health unit due to anticipated mitigation funding from the province.

Kevin McNab reviewed the previously projected improvements to meet service needs and achieve efficiencies, funding considerations, and new models prepared for the modified plan, meeting the goal of 90% and 15 minutes but posing some impacts to service in Meaford, West Grey, and the Town of the Blue Mountains.

Pat Hoy explained considerations for the continuing contracted tree trimming services rather than proceeding with the purchase of a bucket truck. Further, staff spoke about training for Transportation Services staff and confirmed that they will continue receiving the training necessary to keep their certifications.

Scott Taylor noted that Grey Sauble Conservation Authority reported the first year of buckthorn removal was more successful than initially anticipated and confirmed that the buckthorn removal would be a multi-year project and would need to be budgeted annually to support removal and keeping the canopy clear. The Director explained that Grey Sauble staff felt these efforts were necessary to maintain the health of Grey County forests and that the pilot project could be used as a model elsewhere in the province. Further, the Director confirmed that harvests are conducted annually, that the trees are marked and that the work is tendered a year in advance in accordance with the Forest Management program, and that 169 hectares were treated in 2023, which is more than initially anticipated.

CW184-23

Moved by: Councillor Greig

Seconded by: Councillor Pringle

**That Report CAOR-CW-22-23 Proposed Spending Reductions for 2024 Budget be received; and**

**That Council accept the recommended spending reductions for inclusion in the 2024 budget; and**

**That Council direct staff to bring forward a terms of reference for a Budget and Finance Committee to be struck in 2024.**

Carried

## **2024 Budget Overview and Department Presentations**

## **Budget Details**

Mary Lou Spicer introduced the budget process and explained that the proposed 2024 budget had a levy impact of \$6,660,095, or a 9.58% increase after growth, which results in a \$105.07 tax increase to the average single detached home in 2023. The Director discussed the proposed 2024 operating and capital budgets and the net levy requirements.

The meeting recessed and reconvened at 11:15 a.m.

CW185-23

Moved by: Councillor Mackey

Seconded by: Councillor McQueen

**That County Council supports the continued funding of Grey Agricultural Services in the 2024 budget.**

Carried

## **Transportation Services**

Pat Hoy presented the proposed 2024 budget for Transportation Services to the Committee. The Director reviewed the maintenance budget and noted increasing labour, equipment, and material costs. In response to questions from the Committee, Pat Hoy discussed minimum maintenance standards, different levels of service required for different roads, and attempts to do what needs to be done without greatly exceeding.

Pat Hoy described items for facilities, depots, and domes, highlighting the considerations for the Kimberley dome. Pat Hoy and Jim Nicoll responded to questions from the Committee and discussed considerations for funding or alternate options. Randy Scherzer explained that while staff anticipate the Kimberley dome lasting the 2024 season, it may fail, and staff are attempting to plan for a mobile temporary solution at the Clarksburg depot for the winter season.

Pat Hoy reported on the major road and bridge construction, noting a new reserve for anticipated capital works to maintain or replace infrastructure assets. In response to questions from the Committee, Pat Hoy and Trevor Ireton confirmed that staff work where possible with local municipalities to coordinate infrastructure work along County roads or when tendering larger projects. Further, staff discussed considerations for joint-tendering for asphalt and materials with member municipalities.

Trevor Ireton reviewed major capital works contained within the proposed 2024 budget and confirmed that reports would be prepared for works on Grey Road 19 and 21. In response to questions from the Committee, Pat Hoy and Trevor Ireton discussed considerations for land acquisition policies and reserves, shoulder paving, and town line bridges.

Pat Hoy spoke about machinery and equipment budgets, noting the removal of the potential uses of the bucket truck and the possible service improvement by purchasing a second skid steer, which was earlier removed from the 2024 budget. Pat Hoy

discussed in response to Committee questions investigating opportunities for equipment sharing with member municipalities. Further, Pat Hoy and Jim Nicoll described winter maintenance items and the living snow fences programs. Randy Scherzer confirmed the living snow fence program is discussed with the Climate Change Community of Practice to share best practices and investigate grant opportunities.

The meeting recessed and reconvened at 1:17 p.m.

CW186-23

Moved by: Councillor Eccles

Seconded by: Councillor McKay

**That the coverall building for the Clarksburg depot be reduced by \$100,000 in the 2024 budget.**

Carried

CW187-23

Moved by: Councillor Boddy

Seconded by: Councillor Matrosovs

**That Transportation Services staff be directed to prepare a report in quarter one of 2024 investigating sharing resources or equipment with member municipalities.**

Carried

## **Long-Term Care**

Kim Wingrove shared a video of a drone touring the Rockwood Terrace redevelopment site in West Grey to display the works done to prepare the site for construction.

Jennifer Cornell presented the proposed 2024 budget for Long-Term Care to the Committee. The Director shared how the budget had been prepared to align with the County's commitment to resident-centered care. The Director reviewed the level of care base funding, the case mix index, and resident co-payments. The Director reported on expenditures within the budget, including salaries and benefits, direct care funding, raw food, the COVID-19 pandemic, and long-term care administration. The Director noted capital budgets for each of the long-term care homes. The Director raised the work already undertaken to mitigate the budget by Long-Term Care and Finance staff and the budget review conducted with the Long-Term Care Committee of Management.

In response to questions from the Committee, Jennifer Cornell discussed advocacy to the province regarding the behavioural support transition unit pilot projects to ensure that funding aligns with the costs to support the unit. Further, Jennifer Cornell and Markus Hawco confirmed that donations support the resident life enhancement funds, the role of isolation beds to manage outbreaks and the impact of outbreaks on admittances, managing preferred accommodations, funding compensation for transfers from the hospital, and described the Lee Manor shade structure to provide a smoking

area that meets the necessary regulations. Jennifer Cornell is working with healthcare partners to support transitions, trend of admissions from hospital over community and perceived priority for crisis or hospital.

## **Human Services**

Anne Marie Shaw presented to the Committee regarding the proposed 2024 Human Services budget. The Director reviewed the budgets for social assistance and confirmed that the province anticipates a caseload increase of 6.7% in 2024. The Director confirmed that the province would not be increasing Ontario Works in 2024 and that payment amounts had not been increased since 2018. Anne Marie Shaw reported that the province had recently confirmed funding allocations. The Director shared that administration funding had been reduced from 10 to 5 per cent or \$297,000 which would not impact the levy due to mitigation funding. The Director explained that a new funding formula was anticipated for summer 2024.

Anne Marie Shaw reviewed the early learning and child care budgets, including administration, capacity building and support, and fee subsidies. Further, the Director discussed incremental increases to licensed childcare worker wages, which are expected to help with retention and attraction. The Director confirmed that once the province provides information and guidelines, staff would prepare a report for the Community Services Committee in 2024 regarding changes and budget implications. In response to questions from the Committee, Anne Marie Shaw discussed subsidies for OW recipients, provincially mandated services and funding, and the capital expense for the redevelopment of an EarlyON centre to comply with accessibility guidelines or parking requirements.

Anne Marie Shaw outlined the Grey County Housing operational budget, highlighting the units owned and operated by Grey County, the additional nonprofits supported, and services such as the rent supplement or short-term shelter program. The Director highlighted sector challenges created by insurance increases or coverage issues faced by nonprofit providers of multi-residential housing. The Director reviewed provincially funded programs, capital building projects, and transfers to reserve for affordable housing projects.

## **Paramedic Services**

Kevin McNab presented the proposed 2024 budget for Paramedic Services to the Committee. The Director described considerations for rising call volumes, the County's significant geographic area, peer support, and programs for community paramedicine. The Director noted the potential of temporary paramedic staffing to support the Brightshores' offload nurse role and adjustments to service enhancements that would ensure the management of call volumes and response times as the County grows while mitigating the impact on the levy. In response to questions from the Committee, Kevin McNab discussed community paramedicine for long-term care and the corresponding provincial funding, the effects of a lack of inflationary increases to provincial funding, vehicle maintenance costs and the expense of high mileage units.

Council expressed interest in documenting where provincial funding is reduced, frozen, or lacks inflationary increases and the resulting levy cost of continuing services.

Mary Lou Spicer reported that following today's budget deliberations and adjustments, the proposed 2024 budget had a levy impact of \$4,903,195 or a 7.03% increase after growth and that further discussion was scheduled for December 15, 2023.

## **Closed Meeting Matters**

There was no closed meeting.

## **Other Business**

There was no other business.

## **Adjournment**

On motion of Councillors Hutchinson and Paterson, Committee of the Whole adjourned at 2:48 p.m. to the call of the Chair.

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Brian Milne, Warden

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Tara Warder, Clerk