

# Strategic Planning and Budget Minutes



# Committee

November 30, 2022  
1:00 p.m.  
Council Chambers

Members Present: K. Redman, D. Craig, R. Deutschmann, J. Erb, S. Foxtan, M. Harris, C. Huinink, C. James, J. Liggett, D. McCabe, J. Nowak, N. Salonen, S. Shantz, B. Vrbanovic, K. Williams, P. Wolf

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## 1. Call to Order

Chair Michael Harris called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.

## 2. Land Acknowledgement

Chair Harris provided a land acknowledgement.

## 3. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest under the “Municipal Conflict of Interest Act”

None declared.

## 4. Presentations

### 4.1 Plan and Budget 2023: Building World Class

Chair M. Harris provided opening remarks.

Bruce Lauckner, Chief Administrative Officer, introduced a presentation on the 2023 Plan and Budget process. A copy of the presentation is appended to the minutes.

Connie MacDonald provided an overview of the work that staff will undertake as a part of the development of the 2023 Plan and Budget. She

explained that the annual budget operationalizes the strategic plan and highlighted the principles that will guide the development of the budget.

Jenny Smith, Director, Corporate Strategy and Performance, and Deb Bergey, Manager, Community Engagement, described how the community will be engaged throughout the process, and highlighted the engagement work that has been done to date, including a statistically robust phone survey. D. Bergey shared early findings of the survey and stated that staff will return in January with more detailed information.

Paula Whitlow, Director, Truth & Reconciliation; Fauzia Baig, Director, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion; Tara Bedard, Executive Director, Immigration Partnership; and Alison Pearson, Manager, Children & Youth Planning Table, shared the work that is being done to build trust and a stronger community. They also described the impact that immigration is having on the Region and the current state of youth in the community.

Responding to questions, D. Bergey noted that the survey contained questions about specific services and open-ended questions that will be shared in the January update. C. MacDonald further explained that traditional engagement methods are not always reaching everyone and staff are working on methods for better engaging all members of the community.

Members of the Corporate Leadership Team provided an overview of each of the strategic focus areas of the draft 2023 plan.

In response to a question from the Committee, B. Lauckner stated that staff will be providing a report to Council in early 2023 looking at mega site development and the costs for developing land. Rod Regier, Commissioner, Planning, Development & Legislative Services, highlighted that the Region gets strong reviews with medium and large scale site selectors, but that mega sites are difficult.

Jennifer Rose, Commissioner, Engineering and Environmental Services, responded to questions regarding changes to the blue box program, explaining that the changes will occur in 2024 and will result in cost savings but a loss in revenue. Staff will provide a report in 2023 on how the program will function in 2024.

In response to a question from the Committee, B. Lauckner stated that staff will provide information during the budget development on the current state of substance abuse in the community, the capacity of mental health supports, and how much of the current tax levy is dedicated to these

resources that staff feel would be better funded by the provincial or federal government.

Mathieu Goetzke, Commissioner, Transportation Services, responded to a question about the possibility of piloting free rides for seniors, noting that a wide range of fare considerations can be brought to the Committee for consideration. He responded to questions about speeding, noting that a report will be coming in the first quarter of 2023 on the road safety plan. Councillors requested further information on automated speed enforcement and the possibility of looking at a local processing centre.

The Committee recessed at 3:35 p.m. and reconvened at 3:50 p.m.

Craig Dyer, Commissioner, Corporate Services/Chief Financial Officer, provided a presentation on the 2023 budget context and the process that will be undertaken to develop the budget. He stressed that various factors, such as significant inflation and the increase in the cost of fuel, make this budget extremely challenging and different from any other. He highlighted that economic conditions are placing massive pressure on service costs and the gap between what the public expects and the Region's capacity to fund has reached a critical level. He stressed that property tax funding is not appropriate for funding redistributive programs. He provided an overview of expansions that will be affecting the budget and the impact of the elimination of provincial funds for homelessness funding.

In response to questions from the Committee, C. Dyer noted that it would be possible to add a third public input meeting to the 2023 Plan and Budget review timetable, if Council wishes. He further noted that there is no requirement to have the budget approved by February 22, 2022, however the longer the budget process goes the less time there is to implement the plan.

The Committee agreed that it would be premature to provide specific guidance to staff on a tax levy target, but requested that in the future staff provide information on what the impact of a lower tax increase would have on services.

B. Vrbanovic joined the meeting at 1:48 pm.

J. Erb joined the meeting at 1:50 pm.

C. James joined the meeting at 1:56 pm.

## **5. Reports**

**5.1 COR-CFN-22-029, 2023 Plan and Budget Timetable**

Moved by C. James

Seconded by N. Salonen

That the Regional Municipality of Waterloo take the following action with respect to the 2023 Plan and Budget as set out in report COR-CFN-22-029 dated November 30, 2022:

- a. Approve the revised 2023 Plan and Budget review timetable as set out in Appendix A; and
- b. Forward a copy of Report COR-CFN-22-029 to the Waterloo Region Police Services Board and to the Area Municipalities in Waterloo Region.

**Carried**

**5.2 CAO-SPL-22-008, 2023 Plan and Budget Community Engagement Update**

Received for information.

**6. Communications**

**7. Other Business**

**8. Adjourn**

Moved by D. McCabe

Seconded by K. Redman

That the meeting adjourn at 4:55 p.m.

**Carried**

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Regional Clerk

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Regional Chair