

**MINUTES OF THE
FINANCE STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING
COMMITTEE ROOM 2
SAANICH MUNICIPAL HALL, 760 VERNON AVENUE
MONDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2017 at 1:10 pm**

Present: Chair: Councillor Vicki Sanders
Members: Councillors Brice and Wergeland, and Mayor Atwell, Ex-Officio.
Staff Members: Paul Thorkelsson, Chief Administrative Officer; Valla Tinney, Director of Finance; Suzanne Samborski, Director of Parks and Recreation; Jennifer Downie, Administrative Assistant.
Guests: Troy Ziegler, Manager of Accounting Services; Paul Arslan, Senior Manager, Financial Services; Kelli-Ann Armstrong, Senior Manager, Recreation Services

MINUTES FOR ADOPTION – AUGUST 21, 2017

MOVED by Councillor Wergeland and seconded by Mayor Atwell: “That the minutes of the Finance Standing Committee meeting of August 21, 2017 be approved.”

Carried

UTILITY RATE SETTING PROCESS

The Director of Finance reviewed and answered questions from members on the Utility Rate Setting Process report dated October 10, 2017.

In response to Councillor Wergeland, the Director of Finance noted that the Finance, Audit and Personnel Standing Committee did not see the rate setting; the report went to straight to Council as this was not something that was in Council’s ability to adjust.

In response to Councillor Brice, the CAO advised that he has not worked in a jurisdiction where this has been looked at in depth by a board or Council as the fees are driven by external forces.

The Director of Finance advised that this item was brought forward to outline the timeline and associated process that the District staff go through to set the utility rates for the following year and provide options for the committee to conduct utility rate setting reviews as noted in the Terms of Reference.

Moved by Councillor Brice and seconded by Councillor Wergeland: “That the Finance Standing Committee approve Option 3; retain the process status quo as outlined in the ‘Utility Rate Setting Process’ report dated October 10, 2017 of the Director of Finance.”

Carried.

2018 – 2019 PARKS AND RECREATION FEES AND CHARGES

The Director of Parks and Recreation reviewed and answered questions from members on the 2018 – 2019 Parks and Recreation Fees and Charges report dated October 6, 2017.

In response to Councillor Wergeland, the Director of Parks and Recreation advised that Saanich Recreation staff meet with recreation staff from other municipalities on a regular basis to discuss regional facility passes, regular passes, and rates and the different centers often complete surveys amongst each other. A common rate does not exist amongst all the centers due to the wide range of factors impacting each municipality, i.e. type of operation, pool facility, arena, the number of facilities managed by each municipality.

Saanich's rates are higher due to the number of facilities and the size of the whole operation.

In response to Mayor Atwell, the Parks and Recreation Senior Manager noted that she will acquire the contract specifics and breakdown for the pro shop and bring the information back to a future meeting.

Mayor Atwell noted that a lot of money is going into the pro shop contract and he would like a better understanding. He would like to review the structure and details of the contract.

The Parks and Recreation Senior Manager noted that the contract went through an RFP process and anyone could have applied. The contract covers staff wages, lessons, and running the pro shop; the monies are not all going to one individual.

The Director of Parks and Recreation noted that golf course rates are set based on market analysis and not built around a contract.

MOVED by Councillor Brice and seconded by Mayor Atwell: "That the Finance Standing Committee recommend that the proposed 2018 – 2019 Parks and Recreation Fees and Charges be forwarded to the Parks, Trails and Recreation Advisory Committee for review and then to Council for approval as part of the 2018 budget process as outlined in the '2018 – 2019 Parks and Recreation Fees and Charges' report dated October 6, 2017 of the Director of Parks and Recreation."

Carried

COMMUNITY GRANT POLICY REVIEW

The Director of Finance reviewed and answered questions from members on the Community Grant Policy Review report dated October 10, 2017. The report was prepared pursuant to the Finance Standing Committee Terms of Reference:

- To review and make recommendations to Council on the grants policy and budget as part of the annual budget process.

Operating Grants

1. Community Association Operating Grant

The Director of Finance advised that this grant is only available to recognized community associations. Councillor Sanders noted that the community associations have to represent a geographic area and must be tied to the Local Area Plan.

2. Community or Social Service Operating Grants

The Director of Finance noted that applicants for this category include needs societies, marine rescue, emergency support services; people who work in all kinds of areas.

Councillor Sanders advised that the criteria makes it difficult for new applicants as Council keeps funding the ones we have.

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) advised that the policy outlines that funding would be provided to repeating applicants and only intended for new applicants. This is what the policy outlines, however, Council has never followed this policy; grants are being rolled over. This causes concern from a staff perspective as staff would like to make sure that what is put in policy is what Council will follow.

The Director of Finance advised that this is an opportunity for the Committee to review the policy and give staff guidance for making updates to it and bringing amendments back to the Committee to confirm; and then recommending a new policy to Council.

MOVED by Councillor Brice and seconded by Councillor Wergeland: “That under the Community and Social Service Operating Grants, the Finance Standing Committee move that the policy be altered to not require new programs and that such a policy be brought back to this committee for further consideration.”

In response to Mayor Atwell, the CAO clarified that the motion would essentially be to align the policy with what is being practiced by Council

The Director of Finance reviewed the area of interest in the policy, *“Until such time as grant applications exceed available budget funding, all projects will be considered. If and when applications exceed available funding, priority will be given to new applicants.”* The Director of Finance advised that this means that the grant will go to the new applicant and then to an existing; but the opposite is happening.

Councillor Brice would like to recommend that the policy actually reflects the current practice and then bring it back to the Committee for discussion and review as the current policy is very prescriptive

In response to Councillor Wergeland, the CAO noted that the program is oversubscribed as the public is well aware of this opportunity. Council did not approve a significant number of applications in last year’s budget as it was oversubscribed. Council wanted to keep it to the cap of the previous year.

Mayor Atwell noted that Council is giving the same money to the same groups over and over again; new groups should have an opportunity to establish themselves. The current policy lacks a sunset clause. How many years should we be supporting a group?

Mayor Atwell would like to make a recommendation to Council that there be a sunset on some of these grants and that it be established in the policy and how many years money is to be provided to these organizations.

MOVED by Mayor Atwell and Seconded by Councillor Wergeland: “that the motion be amended to add: ‘that the policy come back to the Committee for review with a clause that contemplates the sunset clause.’”

The CAO reiterated that Councillor Brice’s original motion was to bring back some options, recommendations for the Committee to consider about amending the policy to reflect current

practice in terms of the community or social services operating grants. The amendment was to add in the sunset clause.

**The Amendment to the Motion was DEFEATED
with Councillors Brice and Sanders OPPOSED**

**The Main Motion was put and CARRIED
with Mayor Atwell OPPOSED**

The main motion was not amended.

3. Community Association Operating Grant

In response to Mayor Atwell, the Director of Finance advised that there is an operating grant and an insurance grant. When a community association provides the District with proof of payment for their insurance, they are then reimbursed \$500.

No motions were made.

4. Community Dry Grad Grants

In response to Councillor Wergeland, the Senior Manager advised that private and public schools are aware of this grant. Saanich receives approximately eight to ten applications per year.

MOVED by Councillor Brice and seconded by Councillor Wergeland: “That under the Community Dry Grad Grants, the Finance Standing Committee recommend delegating approval to the Director of Finance.”

Carried.

Project Grants

1. Small Sparks Project

The Director of Finance noted that the majority of grant applications are for invasive removal and restoration work. There were a few applications that were not approved as they did not meet the physical improvement criteria. Saanich receives four or five applications a year.

MOVED by Councillor Brice and seconded by Councillor Wergeland: “That the ‘Small Sparks Project’ be renamed and embody Option B: Narrow the criteria to set up a clear invasive removal / restoration grant and allow for multiple year applications to support ongoing work and come back to the Finance Standing Committee to give consideration to it at the next meeting. ”

Carried.

2. Neighbourhood Matched Program Grant

Councillor Sanders noted that historically this grant was for improvement to neighbourhoods, i.e. Mt. Tolmie did street banners. Saanich may need to increase awareness on this grant opportunity.

MOVED by Councillor Brice and seconded by Councillor Wergeland: “That the Finance Standing Committee approve Option A: maintain the program as established.”

Carried.

3. Sustainability Grant

The Director of Finance noted that his program has experienced many challenges since its inception and has been difficult for Council to award this money.

MOVED by Councillor Brice and seconded by Councillor Wergeland: “That the program be removed and the monies that come in from the carbon tax rebates be transferred to the carbon neutral reserve fund”

Carried.

.....
Councillor Brice left the meeting at 2:10 pm
.....

Presentation and Adjudication

In response to the Mayor Atwell, the CAO advised that there a number of possible options and the Manager of Legislative Services has been polling Council regarding possible changes.

The Committee agreed that the current format poses challenges and can be problematic for some presenters.

MOVED by Mayor Atwell and seconded by Councillor Wergeland: “That the Finance Standing Committee direct staff to do further analysis of alternative options for the grant presentation and adjudication process and give specific direction to staff that the scheduling issue for presenters be addressed.”

Carried.

PROPOSED INVESTMENT POLICY

The Director of Finance reviewed and answered questions from members on the Investment Policy report October 6, 2017 and noted that the District does not currently have an investment policy.

The CAO noted that from staff’s perspective this have been a long standing item and it would be beneficial to have a policy in place. The CAO encouraged the Committee to consider the policy as it stands. The Committee could also give further direction to staff to look into some additional items, such as socially responsible investing. The CAO added that the organization would be in a better place by having the policy in place than not having the policy in place.

Councillor Wergeland suggested that is item be tabled to the next meeting to include all Committee members.

MOVED by Councillor Wergeland and seconded by Mayor Atwell: “That the Finance Standing Committee postpone discussing this item until the next meeting.”

Carried.

ADJOURNMENT

On the motion from Council Sanders the meeting adjourned at 2:25 pm.

Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary