

**MINUTES OF THE
FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE STANDING COMMITTEE
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
SAANICH MUNICIPAL HALL, 770 VERNON AVENUE
MONDAY, JULY 20, 2020 at 10:00 AM**

Present: Chair: Councillor Susan Brice
Members: Mayor Haynes, Councillors Harper and Mersereau
Staff Members: Paul Thorkelsson, Chief Administrative Officer; Valla Tinney, Director of Finance; Sharon Hvozdzanski, Director of Planning; Brent Reems, Director of Building, Bylaw, Licensing and Legal Services; Paul Arslan, Senior Manager, Financial Services; Jennifer Downie, Administrative Assistant.

MINISTERIAL ORDER NO. M192 – APPLICATION TO JULY 20, 2020 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE STANDING COMMITTEE

Report of the Manager of Legislative Services dated July 16, 2020 recommending that Council endorse the resolution as outlined in the report.

MOVED by Councillor Harper and Seconded by Mayor Haynes: "That this resolution is passed pursuant to Ministerial Order No. M192, made by the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General pursuant to the Emergency Program Act on June 17, 2020;

That this resolution applies to the Finance and Governance Standing Committee meeting being held on Monday, July 20, 2020 (the "meeting");

That the attendance of the public at the place of the meeting cannot be accommodated in accordance with the applicable requirements or recommendations under the Public Health Act, despite the best efforts of the Committee, because:

- 1. Gatherings of greater than 50 persons are prohibited under order of the Provincial Health Officer;**
- 2. The available meeting facilities at Saanich Municipal Hall cannot accommodate more than 23 persons present in person, including members of the Committee and staff;**
- 3. There are no other facilities presently available that will allow physical attendance of the public in sufficient numbers:**
 - a. without violating the prohibition against gatherings of greater than 50 persons; or**
 - b. without compromising the availability of the options of attending the meeting by telephone conference.**

That the Committee is ensuring openness, transparency, accessibility and accountability in respect of the meeting by the following means:

- 1. By allowing the public to hear via live teleconference.**
- 2. By making the meeting notice available on the District of Saanich website, and directing interested persons to the website by means of the notices provided in respect to the meeting;**
- 3. By making minutes of the meeting available on the District of Saanich website following the meeting."**

CARRIED

MEETING BY ELECTRONIC PARTICIPATION

Due to COVID-19 measures, the Saanich Municipal Hall is currently closed to the public.

Registration deadline to gain access to listen to the proceedings by teleconference was 12:00 p.m. (noon), Friday, July 17.

There was no public interest expressed by the deadline.

DEBT FINANCING

Councillor Brice noted that there are already three items noted for the next Finance and Governance Standing Committee meeting scheduled for October 19, 2020.

In addition to the list, Council approved the following motion from the Special Council Meeting – July 13, 2020:

MOVED by Councillor Plant and Seconded by Councillor Mersereau: "That the pros and cons of increasing the debt servicing rate of 7% of property tax revenue be referred to the Mayor's Standing Committee on Finance and Governance."

The motion was to refer the issue of debt financing implications to the Finance and Governance Standing Committee and to consider it for the upcoming budget. Initial discussions with Council to set the guidelines for the 2021 budget is scheduled for the August 17, 2020 Committee of the Whole meeting.

As the next Finance and Governance Standing Committee meeting is scheduled for October 19, 2020 – this item will be dated.

In fairness to all members of Council, it is noted that in reviewing the list of items for the October meeting that the item "Debt Financing" is not going to be that helpful for Council or for the Committee because it will be usurped by the dates.

Councillor Brice noted that a memo will need to be prepared for Council indicating how this item will fall in terms of the calendar. The memo will also note that although this item is appearing at the October 19, 2020 Finance and Governance Standing Committee meeting, the information being provided does not just pertain to the coming year and will need to be discussed even if it disconnects from the guidelines discussion.

MINUTES FOR ADOPTION

MOVED by Councillor Mersereau and seconded by Councillor Harper: "That the minutes of the Finance and Governance Standing Committee meeting of March 17, 2020 be adopted as circulated."

CARRIED

Mayor Haynes noted that correspondence was received from the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre advising that the Province of BC has announced a \$10 million grant program to support the delivery of coordinated emergency sexual assault response services in regions throughout BC. The Victoria Sexual Assault Centre received \$25,000 from Saanich through the grant funding process.

The Director of Finance noted that the grant amount for 2020 has been sent to them but will review the correspondence and follow up if necessary.

2019 AUDIT FINDINGS REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Director of Finance presented the 2019 Audit Findings Report and Financial Statements report dated July 6, 2020.

In response to the Committee; the Chief Administrative Officer noted that the tables provided in the report are developed by the auditors to enhance the process and not at the request of the District staff. Committee members are welcome to indicate to the Director of Finance the type of benchmarking tools, charts, or metrics they would like to have reported on.

MOVED by Councillor Harper and seconded by Mayor Haynes: "That the Finance and Governance Standing Committee receive the report for information."

CARRIED

MOVED by Councillor Harper and seconded by Mayor Haynes: "That the Finance and Governance Standing Committee review the 'Finance at a Glance' document and other pertinent budget documents at the next scheduled meeting of the Committee."

CARRIED

FINANCIAL IMPACTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Director of Finance presented and reviewed the Financial Update of Impacts of COVID-19 report dated July 9, 2020.

Areas reviewed include:

1. Operating result for the 5 months ending March 31, 2020;
2. Detailed results for recreation revenue and expenditures; and
3. Property tax and utility billing cash flow.

There is currently no cash flow concerns and property tax collection continues to trend very close to 2019.

Committee members thanked the Director of Finance for the updates and keeping Council informed. The Director of Finance noted that the next update will be provided at the August Council of the Whole meeting as the Finance and Governance Standing Committee is not meeting again until the fall.

MOVED by Mayor Haynes and seconded by Councillor Mersereau: "That the Finance and Governance Standing Committee receive the Financial Update of Impacts of COVID-19 report for information."

CARRIED

TRIMESTER REPORTS – 2019 Q3 and 2020 Q1

The Director of Finance presented the following reports:

- 3rd Trimester Results Report, January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019
- 1st Trimester Results Report, January 1, 2020 to April 30, 2020

The Director of Finance advised that Mr. Peter Urbanc, Chief Administrative Officer, MFABC made a presentation to the Committee back in November 2017 on Socially Responsible Investing.

MOVED by Councillor Harper and seconded by Councillor Mersereau: "That the Finance and Governance Standing Committee invite a representative from the Municipal Finance Authority of BC (MFA) to attend a future meeting to provide information on investment opportunities."

CARRIED

MOVED by Councillor Mersereau and seconded by Mayor Haynes: "That the Finance and Governance Standing Committee receive the Trimester Reports for information."

CARRIED

2020 TAX SALE

Report from the Director of Finance dated July 10, 2020 was presented and discussed.

MOVED by Councillor Harper and seconded by Mayor Haynes: "That the Finance and Governance Standing Committee recommend to Council that staff:

- 1. Bring forward a bylaw for Council consideration that defers the annual tax sale for 2020 to September 27, 2021; and**
- 2. Bring forward a bylaw for Council consideration that extends the expiration of the redemption period for all properties that have a redemption period ending in 2020 to September 27, 2021 if any properties sold at the 2019 tax sale are unredeemed at the time of consideration of the bylaw."**

CARRIED

FINANCE 2020 WORK PLAN

Report of the Director and Finance dated July 10, 2020 was presented and discussed.

The Director of Finance noted that Finance staff are working on several initiatives for the Committee that have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic both directly and with respect to allocation of department resources. These initiatives include:

- 1. Open House for Public Engagement on the Financial Plan**
- 2. Community Grants – Agreements for Schedule "A" Recipients; and**
- 3. Permissive Tax Exemptions**

Committee members agreed with strategies on how to manage items #1 and #2.

Permissive Tax Exemptions:

The Director of Finance noted that work on the Council Policy for permissive tax exemptions was scheduled to be completed during March and April. Due to deployment to the EOC and related COVID-19 work, this project work has been delayed. As the 2021 tax exemptions need to be adopted by bylaw by this coming October 31, 2020 work needs to commence corresponding with all the current recipients immediately.

MOVED by Councillor Harper and seconded by Mayor Haynes: “That the Finance and Governance Standing Committee recommend to Council that staff continue to work on this initiative in 2020 with sufficient time to roll it out for a 2022 – 2023 exemption. Another one year bylaw would be prepared for 2021.”

CARRIED

The Committee also expects to have further engagement relating to the initiative and noted that this will be an ongoing piece of work for the Committee.

The Chief Administrative Officer noted that both the 2020 Tax Sale and Permissive Tax Exemption items will need to appear before Council to seek approval at the earliest opportunity. The Chair and Committee members support accelerating these items and thanked the CAO for flagging this for the Committee.

STRATEGIC REAL-ESTATE FUNCTION

Item was referred to the Finance and Governance Standing Committee – motion from the January 28, 2020 Special Council meeting:

Excerpt of minutes and Motion from the January 28, 2020 Special Council meeting:

Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Advisory Committee – Chair’s Remarks – discussion items

MOVED by Councillor Harper and Seconded by Councillor Mersereau: “That the item – development of a Strategic Real Estate function for Saanich, be referred to the Mayor’s Standing Committee on Finance and Governance.”

The Director of Building, Bylaw, Licensing and Legal Services noted that the District does not have a Strategic Real Estate section like the City of Victoria. Saanich has one dedicated staff member in the land agent role. The land agent receives support from the Director of Building, Bylaw, Licensing and Legal Services and Municipal Solicitor.

The Director of Building, Bylaw, Licensing and Legal Services noted that staff continue to look for opportunities and benefits, and explore ideas when dealing with land issues. Saanich should not be compared with the City of Victoria as Saanich has different land holdings.

MOVED by Councillor Mersereau and seconded by Mayor Haynes: “That the Finance and Governance Standing Committee advise Council that the Committee feels the existing land agent role is currently an appropriate approach to managing the municipality’s assets.”

CARRIED

POST BUILT VARIANCES

Item was referred to the Finance and Governance Standing Committee – motion from the April 27, 2020 Special Council meeting:

Excerpt of minutes and Motion from the April 27, 2020 Special Council meeting:

4850 MAJOR ROAD – DEVELOPMENT VARIANCE PERMIT APPLICATION

MOVED by Councillor Plant and Seconded by Councillor Brice: “That Council refer the matter of post built variances to the Mayor’s Standing Committee on Finance and Governance.”

The Director of Planning explained the Development Variance Permit Application process. Following Committee discussion it was determined that this was a rare and unfortunate event.

MOVED by Councillor Harper and seconded by Mayor Haynes: “That the Finance and Governance Standing Committee recommend to Council that staff’s role and the current policies and processes remain in place.”

CARRIED

NEXT MEETING

Next regular scheduled meeting is Monday, October 19 at 10:00 am. The Committee will meet at least four times per year and may hold special meetings as required at the call of the Chair.

ADJOURNMENT

On the motion from Councillor Brice the meeting adjourned at 11:39


Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.


Committee Secretary