

MINUTES
FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE STANDING COMMITTEE

Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room 2
770 Vernon Avenue
October 27, 2025 at 9:30 AM

ROLL CALL

In Attendance: Councillor Susan Brice (Chair); Councillor Nathalie Chambers (via Teams at 9:35 a.m.); Councillor Zac de Vries (via Teams); Mayor Dean Murdock (10:03 a.m.); Councillor Mena Westhaver

Regrets: None

Guests: Peter Urbanc, CEO, Municipal Finance Authority; Ehren Lee, Water Strategy Consultant, Urban Systems

Staff: Brent Reems, Chief Administrative Officer; Paul Arslan, Director of Finance; Suzanne Samborski, Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services; Cristina Caravaca, Senior Manager, Community Services; Lesley Hatch, Senior Manager of Water Resources; Jennifer Lockhart, Senior Manager of Financial Services; Jennifer Jakobsen, Manager, Saanich Commonwealth Place; Helene Roberge, Manager of Strategic Projects; Bernard Tso, Manager of Accounting Services; Nathan Cernusca, Committee Clerk; Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by Councillor Westhaver and Seconded by Councillor de Vries: "That the Minutes of the Finance and Governance Standing Committee held July 14, 2025, be adopted as circulated."

RESULT: Carried 4 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Brice, Chambers, de Vries, Westhaver

OPPOSED: None

COMMITTEE BUSINESS ITEMS

COUNCIL INVESTMENT POLICY AMENDMENT

Peter Urbanc, CEO from the Municipal Finance Authority gave a presentation (PowerPoint on file). The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- A maximum of \$81 million is eligible to be invested in long-term investments for 10 years or longer at Council's discretion.
- The Province sets the maximum limit (as a percentage) of investment in the Diversified Multi-asset Class Funds (DMAC) based on reporting from the Municipal Finance Authority.
- Eight or nine municipalities have already participated in DMAC with combined investment amounts in excess of \$1 billion.
- The fund generates better returns over the long-term which helps to reduce pressure on taxation to residents.

MOVED by Councillor de Vries and Seconded by Councillor Westhaver: "That the Finance and Governance Committee receive the Council Investment Policy Amendment report from the Director of Finance for information and recommend to Council the approval of the amendments to the Council Investment Policy."

RESULT: Carried 4 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Brice, Chambers, de Vries, Westhaver

OPPOSED: None

The CEO, Municipal Finance Authority, exited the meeting at 9:49 a.m.

WATER AND SEWER UTILITY RATES REVIEW – PROJECT JOURNEY, SUMMARY OF 2025 CHANGES, AND NEXT STEPS

The Senior Manager of Water Resources and the Senior Manager of Financial Services gave a presentation (PowerPoint on file). The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- Flat fixed fees for water is currently based on connection size and unit-rate charges based on volumetric consumption.
- Over the next three to five years, continue to incrementally adjust flat rates while aging meters are replaced and a communications system linkage is established to build data trends in consumption to inform future changes to the utility rates design. Revenue stabilization is forecast to occur beyond this timeframe.
- Conservation still plays a large role in reducing resident consumption to lower impacts on utility bills. Messaging will be provided to residents to continue to communicate conservation incentives.
- Kits to promote conservation (containing low-flow shower nozzles) were offered to residents in the past and likely sourced through the Capital Regional District at that time.
- Increases in bulk water costs from the Capital Regional District will affect rate increases with District residents.

Mayor Murdock joined the meeting at 10:03 a.m.

MOVED by Councillor Westhaver and Seconded by Councillor de Vries: “That the Finance and Governance Committee receive the report dated October 15, 2025 for information and recommend to Council that:

- 1. Council continue incrementally adjusting the monthly charge (flat rate) component of water and sewer utility rates for 2026 for the District’s portion of the costs.**
- 2. Council approves the allocation of the 2026 CRD Sewer Requisition increase as a separate flat fee on the utility bill, to enhance transparency for utility customers.”**

RESULT: Carried 4 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Brice, Chambers, de Vries, Westhaver

OPPOSED: None

The Senior Manager of Water Resources left the meeting at 10:13 a.m.

FUNDING OPTIONS FOR SWAN LAKE & CHRISTMAS HILL LAND MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT FEE

The Committee discussed the staff report from the Director of Finance dated October 8, 2025, and the following was noted:

- Increases per the standard Consumer Price Index (CPI) would result in a shortfall due to inflation. This has been noted as current (and previous) practice.
- Suggestion of incremental increases of CPI plus 1% would help to mitigate large impacts and bring funding closer to inflation.
- A policy statement that captures the annual increase of CPI plus 1% will be presented during Council’s annual financial planning process and is subject to approval.
- The current Land Management Agreement has been extended to 2026, however can continue until 2029 if needed.
- Recommended to review the policy concurrently with the Agreement to capture changes to funding.

MOVED by Councillor Chambers and Seconded by Councillor Westhaver: “That the Finance and Governance Committee recommend that Council adopt a policy of establishing the annual increase of fees to the Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary (Society) by prior year’s CPI plus 1%, subject to approval through the annual financial planning process.”

RESULT: Carried 4 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Brice, Chambers, de Vries, Westhaver

OPPOSED: None

2025 2ND TRIMESTER RESULTS REPORT

A report from the Director of Finance with the 2nd Trimester Results for 2025 was reviewed (May 1, 2025 to August 31, 2025), and the following was noted:

- Engineering and Parks departments are experiencing lower expenditures due to seasonal demands and staffing shortages.
- The District’s investment portfolio earned 3.65% due to the Bank of Canada reducing interest rates.
- A Sole source refers to a single company that is the sole representative for the specific goods that is needed by the District.
- A Single bidder refers to a company that was chosen in lieu of multiple bids, recommended by a department as outlined in a Memo or Report, due to time or emergency-related restrictions.

The Senior Manager of Community Services joined the meeting at 10:38 a.m.

MOVED by Councillor Westhaver and Seconded by Councillor Chambers: “That the Finance and Governance Committee receive the 2nd Trimester Report for 2025 from the Director of Finance for information and that the report be referred to Council for its consideration.”

RESULT: Carried 4 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Brice, Chambers, de Vries, Westhaver

OPPOSED: None

Councillor de Vries exited the meeting at 10:44 a.m.

AMENDING ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE POLICY

A report from the Director of Finance dated October 16, 2025 was presented, and the following was noted:

- A modernized policy is required to address charging interest on delinquent accounts and procedures to be established for the write-off of uncollectible accounts.
- Current practice involves the collection of costs through insurance and collection agencies.

MOVED by Councillor Chambers and Seconded by Councillor Westhaver: “That the Finance and Governance Committee recommend that Council:

- 1. Approve the amended Accounts Receivable Policy, including the application of interest charges on delinquent accounts and a formalized procedure for the write-off of uncollectible accounts.**
- 2. Direct staff to implement the policy effective December 31, 2025 and bring forward a fees and charges bylaw that includes an interest rate charge on delinquent accounts.”**

RESULT: Carried 3 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Brice, Chambers, Westhaver

ABSENT: de Vries

OPPOSED: None

MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL FEASIBILITY REPORT

A report from the Director of Parks, Recreation & Community Services dated October 17, 2025 was presented, and the following was noted:

- Bi-annual events can be staggered to allow for a yearly event to occur within current staffing resources.
- Evaluate this event to represent a multi-cultural plan to celebrate and cultivate the heritage of Saanich.
- Further discussion to occur to help shape a new funding and implementation model for the event.
- The revisioning of this event will be considered in advance of the 2027 budget deliberations.

MOVED by Councillor Chambers and Seconded by Councillor Brice: “That the Finance and Governance Committee”

- 1. Receive the Multicultural Festival Feasibility report from the Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services for information; and**
- 2. Recommend that Council requests staff report back on a multicultural event that represents the culture of the District of Saanich in advance of the 2027 budget cycle.”**

RESULT: Carried 3 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Brice, Chambers, Westhaver

ABSENT: de Vries

OPPOSED: None

The Senior Manager of Community Services exited the meeting at 11:19 a.m.

NEW LEASE EXPENSE AT CORDOVA BAY COMMUNITY SPACE

- Cordova Bay 55 Plus Association (CB 55+) in discussion with the District to address increased annual operating costs and facility space for expansion.
- There is an operating Agreement with School District 63 for the community space at the Cordova Bay Elementary School.
- The Cordova Bay 55 Plus Association programming provides value for seniors.
- Non-discretionary funding is recommended for new lease obligations.

Mayor Murdock exited the meeting at 11:34 a.m.

MOVED by Councillor Chambers and Seconded by Councillor Westhaver: “That the Finance and Governance Committee receive the New Lease Expense at Cordova Bay Community Space report from the Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services for information and that the report be referred to Council for its consideration with a recommendation to endorse Recreation’s non-discretionary request for an additional \$64,404 annually to support the new lease obligations, extend the Partnership Agreement with Cordova Bay 55 Plus Association, and work with them to cover their own portion of operating costs for the Community Space.”

RESULT: Carried 3 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Brice, Chambers, Westhaver

ABSENT: de Vries

OPPOSED: None

The Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services exited the meeting at 11:36 a.m.

SCHEDULE OF 2026 MEETINGS

MOVED by Councillor Westhaver and Seconded by Councillor Chambers: "That the Finance and Governance Committee approve the schedule of 2026 meetings with the addition of May 1, 2026."

RESULT: Carried 3 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Brice, Chambers, Westhaver

ABSENT: de Vries

OPPOSED: None

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Councillor Westhaver and Seconded by Councillor Chambers: "That the meeting be adjourned."

RESULT: Carried 3 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Brice, Chambers, Westhaver

ABSENT: de Vries

OPPOSED: None

The meeting adjourned at 11:37 a.m.

CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

COMMITTEE CLERK