



**County  
of Huron**

## **Committee of the Whole**



**Minutes - March 20, 2007**

*GODERICH, ONTARIO*

Goderich, Ontario  
March 20, 2007

The COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE met at 10:00 a.m. in the Wingham Westcast Complex, Columbus Centre on Highway 86. Business included a Public Forum for budget presentation and question period.

### **1. Minutes**

**Moved by J. Bezaire**

**Seconded by D. Kelly**

**That the minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting of February 20, 2007 be adopted as circulated.**

**CARRIED**

### **2. Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund (OMPF)**

D. Carey, Treasurer and Deputy CAO, presented the attached report (Appendix A) for the information of committee and Council.

**Moved by B. MacLellan**

**Seconded by K. Oke**

**That the report be received.**

**CARRIED**

### **3. 2007 Capping Analysis and Tax Tools Options**

Nancy Rennick, Manager of Financial Services and Deputy Treasurer, presented the attached report (Appendix B) and answered questions for the information of committee and Council.

It is recommended that the following be adopted to establish a maximum increase threshold as the greater of:

- i. 10% of the previous year's annualized capped classes; and
- ii. 5% of the previous year's annualized CVA tax eligible property; and
- iii. imposing a threshold adjustment for capped properties where the required billing adjustment (credit only) is within \$250 of the properties' CVA tax; in this instance, no capping credit would be applied, and the affected property would be billed at its full CVA tax level;

and that the necessary by-law be passed stating that the above paragraph applies to the calculation of the amount of taxes for municipal and school purposes payable in respect of the property in the commercial, industrial and multi-residential classes for 2007.

It is further recommended that the necessary by-law be passed stating the County will impose a 90% threshold on the tax level for eligible new construction for 2007.

**Moved by J. Bezaire**

**Seconded by B. Dykstra**

**That the recommendations be approved and the necessary by-laws be passed.**

**CARRIED**

#### **4. Connecting Links Funding**

There was no formal report prepared on the connecting links funding at the time of the meeting. The Treasurer verbally advised the committee that there is no proposed funding or budget for 2007 and is unsure if there will be any for 2008 for connecting links.

**FOR INFORMATION**

#### **5. Canada Ontario Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (COMRIF) Asset Management Project**

The COMRIF program requires a resolution to be passed to proceed with the application for funding.

It is recommended that a resolution be passed designating the project to be of the highest priority for Intake 4 and authorizing the execution of the COMRIF application.

**Moved by N. Vincent**  
**Seconded by G. Robertson**  
**That the recommendation be approved.**

**CARRIED**

#### **6. Draft Budgets**

Each committee was presented the draft 2007 operating budgets for preliminary discussion in January and brought back for review in February. The Cultural Services and Seniors Committee conducted their second review at the March meetings because of the cancellation due to inclement weather. These draft operating budgets were forwarded to the February Committee of the Whole for further discussion in the consolidated budget. Treasurer, D. Carey, made a PowerPoint presentation that included: 2007 and Beyond Budget Pressures; What Your Tax Dollars Support; How Much Do These Services Cost; Where Does the Funding Come From; Uncontrollable Increases to the Levy; Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB) 3150 and Asset Management and Aging Infrastructure; Service Levels; Reserves, draft 2007 Budgeted Levy; Levy History; and Levy Shortfall.

Public meetings are being conducted in Wingham and Exeter in March for budget deliberations. Advertisements were placed in all the County papers inviting written comments and questions. Submissions were received up to March 14, 2007 at the office of the County Clerk.

The Treasurer presented the Draft Budget and answered questions of the committee. The floor was then open for a public question and answer period. Discussion took place and the following questions and comments were dealt with:

- Ø Would Lambton County be approached to contribute to the CT Scanner? Because Lambton County residents will probably be using the scanner it was staffs opinion that the Campaign Committee would be approaching Lambton to contribute.
- Ø It was suggested that the committee forget about cutting the budget and consider slight reductions across the board including reserves. Council should reduce budget to 5.8% or less by using reserves more. Patients who require a CT Scan should not experience problems, as patients whom are considered an emergency priority do not have to wait; doctors have no problem getting them immediate appointments at Walkerton or Stratford.

- Ø It was stated that tax levies in this region of Ontario are excessive and that Huron County is an expensive County to live in. It was felt that any tax increase beyond inflation was unacceptable. This resident was also against imposing mandatory septic system inspections.
- Ø Councillor B. MacLellan questioned the level of the Liability Insurance Reserve and also questioned if the implementation of PSAB's Asset Management Program would eliminate the need for some of the County's current reserves.

The Treasurer responded that the current level of \$800,000 for the Liability Insurance Reserve was based upon the claims history of the County over the prior 15 years and used actuarial methods to determine the level. The Treasurer agreed with Councillor MacLellan that an analysis should be performed after the first year to determine whether the reserve level is more than required or less than required. The analysis would also show whether increasing the County's deductible to \$100,000 was prudent when comparing the insurance premium to what it would have been at the former deductible of \$25,000.

The Treasurer also responded that eliminating a reserve would need to be a decision of Council. Under the new PSAB reporting format all that will be reported on the balance sheet will be accumulated surpluses or accumulated deficits. This figure will be the reserves the County currently has in place adjusted for use and additions over time. The accumulated surplus or accumulated deficit could be detailed in a Statement of Changes to Accumulated Surplus/Deficit which would detail the amounts by the current reserves. In order to utilize the accumulated surplus, the County would need to run a deficit for the year and, conversely, run a surplus to add to reserves. It needs to be stressed that tangible capital assets will be amortized (depreciated) over time and that the amortization would be a charge to County operations within the respective programs.

- Ø The councillors were asked if they had an overall target in mind to keep the budget increase at i.e. 4 to 5 percent. The Warden replied that he would like to see any increases kept at that percentage, but wasn't making any commitment.
- Ø The Treasurer was complimented on an excellent presentation and County Councillors were thanked for informing the public and providing the opportunity for budget questions.

Councillor K. Oke commented that salaries went up three percent and that fuel and asphalt costs went up double to triple digits and those are expenses that are beyond inflationary rates that are not in the County's control. The Warden urged the public not forget about the Provincial downloads and felt that it was time the Provincial Governments provide more funding.

**Moved by B. MacLellan**

**Seconded by J. Seili**

**That the Council of the Corporation of the County of Huron encourages the Province of Ontario to assume 100% funding of the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP); and further, that this resolution be forwarded to AMO and all municipalities in Ontario for endorsement.**

**CARRIED**

Councillor B. MacLellan referred to the \$250,000 increase for the Waste Management Reserve and felt that a presentation from Plasco Energy Group Inc., regarding their gasification process would be beneficial to Council before making any definitive decisions regarding waste management. The Director of Planning addressed the committee advising that the two year project being conducted in the City of Ottawa involves a demonstration/evaluation facility which is soon to be under way. He noted that County Council has been advised for the past three years to increase the Waste Management Reserve and it has yet to be started. The Terms of Reference for the Environmental Assessment for the expansion of the Wingham Landfill as a long-term contingency for County municipalities will include studies of new technologies (such as gasification).

The Director of Planning will contact Plasco Energy Group for a possible presentation in April or May.

### 7. Correspondence Attached – For Information

- a) AMO – Member Communication – Alert
  - Ø AMO Releases Rural-Northern Discussion Paper
  - Ø AMO President’s Remarks to ROMA/OGRA Conference Now Available On-Line
- b) Ontario Farmland Trust, received March 1, 2007 regarding announcement of “Places to Grow...Food” Conference April 12 and 13, 2007 at the University of Guelph.
- c) Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority, Minutes of January 18, 2007. (*Package available in Clerks office on request.*)
- d) Association of Municipalities, Doug Reycraft, President, re: Federal Gas Tax Agreement and March 31, 2007 deadline.
- e) Resolutions
  - Ø City of Stratford re: Perth County Coalition Against Poverty requesting support of a resolution concerning poverty or those people who have a financial hardship.

**Moved by J. Bezaire**  
**Seconded by D. Kelly**  
**That the resolution from the City of Stratford be endorsed.**

**CARRIED**  
**FOR INFORMATION**

### 8. Accounts

Accounts for February 2007 were reviewed.

Members of Council	\$5,061.28
Corporate	\$1,499,280.73

**Moved by M. Scott**  
**Seconded by J. Dietrich**  
**That the accounts be received.**

**CARRIED**

**9. Next Meeting**

A special meeting of the Committee of the Whole will also be held on Thursday, March 22, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. in the South Huron Recreation Centre, Exeter. Budget presentation and Public Forum with question period.

The next regular scheduled meeting of the Committee of the Whole will be held on Tuesday, April 17, 2006 at 9:00 a.m.

**10. Adjournment**

**Moved by B. Dowson**

**Seconded by J. Dietrich**

**That the meeting adjourn at 12:10 p.m.**

**CARRIED**

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Chair