

**MINUTES of the REGULAR MEETING of the COUNCIL of the DISTRICT OF MISSION** held in the council chambers of the municipal hall, 8645 Stave Lake Street, Mission, British Columbia on Monday, January 31, 2011 commencing at 6:30 p.m.

Council Members Present: Mayor James Atebe  
Councillor Jenny Stevens  
Councillor Terry Gidda  
Councillor Paul Horn  
Councillor Danny Plecas  
Councillor Heather Stewart

Staff Members Present: G. Robertson, chief administrative officer  
P. Gipps, deputy chief administrative officer  
T. Mooney, administrative clerk

Council Members Absent: Councillor Mike Scudder

## 1. NEW BUSINESS

PH11/001  
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### **Flick Billingsley and Margret Crawford – Bylaw Enforcement Dispute – 8757 Cedar Street**

A report from the senior bylaw enforcement officer dated January 25, 2011 regarding Flick Billingsley and Margret Crawford and a bylaw enforcement dispute was provided for council's information.

Moved by Councillor Plecas, seconded by Councillor Horn, and

RECOMMENDED: That the practice of auto wrecking and salvage not be allowed at 8757 Cedar Street in accordance with District of Mission Zoning Bylaw 5050-2009.

CARRIED

## 2. PUBLIC BUDGET CONSULTATION SESSION

PH11/002  
JAN 31/11

### **2011 Financial Plan / Budget Highlights – Powerpoint Presentation by Ken Bjorgaard, Director of Finance**

Ken Bjorgaard, director of finance, presented information and highlights of the proposed 2011 financial plan and budget as follows:

- Mission's relationship to other municipalities in regards to 2010 property taxes and utility charges, noting Mission was rated at 11<sup>th</sup> place out of 27 communities.
- The full-service scenario (5.40%) includes the cost of maintaining existing services, additional revenue and new or enhanced services that include an additional police officer and a second assistant fire chief.
- The 4.66% tax increase scenario is the 5.40% scenario minus funding for the police officer and the second assistant fire chief.
- The 3.88% tax increase scenario continues with the reductions from the 4.66% scenario and includes:
  - Funding downtown security from the gaming reserve;
  - Defer electronic document management system upgrade;

- Delay LiveScan implementation (RCMP);
- Budget reductions within corporate administration i.e. reduce corporate training, legal costs; and,
- Budget reductions within engineering/public works areas i.e. survey consulting, roads budget, remove insuring municipal bridges.
- The 3.50% tax increase scenario continues with the reductions from the 3.88% scenario with the following additional reductions and new revenue sources:
  - Reduce fire/rescue service training;
  - Reduce public hearing overtime budget for Planning;
  - Reduce parks recreation & culture afternoon reception coverage;
  - Reduce finance department training budget;
  - Institute a \$10/player field fee for minor sports participants;
  - Advertising opportunities at the mission leisure centre; and
  - Implement subdivision engineering administration fees.
- All of the tax increase scenarios include the 1.03% for the full-time fire fighters and a 1.00% for a capital contribution. If you take the fire fighter and capital contribution percentages away from the 3.50% scenario, it comes out to an approximate 1.50% increase for general operations.
- Projected 2011 property tax and utilities Increases based on various tax scenarios and average home assessment of \$393,000 in Mission.
  - Estimated Increase in municipal and library taxes for 2011 on an average assessed home
    - 5.40% = \$53.56
    - 4.66% = \$41.53
    - 3.88% = \$28.80
    - 3.50% = \$22.63
  - Increase in utility charges only for urban areas equals \$89.32 for each of the scenarios; and
  - Increase in rural recycling charge equals \$17.00 for each of the scenarios.

The mayor thanked the director of finance for the information and invited members of the public to provide their comments.

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### **Public Feedback Question and Answer Period**

Various members of the public provided comments and questions as follows:

Terry Mortimer

- (a) How are exempt staff yearly increases determined, do other municipalities have an increase every year and are these increases linked to the union increases?

The chief administrative officer responded that increases are proposed to council based on information gathered from other municipalities and an independent consulting firm completed a comparative which compares similar size municipalities with similar size budgets and responsibilities. The increases are not put before council at the same time as the union negotiations.

- (b) Why are exempt staff's wages not listed in the budget and why was the remuneration schedule not included in the budget.

The chief administrative officer noted that they are included in the overall salaries section of the budget.

The director of finance responded that in compliance with the Community Charter the remuneration schedule is published in a public bodies report which is available prior to June 30.

- (c) In previous years the staff remuneration contained three columns. Could a fourth column identifying the actual real cost of exempt staff which would include the non-taxable and non-wage benefits as CPP, dental, pensions and medical etc. be incorporated?
- (d) He noted an increase in exempt staff earning in excess of \$75,000.00. How many exempt staff is presently on payroll?

The deputy treasure/collector replied there are 32 exempt staff.

- (e) Would council consider putting forward a motion at the next UBCM conference that all municipalities negotiate union contracts together in unison?

The mayor responded that all municipalities are autonomous and each collective agreement is negotiated differently.

Councillor Horn noted that this comment would be considered and discussed by council.

- (f) Are there any new raw logs being exported from the Mission Tree Farm.

The manager of forestry responded that they have an independent log marketing contractor and logs are only exported when they pass the export test which is required by provincial law and there is not viable domestic markets for certain products.

- (g) What has the forestry department done to mitigate loses and the break even forecasts?

The manager of forestry responded that council has been presented with several cost saving ideas and one example is that staff are now sharing a vehicle rather than each having a vehicle. Further information could be provided to Mr. Mortimer at his request.

Councillor Horn noted that the forestry department has been instrumental in looking at the Stave Lake forest as more than just a logging operation and have played a key role in not only producing lumber but also as a place for people to engage in tourist activities etc.

- (h) Has there been any staff reductions or part-time offers to staff to create savings?

The manager of forestry responded that if the economy is low they reduce the amount of work that consultants are retained to do.

- (i) Do we need a full time manager in the forestry department?

Mayor Atebe noted that a full time manager is required. Our forest is the first historical community forest established and still continues to provide leadership in the province. Taxpayers are protected from impacts of an economic downturn by ensuring that the forestry department has its own reserves to keep it self-sustaining.

Councillor Stevens stated that in earlier years the forestry department was making large profits and those profits were used for many projects within the community. Now that the timber industry has declined, the forestry department is looking at ways to profit and develop cultural and recreational tourism incorporating our forests and an experienced full time manager is required to move this forward.

- (j) Has staff looked at privatizing the forestry department in order to make a profit.

The mayor responded that the forestry department is made up of few staff members and work is performed by contractors so the department is kept viable by reducing contract work when necessary.

- (k) The crime rate appears to be declining and why are there savings noted in the RCMP budget.

The director of finance noted that the RCMP provides updates to the contract budget frequently and the changes reflected projections for member salaries and benefits. The RCMP projections are provided well in advance and those projections change.

Mayor Atebe noted that in 2006 it was agreed to add a new member to the RCMP every year in order to reduce crime in our community. With the addition of new members, crime has been reduced but you do not abandon the strategy that works by reducing or not adding another new member as this strategy has proven to be successful since 2006.

Councillor Horn noted that there has been a distinct improvement in our community in the reduction in crime and this is noticeable in the downtown area.

Councillor Stevens noted that there has been a reduction in crime however in the area of family violence the crime has increased. This new RCMP member could co-ordinate all the resources in dealing with family violence as it is needed in our community.

- (l) If we could get through the Olympic month with six fewer members why would we add new members now? Mission taxes should not go towards funding members to attend the Olympics and was there overtime paid to members during the Olympic months?

Inspector Walsh noted that well in advance of the Olympics plans were put in place to ensure that there was adequate coverage in the community. Every detachment in the province supplied members and it was a short time span. He noted that crime did not increase because the community spirit was recognized throughout the province. Overtime was paid to members, but not as a result of the Olympics as members incur overtime hours over the course of a year despite attendance at the Olympics.

Othmar Kagi

- (a) Under what revenue, how is the money collected and entered from public safety inspection team.

The director of finance noted that there is a specific PSIT revenue account and more detailed information can be obtained from the finance department.

- (b) If the public safety inspection team includes police and fire officers and the program is to be self-supporting, why do we require the addition of another assistant fire chief and new RCMP member?

Mayor Atebe noted that the program is independent and the taxpayers are not responsible for covering the cost of PSIT inspections. The inspection fee is for the recovery of that program and this is for PSIT inspections.

The director of finance confirmed that the fees recovered from the program have covered all the expenses incurred which include the fire inspection and the police officer and no property taxes have gone to the public safety inspection program.

- (c) Will the new RCMP member be responsible only for domestic disputes?

Inspector Walsh noted that there is a very detailed business case to support the hiring of a new member in this function and is available if requested.

Councillor Horn noted that while crime has decreased, domestic violence has not and the analysis shows that we haven't had the decrease that is required.

- (d) If we do not hire a further RCMP or fire member then this would reduce the increases in the budget and councils needs to freeze the salaries and cut back benefits.

Mayor Atebe noted that council is not taking a salary increase this year and feels the benefits that council receives are justified.

Shannon Higg expressed concern with council instituting a \$10.00 player field fee for minor sport participants as the children should not be penalized.

Ian MacKenzie noted the following items are excessive and if reduced cost savings could be found:

- (a) staff recognition budget, could it be reduced;
- (b) corporate training budget could it be reduced;
- (c) building inspection relief staff; and
- (d) economic development department – has there been a cost benefit analysis performed and can anything be reduced

Mayor Atebe noted that there has been a cost benefit analysis and the department has been instrumental in bringing in new commercial development to Mission. The majority of taxes collected in Mission are from residential property but the commercial tax base is increasing and we need to change the balance from a highly residential revenue generated base to a more diversified economy and to strengthen the economics in the community. Our economic development officer is working to accomplish this.

- (e) engineering department vehicle expenses could be reduced;
- (f) taxpayers should not be covering the cost for coffee for the employees in the public works department;

The director of finance responded that the coffee budget for the public works department is to accommodate individuals attending meetings and not staff.

- (g) why are we projecting a 50% increase in sign vandalism if property damage appears to be declining and is there a way to reduce this amount?

The director of finance responded that the figures that are being compared are from 2009 and the actual amounts for 2010 have not yet been calculated.

The director of engineering noted that there was excessive damage on the overpass which was costly but it is extremely hard to anticipate these figures.

- (h) Street light maintenance hydro costs – he noted that the ornamental Christmas lights this past season were still on until January 27, 2011 and they should be taken down sooner to reduce costs.
- (i) If only one position could be hired at this time, consideration should be made on if new assistant fire chief or another fire fighter would be utilized more efficiently.

Councillor Horn noted that the fire chief or the assistant fire chief are first on the scene and are on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week which adds up to each spending 50% of their lives on call.

Fire Chief Ian Fitzpatrick noted that the second assistant fire chief position was adopted by council as a master plan. The new position would assume some of the fire chief's responsibilities as he is presently performing fire chief/administrative duties and handling the operations and emergency preparedness.

- (j) Why is the cemetery not self-sustaining and having to be subsidized?

The director of parks responded that the increase in the budget will allow for reserve funds to look at future nearby development when and if the current cemetery reaches capacity. There are also recommendations to beautify the existing cemetery.

(k) Why is the Columbia Street rental property not showing any rental revenue?

The director of finance noted that the property has been sold.

(l) Why is the Clegg Street rental property not showing any rental revenue?

The director of finance responded that the rental income has been used towards repairs and allocated for future improvements on the home.

(m) Why is there is a 20% reduction in the vending machines at the leisure centre.

The director of parks, recreation and culture noted that the vending machines are included in the contract with the concession contract at the leisure centre and the District of Mission receives a percentage of the sales. This 20% reduction will be reviewed to determine why there is a 20% reduction projected.

(n) Why has the arena revenue been reduced by 20%.

The director of parks, recreational and culture noted that revenue is based on a percentage split with user groups including minor hockey and junior B. The District of Mission is dependent on the sales they generate and through a reduction in volunteers in these user groups, they have not been able to secure more advertising.

(o) Why is there a 30% reduction in pool shop sales?

The director of parks, recreation and culture responded that the sporting goods store that was leased has subsequently closed and therefore the leisure centre front desk is now selling some swimming accessories.

(p) Why is there a projected 80% increase in the vandalism budget and can this be decreased?

The director of parks, recreation and culture noted that vandalism goes up and down and is very hard to predict.

(q) There is an error in the detailed budget as it indicates that the revenue is \$2,867,678.00 and should be \$2,732,467.00. There is a deficit of \$135,211.00. Is the deficit coming from general revenue to subsidize the forestry operation?

The director of finance responded that there is a forestry reserve established so that taxation does not support forestry. There is in excess of \$400,000.00 remaining in the forestry reserve should a loss be incurred.

(r) The projected increase in the water and sewer budgets is large and will substantially increase in the next 15 years. How will these increases be collected without a large impact on taxpayers?

The director of finance noted that the increases are significant due to the need for a second water source. The amounts required will decrease if the District of Mission is able to secure a grant for this project and the development cost charge rates are currently under review. A report will be submitted to council which will include the majority of the growth related costs for water and the effect of the increase in development costs charges. He noted improvements made on the growth related projects as the District of Mission has negotiated a new formula with the City of Abbotsford as Mission was responsible to pay 25% but that figure has been reduced to 12%. The District is hopeful that this 12% figure will also apply to the sewer costs. He noted that high costs are associated with water and sewer increases due to the fact that the District has had to react to the projects and did not have the opportunity to plan for them.

Mayor Atebe responded that the water and sewer expansion has been expensive. The water rates have not increased for 10 – 15 years. Mission and Abbotsford have been working together to avoid extensive borrowing to avoid a negative impact. A grant application has been submitted and will be beneficial to both communities if the funding is granted.

- (s) a domestic violence co-ordinator is essential in our community and should be a priority to reduce these types of crimes in our community.

Harpreet Grewal expressed concern with the implementation of a \$10.00 field fee for minor sport participates. This is short term revenue and not a long term solution. We encourage children to be active and we should not place barriers for kids to participate. He is not opposed to user fees and suggests that if council was to approve a fee that it be implemented in minor amounts over the course of a couple of year and not a large fee all at once.

Sonia Barker

- (a) Closing the library for one day a week could reduce the costs.
- (b) How many fires do we have in Mission per year that would justify the hiring of a new assistant chief?

The fire chief encouraged Ms. Barker to contact him for this information.

- (c) Does the fire department respond to ambulance calls as well?

The fire chief responded that paid full-time members now attend medical calls if they are available. Prior to the implementation of full-time members, all fire calls were responded to by on-call members and therefore they only responded to certain medical emergencies. This is an important addition to our community as it increases response time by having fire department and ambulance members attend medical emergencies and quick response times save lives.

- (d) Eliminate off leash dog parks to reduce costs.
- (e) Can we reduce cost within the restorative resolutions department as there are other services available in the community and school to handle conflict



resolution?

Mayor Atebe responded that some of the social issues are addressed through other programs. However this program is beneficial to both youth and members in the community as it utilizes volunteers to facilitate conflicts and resolves issues in a timely manner.

Pam Willis

- (a) Supports hiring a domestic violence co-ordinator within the RCMP. These types of crimes are increasing in our community as approximately 30% of women that are battered contact police as they have trust issues but with the addition of a co-ordinator this may alleviate some of those issues.
- (b) She does not support the \$10.00 user fee increase for participants using sports fields as this will put up further barriers that affect youth participation and this increase goes against the District of Mission's commitment to a healthy community.
- (c) She does not support the reduction in recreation services which includes the afternoon leisure centre reception hours. What is the rational for this reduction?

The director of parks, recreation and culture responded that this was proposed as the afternoon hours on Monday to Friday is less busy and if they could reduce the hours of staff during this time it would be a cost savings.

- (d) There are cuts for arena programs for 14 years and under. Is this because the programs were undersubscribed?

The director of parks, recreation and culture noted that this was a redistribution of revenue and is now included in children's programs and there are no cuts to programming.

- (e) She supports continued heritage funding.
- (f) She supports increased costs for water, sewer, recycling and garbage disposal.
- (g) She expressed concern on the financial impact if Abbotsford withdraws from the regional district next year.

Mayor Atebe noted that if decisions are made that Abbotsford will withdraw from the Regional District a further analysis will be performed which would be available to the public.

Tony Luck stated that he challenges council to find deficiencies to reduce the budget by 3 to 6% in order to meet a 0% increase. Taxpayer salary increases are not increasing at the same rate as property taxes. Council needs to seriously review its budget and questioned what has been done in Mission to decrease expenditures from the many departments within the District of Mission?

Mayor Atebe encouraged Mr. Luck to provide written comments on what services he, as a taxpayer, would like to see expanded, maintained or reduced in order to council to put forward a 0% budget. He would like to see the current council and any candidates running in the 2011 municipal election defer any pay raises until budget increases can be reduced.

The director of finance noted that in the district's budget there are cyclical revenues (ie building permit fees, subdivision inspection fees and planning development fees). The District of Mission relies on a base amount of those fees and does not rely on the excess fees to fund on-going expenditures.

Mike Gildersleeve

- (a) Would like to see if a budget committee could be organized so that citizens could be involved in budget planning prior to any scenarios being presented to the public.
- (b) Would like to see a 0% budget put forth.
- (c) He is opposed to the \$10.00 field user fee for youth participating in field sports as this creates barrier for families.
- (d) A domestic violence co-ordinator hired for the RCMP would be an important addition to our community.

Mayor Atebe responded that the budget planning commences in September and the meetings are advertised. Community members are encouraged to attend and participate in the meetings.

Larry Nundal

- (a) Why are the restorative resolution and social development departments, which are non-core services and budgeted for approximately \$300,000.00, not on the table?
- (b) A Penticton core review resulted in the elimination of a deputy fire chief and a core review should be prepared to see if any positions could be eliminated.
- (c) Expressed concerns that over the last 6 years, all departments appear to show a large increase in expenditures except the public works department.

Ali Kia

- (a) Some services may need increase to prepare for future planning.
- (b) He supports the restorative resolutions program as it requires minimal paid staff and utilizes many highly trained community volunteers. This program enhances Mission by building a community and helps individuals solve problems and conflicts within the community.

- (c) Youth programs should be budgeted for, sustained and expanded for the future of Mission.

Kevin Frances

- (a) He supports a 0% increase and supports the comments made by previous speakers.
- (b) Has council thought of other options that maybe available to decrease the budget.

Councillor Horn responded that our forestry department is unique and has been around for 52 years and it could expand the forestry operations into more recreational areas. The District has also explored gravel operations and developing industrial land.

- (c) Is there a parameter on what the District of Mission can and can't do?

Mayor Atebe noted that decision making is governed under the Community Charter.

- (d) Who is responsible for the District of Mission's investment portfolio and what is the percentage rate of return?

The director of finance responded that municipal investments are restricted to the type of investing as set out in the Community Charter. Most municipalities invest in the Municipal Finance Authority and they have three funds including a money market fund, intermediate fund and a bond fund.

- (e) What is our average rate of return?

The deputy director of finance responded that our average rate of return is about 3%.

Shelly Clarkson

- (a) Are the gaming revenues projected to increase or decrease?

The director of finance noted that when our gaming centre was first opened the projected revenues was \$300,000.00. The present projection is \$500,000.00 and should remain stable.

- (b) If the downtown security monies are to be funded from taxation rather than gaming monies, could the gaming monies be allocated to funding the \$10.00 proposed increase in the field user fees. If you charge extra fees for children to participate in activities it is more difficult to keep them active.

Councillor Horn noted that gaming monies are not considered continued revenue as they can change and the District does not like to allocate them to necessary core services as this could affect future budgeting.

- (c) Is the reciprocal agreement between the School District and the Leisure Centre still in place as far as maintaining fields etc.

The director of parks, recreation and culture noted that the agreement has expired and it will be re-negotiated but they continue to honour the previous agreement.

Michelle Cummings noted that Mission taxes are high and this deters people from purchasing property in Mission. The services appear to have decreased and property taxes do not.

Mike Denier

- (a) Is the Minnie's Pit \$1,000,000.00 reserve part of the general reserves and surpluses that totals \$25,000,000.00.

The director of finance noted that there are two parts to the landfill reserve. One is for opening new cells and the second is a liability amount required to close cells. The general reserve includes only the liability for closing the cells.

- (b) If a legal action is brought against the District of Mission would any amounts be withdrawn from the contingency fund?

The director of finance responded that the District is covered under the insurance program through Municipal Insurance Association.

- (c) What is the deductible on that insurance and would the rates increase if the District lost in a legal action?

The director of finance responded the deductible is \$250,000.00 and he cannot confirm if the District lost a legal action if the Municipal Insurance Association would raise rates.

Jim Heinz

- (a) Does the monies for the Downtown Security include an increase or is it based on the same hours as last year?

The director of finance responded that the amount is similar to last year.

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**Moved by: Councillor Horn, seconded by Councillor Gidda; and**

**RECOMMENDED:** That the meeting be extended until all business on the agenda has been concluded.

**CARRIED**

Terry Mortimer

- (a) Why do full-time fire fighters drive in the truck in full gear to Safeway for lunch?

The fire chief replied that with a full-time team of fire fighters they must spend their shift together. If a member must attend the store to pick up nourishment, the entire team must go as they must be together as a group and have their equipment,

including their vehicle, should a call be received to reduce response time to the emergency.

(b) Does the PSIT team have an expensive vehicle?

The fire chief responded that the PSIT team has a vehicle to drive to inspections.

(c) How many municipal bridges are there?

The director of engineering and public works responded that there are 13 – 15 bridges.

(d) How many meetings were in camera or public for budget discussions?

Mayor Atebe noted that the Community Charter dictates what information must be heard in closed meetings.

(e) Was the controlled substance bylaw vetted by Mission's counsel? If so and a legal action is brought against the District, is the District of Mission counsel also liable?

(f) How many staff members are employed in the environmental department and why did they increase?

Mayor Atebe responded that there is two full-time staff in this department and this department is an integral part of the District especially working with the landfill.

Councillor Horn noted that this department has applied for numerous grants that were awarded to the District and they continue to educate the community about environmental concerns and how to reduce the environmental impacts in our community. This department has added a quality of life and a financial benefit to our community.

(g) Why should taxpayers fund an off leash dog park?

Councillor Stevens responded that many community members requested an off leash dog park and some families do not live in an area where their dog can run so it is maintained to accommodate the entire community.

Councillor Horn asked what is the operational cost for the dog leash park at Centennial Park?

The director of parks and recreation replied that operational costs for the off leash dog park consist of purchasing dog litter bags and emptying the garbage cans. The estimate cost is a couple of thousand dollars per year.

Ian McKenzie

(a) Why did the dike maintenance fees increase 180% from 2009.

The director of finance responded that the dike maintenance needs to be increased as they were in disrepair for a long period of time and they have been significantly improved. The District has also received grants to improve the dikes.

- (b) Why under crime prevention have the amounts not increased? What do we have for crime prevention?

The director of finance stated that crime prevention budget is now included in the community policing access centre budget.

Inspector Walsh discussed various community initiatives that are implemented.

- (c) Would like to see more information put forth to the community by the RCMP?

**3. QUESTION PERIOD (on new business only)**

There were no questions from the public.

Mayor thanked everyone for coming out and voicing their concerns.

**4. ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Councillor Horn , seconded by Councillor Gidda, and

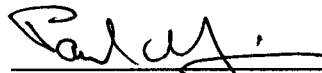
RESOLVED: That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.



MAYOR JAMES ATEBE



PAUL GIPPS, DEPUTY CHIEF  
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER