



## Special Finance Committee

Date: Monday, January 18, 2021

Place: Council Chambers  
Richmond City Hall

Present: Mayor Malcolm D. Brodie, Chair  
Councillor Chak Au  
Councillor Carol Day (by teleconference)  
Councillor Alexa Loo (by teleconference)  
Councillor Bill McNulty (by teleconference)  
Councillor Linda McPhail (by teleconference)  
Councillor Harold Steves (by teleconference)  
Councillor Michael Wolfe (by teleconference)

Call to Order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:47 p.m.

Mayor Brodie advised that the order of the agenda would be varied to consider Item No. 2 first.

### MINUTES

It was moved and seconded

*That the minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee held on January 5, 2021, be adopted as circulated.*

**CARRIED**

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**FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES DIVISION**

**2. 2021 OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGETS FOR RICHMOND PUBLIC LIBRARY**

(File Ref. No.) (REDMS No. 6598804)

It was moved and seconded

*That the 2021 Richmond Public Library budget of \$10,182,368 as presented in Attachment 1 from the Chief Librarian and the Secretary to the Board, be approved.*

The question on the motion was not called as discussion ensued with regard to (i) the funding transfer from the Budget Stabilization Provision, (ii) cost-savings from reduced services during the COVID-19 Pandemic, and (iii) costs of acquiring digital eBooks.

The question on the motion was then called and it was **CARRIED**.

**1. 2021 PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET**

(File Ref. No. 03-0970-25-2021-01) (REDMS No. 6466396 v. 7)

Mayor Brodie noted that parts of the 2021 Proposed Operating Budget related to Fire-Rescue (Parts 3 and 4) and Part 5 will be considered separately.

Discussion ensued with regard to potential opportunities for cost savings in previously approved capital items and increasing the budget allocation for public safety including additional RCMP Officers.

In reply to queries from Committee, staff noted that the recommended 2021 Operating Budget listed under Option 1 presents a budget that is within 1% of the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

It was moved and seconded

*That the 2021 Proposed Operating Budget (City-Wide excluding Fire-Rescue) as presented in Budget Option 3 (City-Wide excluding Fire-Rescue) be approved as outlined below:*

- (1) A same level of service budget increase of \$2,380,910 after tax growth with a tax increase of 0.99% be approved;*
- (2) Transfer to reserves for Investment in Community Facilities as per Council's Long Term Financial Management Strategy for 2021 in the amount of \$2,393,567 with a tax increase of 1.00% be approved;*
- (3) Senior government increase of \$255,000 with a tax increase of 0.11% be approved;*

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- (4) *Amounts deferred for Community Safety increases from the 2020 Operating Budget totalling \$1,609,318 with a tax increase of 0.67% be approved;*
- (5) *A partial funding of the operating budget impact from the 2019 Capital Budget Year 3 of 3 of \$311,220 with a tax increase of 0.13% be approved;*
- (6) *The remainder of the operating budget impacts totaling \$1,409,684 with a tax increase of 0.59% be approved; and*
- (7) *Council's Safe Community Priority Program of 16 RCMP officers and 11 municipal employees in the amount of \$2,990,022 with a tax increase of 1.24% or a portion thereof, be approved.*

The question on the motion was not called as discussion ensued with regard to (i) impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the operating budget, (ii) continuing with the 1% transfer to reserve for the Investment in Community Facilities, (iii) the budget impacts from the loss of gaming revenue, (iv) acquiring additional RCMP officers, (v) and proceeding with development and construction of new City facilities.

In reply to queries from Committee, staff noted that the Province has contributed a grant as part of the COVID-19 recovery effort and that funding will be allocated towards the City's Pandemic recovery initiatives such providing community grants, acquiring technical equipment and reopening of facilities.

It was suggested that the proposed 2021 Operating Budget reflect the Richmond RCMP's recommendation of hiring 12 RCMP officers and 4 municipal employees, and as a result the following **amendment motion** was introduced:

It was moved and seconded

*That the 2021 Proposed Operating Budget (City-Wide excluding Fire-Rescue) as presented in Budget Option 4 (City-Wide excluding Fire-Rescue) be approved as outlined in the staff report titled 2021 Proposed Operating Budget, dated January 4, 2021, from the Acting Director, Finance.*

The question on the motion was not called as discussion ensued with regard to minimizing tax increases and enhancing public safety.

The question on the amendment motion was then called and it was **DEFEATED** with Mayor Brodie and Cllrs. Loo, McNulty, McPhail and Steves.

The question on the main motion was then called and it was **CARRIED** with Cllrs. Au, Day and Wolfe opposed.

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In accordance with Section 100 of the *Community Charter*, Cllr. Au declared to be in a conflict of interest as his son is a firefighter in Richmond Fire-Rescue, and Cllr. Au left the meeting – 5:22 p.m.

Discussion ensued with regard to (i) budget options for Richmond Fire-Rescue (RFR), (ii) options to minimize the proposed tax increase, (iii) potential negative effects of deferring the hiring of additional firefighters on public safety, (iv) seeking Provincial guidance on additional qualifications for firefighters, and (v) the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the types and number of calls that first responders attend.

It was moved and seconded

***That the 2021 Proposed Operating Budget (Fire-Rescue) as presented in Budget Option 2 (Fire-Rescue) be approved as outlined below:***

- (1) A same level of service budget increase of \$421,700 with a tax increase of 0.18% be approved; and***
- (2) Senior government increase of \$45,000 with a tax increase of 0.02% be approved; and***
- (3) That the inclusion of the remaining 12 firefighter positions from Council's Safe Community Program in the amount of \$1,801,859 with a tax increase of 0.75% be approved.***

The question on the motion was not called as discussion ensued with regard to options to reduce first responder response times and options to expand capabilities of RFR personnel.

The question on the motion was then called and it was **CARRIED** with Cllrs. Day and Wolfe opposed.

Cllr. Au returned to the meeting –5:38p.m.

It was moved and seconded

***That the 2021 Operating Budget as approved be included in the Consolidated 5 Year Financial Plan (2021-2025).***

**CARRIED**

## ADJOURNMENT

It was moved and seconded

***That the meeting adjourn (5:39 p.m.).***

**CARRIED**

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Certified a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the meeting of the Special Finance Committee of the Council of the City of Richmond held on Monday, January 18, 2021.

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Mayor Malcolm D. Brodie  
Chair

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Evangel Biason  
Legislative Services Associate