



Budget Committee Minutes

No. 4

October 29, 2019, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Council Chamber

Members	Councillor Amanda Collucci, Chair Councillor Andrew Keyes, Vice-Chair Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton	Councillor Keith Irish Councillor Reid McAlpine Councillor Karen Rea
Regrets	Councillor Khalid Usman	
Roll Call	Regional Councillor Jim Jones Andy Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer Trinela Cane, Commissioner, Corporate Services Brenda Librecz, Commissioner of Community & Fire Services Arvin Prasad, Commissioner Development Services Claudia Storto, City Solicitor and Director of Human Resources	Joel Lustig, Treasurer Matthew Vetere, Manager, Budgeting Nasir Kenea, Chief Information Officer Graham Seaman, Director, Sustainability & Asset Management Chris Bird, Director of Building Standards Laura Gold, Council and Committee Coordinator

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Budget Committee convened at 9:05 AM with Councillor Amanda Collucci in the Chair.

2. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

None.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Moved by Councillor Andrew Keyes

Seconded by Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton

That the Minutes from the October 4, 2019 Budget Committee be approved as presented.

Carried

4. **BUDGET PRESENTATION**

4.1 **2020 Director's Presentation - Building Standards Department**

Building Standard Presentation

Chris Bird, Director of Building Standards provided the 2020 Building Standards Budget Presentation.

Staff provided the following responses to Committee inquiries regarding the 2020 Building Standards Budget Presentation:

Forecasting of Building Permit Revenue

Staff advised that to improve the forecasting of building permits, the City has started tracking all development projects and their respective site plan approval dates. Using this information, a mathematical model is then used to forecast building permit revenue.

Building Permit Fees

Markham's building permit fees are comparable to Vaughan and Richmond Hill's fees. The fee is set to cover the reasonable costs of enforcement and to help maintain a sufficient Building Reserve balance.

Building Permits

Staff have created an ePlan guide to help applicants ensure they are meeting all required criteria when they are submitting their building permit application. Drawings cannot be circulated to customers, as they may contain personal information.

A small percentage of the City's building permits are for infill housing. The majority of building permits issued are for low rise building (65%), and commercial buildings (35%).

Building Inspections

The building inspector will check to see if the building is being constructed based on the approved drawings, and if all requirements of the Building Code are met.

City staff will follow up with owners that have not organized their required building inspections, noting that the onus is on the owner to organize and call for the inspection.

Building Construction

The City's zoning by-laws determine what is considered a renovation versus new construction. The Building Standards Department is working with the City's Legal Staff to explore ways to handle cases where construction is taking too long.

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* requires buildings being extensively renovated (only the portion of the building being renovated), and new construction to be accessible. Most accessibility requirements do not apply to houses.

Budgeting for Position Vacancies

Gapping of salaries due to staff vacancies is budgeted at a corporate level.

4.2 2020 Director's Presentation - Information Technology Services Department

Nasir Kenea, Chief Information Officer provided the 2020 Budget Presentation for the Information Technology Services (ITS).

Staff provided the following responses to Committee inquiries regarding the 2020 ITS Budget Presentation:

Open Data

Staff advised that the Open Data portal was launched at the end of 2018, and there is plan to publish additional data sets on the City's website in 2020. Releasing additional data sets has been delayed a bit due to workload.

A Committee Member suggested reaching out to third parties that have downloaded data from the City to better understand their reasons for requiring the information or its use.

Cyber Security

Staff advised that the City has taken steps to improve the City's cyber security posture. Some of the steps taken to date include: 1) development of cyber security program and the work underway to address previously identified gaps; 2) hiring a Senior Cyber Security Specialist; and 3) purchasing cyber insurance for the City.

It is possible that there will be a 2021 budget request for the implementation of parts of the Cyber Security Program.

Customer Service

Staff are trying to improve Help Desk response times by minimizing the calls to the help desk by providing more education and training to users as part of technology project implementations.

Website

The City's website was designed by experts to be user friendly for customers. Continuous improvements are being made to the website to integrate and streamline online services.

Municipal Election

Funds for technology requirement for the municipal election (online voting) are requested and approved through the municipal election budget.

Regional Councillor Jim Jones asked why the voting software used in the 2018 municipal election could not provide the results for each Regional Councillor by Ward.

Software/Technology

The City collaborates with other local municipalities when possible to reduce software costs. However, each organization is required to purchase its own software licenses based on the way the license to use them is structure, which puts limitations on the cost savings that can be derived. However, negotiation as a larger group is continuously explored, if the timing of the project aligns between the municipalities.

Capital Budget Items

Staff provided the following responses to the Committees inquiries regarding the ITS Capital Budget items:

20055 – ITS - Recreation Fitness Training Management Application

This Capital Budget Item is for software that fitness members can use to track their fitness goals. The software is being requested by fitness members.

20056 – ITS - Recreation Facility Tablet Project

The tablets are being purchased to monitor the cleaning of the City's community centres. Durable high quality tablets with cases are required, as they will be used

while staff are cleaning. Staff agreed to look at opportunities to lower the cost per tablet when purchasing the tablets.

20061 - ITS - Life Cycle Asset Replacement

The life cycle for capital asset is determined by the type of asset being replaced.

Staff clarified that there is about \$500K is available from previous budgets for the implementation of the Digital Markham Strategy. And \$300K is being requested in this budget. The funds will be allocated to projects, which will be approved as per the normal purchasing process prior to the funds being spent.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton

Seconded by Councillor Andrew Keyes

That the ITS Capital Budget Items be approved as presented.

Carried

4.3 2020 Director's Budget Presentation - Finance

Joel Lustig, Treasurer provided the 2020 Finance Department Budget Presentation.

Staff provided the following responses to Committee inquiries regarding the 2020 Finance Department's Budget Presentation:

Provincial Announcement - Regional Review

Staff will report back to Council on the Province's plan to provide funding to municipalities to improve service delivery and to meet the needs of changing communities once more information is provided.

Property Taxes

Markham's property taxes are less when comparing the property taxes of a similar properties in Vaughan and Richmond Hill.

Capital Budget Items

Staff provided the following responses to inquiries regarding the Finance Capital Budget Items:

20062 - Bill 108 – Community Benefits Charge By-Law

Staff will report back to Council on the impact the Community Benefit Charge will have on the City once the Province announces its funding formula. This Capital Budget item is for any legal and consulting fees that may be required, as a result to the change in funding structure.

Moved by Councillor Andrew Keyes
 Seconded by Councillor Keith Irish

That the Finance Capital Budget Items be approved as presented.

Carried

4.4 2020 Director's Presentation - Sustainability & Asset Management

Graham Seaman, Director of Sustainability & Asset Management provided the 2020 Sustainability & Asset Management Budget Presentation.

Staff provided the following responses to Committee inquiries regarding the 2020 Sustainability & Asset Management Budget Presentation:

Asset Management Audit

A 2020 budget request for a Manager of Corporate Asset Management has been submitted to address the recommendation of the City's Asset Management Audit.

Markham Energy Conservation Office

The Markham Energy Conservation Office was established within the corporation to find energy savings. To date, there has been \$2M of energy savings per year found.

Municipal Energy Plan

The Municipal Energy Plan maps out how Markham will be net zero by 2050. Cancellation of the Province's GreenON Rebate Program has been a slight setback to reaching the target. A report outlining the City's progress with respect to its Municipal Energy Plan will be brought forward to the General Committee in 2020.

Corporate Security

Staff advised that all visitors going to secured areas of Markham Civic Centre are required to sign in and have a visitor pass. Landscaping enhancements have been made at Civic Centre to address security gaps. Staff are trying to promote a corporate culture that supports security.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton
 Seconded by Councillor Andrew Keyes

That the Sustainability Office Capital Budget Item be approved as presented.

Carried

5. NEW BUSINESS

None.

6. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next Budget Committee Meeting will be held on Friday, November 1, 2019.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Councillor Andrew Keyes

Seconded by Councillor Amanda Collucci

That the Budget Committee adjourn at 11:57 PM.

Carried