

Special General Committee Minutes

Meeting Number 15
October 21, 2020, 9:00 AM - 12:30 PM
Live streamed

Roll Call	Mayor Frank Scarpitti	Councillor Reid McAlpine
	Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton	Councillor Karen Rea
	Regional Councillor Jack Heath	Councillor Andrew Keyes
	Regional Councillor Joe Li	Councillor Amanda Collucci
	Regional Councillor Jim Jones	Councillor Khalid Usman
	Councillor Keith Irish	Councillor Isa Lee
	Councillor Alan Ho	
Staff	Andy Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer	Mary Creighton, Director of Recreation Services
	Trinela Cane, Commissioner, Corporate Services	Hristina Giantsopoulos, Elections & Council/Committee Coordinator
	Arvin Prasad, Commissioner Development Services	John Wong, Technology Support Specialist II
	Claudia Storto, City Solicitor and Director of Human Resources	Graham Seaman, Director, Sustainability & Asset Management
	Joel Lustig, Treasurer	Shane Manson, Senior Manager, Revenue & Property Taxation
	Bryan Frois, Chief of Staff	Grace Lombardi, Election and Council/Committee Coordinator
	Kimberley Kitteringham, City Clerk	Terence Tang, Technology Support Specialist II
	Martha Pettit, Deputy City Clerk	

1. CALL TO ORDER

Under the authority of the *COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, 2020* (Bill 197) and the City of Markham's *Council Procedural By-law 2017-5*, and in consideration of the advice of public health authorities, this meeting was conducted electronically with members of General Committee, staff, and members of the public participating remotely.

The Special General Committee Meeting convened at the hour of 9:07 AM in the Canada Room with Mayor Frank Scarpitti presiding as Chair until 9:38 AM at which time Regional Councillor Jack Heath assumed the Chair.

The Committee recessed at 10:30 AM and reconvened at 10:40 AM.

2. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were none disclosed.

3. DEPUTATIONS

There was a deputation in relation to item 4.1 Responding to the Pandemic.

Refer to the individual item for the deputation details.

4. PRESENTATIONS

4.1 RESPONDING TO THE PANDEMIC (7.0)

Andy Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) addressed the committee and provided information on the overall response by the City to the COVID-19 pandemic and noted that the City did not declare a statement of emergency and operated under the direction of the Province. The City maintained service delivery to residents and executed operational excellence and innovation to find efficiencies while maintaining agility to adapt to the evolving situation. The CAO, Trinela Cane, Commissioner, Corporate Services, Claudia Storto, City Solicitor and Arvin Prasad, Commissioner, Development Services addressed the Committee to deliver a presentation entitled, Responding to the Pandemic which provided an overview to the City's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 905 Chairperson for the City of Markham, Rob Kerfoot, addressed the Committee to express his appreciation for the continued communication and the hard work done by the City with respect to the recent staff redeployment on behalf of the approximate 400 full time CUPE members.

The Committee acknowledged the work by staff to maintain service provisions and noted that the City handled the crisis very well through the leadership of senior staff and the whole organization. They further acknowledged the positive partnership with CUPE leadership and thanked Mr. Kerfoot for addressing the Committee.

There was discussion on the following in relation to the presentation:

- Consideration to alternative actions with respect to issue management with the information that is currently available;

- Consideration to enable public availability to the outdoor skating rink at Civic Centre as appropriate in the winter months;
- Inquiry into COVID-19 infection rates at the City;
- Staff vacation allotments and their rate of use;
- Year to date data comparison versus month over month for the statistical analyses;
- The positive feedback received from members of the public on the City's management of the pandemic; and,
- Concerns with the parking ticket issuance process.

The Committee requested a year over year comparison for the legislative services data presented by way of email to Members of Council and a verbal update on the City's parking program.

Moved By Mayor Frank Scarpitti
Seconded By Councillor Amanda Collucci

1. That the presentation entitled Responding to the Pandemic be received.

Carried

4.2 COVID-19 IMPACT UPDATE (7.0)

Joel Lustig, Treasurer, addressed the Committee to provide an update on the City's finances with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic and delivered a presentation entitled, COVID-19 Impact Update that provided an overview of financial performance, property tax collection results and updates on cash flow and City relief measures.

The Committee discussed the following in relation to the presentation:

- Social media messaging to the public in relation to the start of late payment charges on overdue property tax payments effective January 1, 2021;
- Consideration to provide property tax relief for residents and businesses into 2021;
- Notions on whether the City is on a financial rebound, and whether the worst is over from a pandemic perspective;

- Discussion regarding whether the Library should continue with the acquisition of materials and resources in 2021;
- Inquiry into the water/wastewater rates and scheduled increase from York Region;
- Concerns over the possibility of a property tax rate increase and working to identify savings to avoid one;
- Property tax collection rates among homeowners and businesses;
- Concerns with future tax collection rates as the pandemic evolves when financial assistance programs end;
- Financial assistance options for 2021;
- Concerns about local businesses and their viability during the pandemic;
- Consideration to offer permanent property tax deferrals;
- Communication options and strategies to engage with businesses in the Community to assess their ability to pay their taxes; and,
- Review of the current variance in property tax collection and arrears rates and the shortfall.

The Mayor indicated he was pleased with the high level of property tax payment compliance and requested that those who can pay their property taxes, to please continue to do so and enable the City to continue to provide high levels of services to the community. He also thanked the federal and provincial government for their financial support.

The Treasurer advised that while the current tax payment rate is higher than anticipated, the pandemic will continue into 2021 and indicated that staff will continue to monitor the effects on City finances. He noted that additional financial considerations may be addressed at upcoming Budget Committee meetings.

Moved By Mayor Frank Scarpitti
Seconded By Councillor Amanda Collucci

1. That the presentation entitled COVID-19 Impact Update be received; and,
2. That the City not apply for Phase 2 funding as part of the Safe Restart Agreement; and,

3. That the City suspend the Municipal Accommodation Tax from January 1st, 2021 to December 31st, 2021, and if required, request endorsement of this action from the Destination Markham Corporation; and further,
4. That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

Carried

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1 PERSONNEL MATTERS

Mayor Scarpitti addressed the Committee and raised an item of new business to be addressed in confidential session. With the consent of two-thirds of the members present, the rules were waived to add a confidential item to the agenda.

6. CONFIDENTIAL

Moved By Mayor Frank Scarpitti
Seconded By Councillor Isa Lee

That, in accordance with Section 239 (2) of the Municipal Act, General Committee resolve into a confidential session to discuss the following matters:

Carried

6.1 FINANCE & ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

6.1.1 PERSONAL MATTERS ABOUT AN IDENTIFIABLE INDIVIDUAL, INCLUDING MUNICIPAL OR LOCAL BOARD EMPLOYEES (11.0) [Section 239 (2) (b)]

The Committee consented to report out on this matter at a future meeting.

Moved by Mayor Frank Scarpitti
Seconded By Councillor Isa Lee

That the Electronic General Committee confidential session adjourn at 12:29 PM

Carried

7. ADJOURNMENT

The Special General Committee meeting adjourned at 11:58 AM and immediately convened into confidential session. The Committee will report out on this matter at a future meeting.

Moved By Mayor Frank Scarpitti

Seconded By Councillor Isa Lee

That the Special General Committee Meeting adjourn at 11:58 AM.

Carried