

Council Caucus Room
November 29, 2012 6:00 p.m.

An Open Meeting of Guelph City Council.

Present: Mayor Farbridge, Councillors Bell, Burcher, Dennis, Findlay, Furfaro, Guthrie, Hofland, Laidlaw, Piper, Van Hellemond and Wettstein

Absent: Councillor Kovach

Staff Present: Ms. A. Pappert, Chief Administrative Officer; Mr. M. Amorosi, Executive Director of Corporate & Human Resources; Ms. C. Bell, Executive Director of Community & Social Services; Mr. A. Horsman, Executive Director of Finance & Enterprise; Dr. J. Laird, Executive Director of Planning & Building, Engineering and Environment; Mr. D. McCaughan, Executive Director of Operations, Transit & Emergency Services; Ms. S. Purton, Supervisor for Financial Planning; Mr. B. Labelle, City Clerk; and Ms. D. Black, Council Committee Coordinator

DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST AND GENERAL NATURE THEREOF

There were no disclosures.

DELEGATIONS

Ms. Sonya Poweska, Executive Director, Guelph Arts Council gave a summary of programs and services they offer. She advised they have established a five year strategic plan and new mandate. She highlighted their plans for 2013 and requested an increase in operating fund by \$5,000.00 to make it \$38,000.00 which is well below the average percentage given to Arts Councils across the province. She noted they are exploring other means of funding their activities going forward.

Ms. Elizabeth Dent, Executive Director, Ed Video, highlighted their activities and services and advised of some partnerships they have. She stated they are requesting an increase of \$1,000 which results in 3% of their operating and a total of \$5,500.00, well below the average for comparator municipalities.

Ms. Sandra Ferguson-Escott, Chair, Guelph Non-Profit Housing Board (GNPH), outlined their goals, objectives, challenges and achievements. She stated they are trying to increase the number of available units as money from the three levels of government allows. She noted that when the City removed their debt from the City budget, it

added the debt to the GNPH budget. She stated they are asking for \$100,000 to remove that debt. She noted the various ways they have been attempting to find long-term solutions. She said they are also asking the City to fund the affordable housing reserve with year end surplus. This is the third time that GNPH has requested \$100,000 to make-up for a shortfall in capital for the Paisley Place Project. That GNPH has completed all other avenues for rectifying the annual shortfalls and that the \$100,000 is the only outstanding amount. GNPH acknowledges that it has been removed from the city's financial statement and is happy that the city's credit rating has increased because of it.

Mr. Paul Clulow, Secretary/Treasurer, CUPE Local 241, said the potential austerity measures would take away from services that taxes should cover. He encouraged Council to consider the long-term impacts on the community when cancelling services and front line staff should be consulted to determine the issues and learn how the budget decisions are affecting everyone.

Mr. Craig Chamberlain expressed concern regarding the City's media analysis and said that he does not believe City staff should be using social media monitoring. He suggested soliciting feedback from City forums and asked Council to stop providing any money for media monitoring.

Mr. Marty Williams, Executive Director, Downtown Guelph Business Association, believes it would be a mistake to cut the façade improvement grant program by 50% because it is paying off in private spending. He advised of a business transformed from being just a nightclub to being a daytime restaurant as well and how other businesses would like to do similar. He stated that changing downtown parking regulations before the parking study is completed would not be prudent. He said downtown parking brings in revenue and pays for by-law officers and helps the budget.

Ms. Lianne Howie, Mitchell Woods Public School Parent Council, raised concerns about traffic around their school. She said ten year old students are currently directing traffic and that is too much responsibility for them. She noted the traffic issues will only get worse when the Costco is built. They are asking for approval of the crossing guard budget.

Ms. Krista Thompson, Co-Chair, Parent Council, King George Public School, noted that a number of young children are being walked to school by older siblings and

since some drivers do not listen to the children patrols, there is a big safety concern. She said that next year when Laurine Avenue reopens, it will only add to the traffic issues and increase the need for by-law enforcement. She noted that City staff have identified the need for three adult crossing guards and there are five other schools needing adult crossing guards. She asked Council to approve the budget item for adult crossing guards.

Ms. Rosemary Blacklock, Parent Council, Taylor Evans Public School, submitted a petition with 120 signatures requesting an adult crossing guard. She noted there is a large volume of traffic at their school and they are having similar issues to the other schools. She also requested Council approve the adult crossing guard budget.

Ms. Kendra Spira, speaking on behalf of current King George and next year's Laurine Avenue schools, reiterated that when Laurine Avenue school reopens, the traffic issues will only increase. She noted that the need for adult crossing guards has been identified at the corners of Lemon and Metcalfe and Eramosa and Metcalfe. She asked Council to be proactive, not reactive.

Ms. Kathy Watts was not present

Ms. Sue Ricketts, Fair Pensions for All, identified trends regarding pensions. She expressed concern about the increase to the number of City employees, the salaries and wage figures and costs of benefits. She provided figures regarding the cost price index and staff compensation and expressed concerns about the cumulative premium distance. She requested Council to give consideration to their hiring practices and compensation packages.

Mr. Bill Tufts assisted Ms. Ricketts with responses to Council questions and provided statistics surrounding benefit, compensation and pension costs.

Mr. Duncan MacKenzie believes it is safer than people think to cycle in Guelph. He would like Council and the Board of Education to organize a couple of days to encourage everyone to ride to work/school. He believes that money could be found for the bicycle lanes if police and City vehicles reduced their vehicle idling times.

The Mayor left the meeting and Councillor Laidlaw assumed the chair.

Mr. Steve Lidkea said the City should stop making bicycle lanes because they are not being used enough. He said the police need to enforce the cycling laws regarding riding on the sidewalks and then the cyclists would use the bicycle lanes more.

The Mayor resumed the Chair.

Ms. Yvette Tendick, requested Council set 5% of the roads budget aside for active transportation which would result in saving money on road maintenance, parking and pollution control. She would like to see bicycle lanes on Stevenson Street from York Road to Elizabeth Street; and on Woodlawn Road near the Galaxy theatre, as well as on College Avenue near the high schools. She also noted there is a need for more bicycle parking downtown.

Ms. Suzanne Gates also requested 5% of the road budget for bicycle lanes. She requested more bike security or lock up areas, especially in the downtown core. She stated the University has some great options and suggested that the City could use one or two parking spots in the parking lots to be designate for bicycle parking.

Ms. Donna Jennison concurred with the delegates asking for money from the roads budget to be allocated to bicycle lanes. She also noted the need for a bicycle lane on Stevenson Street. She noted the City could get 53 kilometres of bicycle lanes built annually and that it costs about \$10,000 to install a lane. She said bicycle lanes currently are random and not well maintained so more money is needed for them. She said lanes between Grange Road and Palmer Street on Stevenson Street needs special attention.

Mr. Stephen Saines was not present

Mr. Jack Sills, student and patrol captain at King George School, requested help from adult crossing guards. He said cars park where they should not be and buses cannot make the turns. He believes drivers may listen to an adult better and he asked Council to approve the budget money for adult crossing guards so they could be safer.

Mr. Terry O'Connor, 1st Vice-President, Guelph & District Labour Council, made note of programs within the City and said he understands taxes are necessary. He believes the City is providing a strong economic climate and is building a strong public sector, however, revenue generation seems to be lacking and Council needs to be innovative and creative. He would like to see the

affordable bus pass and the wellbeing initiative continue and does not recommend adopting the austerity measures options. He also said raising user fees is not an answer. He encouraged Council to be aware of barriers they could create when cutting programs.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield, Guelph Chamber of Commerce encouraged the City to stick closely to the consumer price index. He believes the Information Technology Strategy plan is a good way to build efficiencies. He suggested the City put a pause on hiring whenever possible. He noted that finding efficiencies is crucial and leveraging non-profit groups within the city and partnering with them would be beneficial. He also said the City needs to draw on resources from the two other levels of government. He suggested setting an efficiency target and reporting on progress.

There was some discussion regarding partnering ideas and it was identified that there is a duplication of work between the City and non-profit groups, wellness initiatives being an example. It was also suggested that full time expansions be examined after operational reviews.

Mr. Milton Burns asked the city to stop raising the taxes higher than the cost of inflation. He provided statistics regarding the disparity between the cost of living and salary and benefit cost increases. He would like to see the City evaluate salaries and benefits and find some cost savings.

Ms. Mary DuQuesnay, St. Joseph's Health Centre, provided information regarding their services and stated that proper care would save healthcare dollars in the long term. She stated they have increased long term care by 66% and are the only facility in Guelph to provide bariatric beds. She said their request is to help pay for the specialty beds and room alterations; day programs; monitoring at risk and critical care clients.

Mr. Jeff Burke stated concerns regarding the budget process. He wants to see growth cover expenses. He believes pensions are too high and are unsustainable and would like Council to review the policies regarding salaries, benefits and pensions.

Mr. Bill Gardner provided data regarding costs for sidewalk winter control and costs per household. He raised compliance questions and what the costs would be for enforcement. He does not believe citizens could clear

the sidewalks more efficiently. He encouraged Council to keep the sidewalk plowing money in the budget.

Councillor Findlay left the meeting.

Mr. John Valeriote, Vice-Chair, Macdonald Stewart Art Centre, provided information regarding the Art Centre's role. He said Arts make the city a more well-rounded place to live and will attract more people, thus increasing the tax base. He noted cultural activities are valuable to the economy and would like the City to approve the budget item for their Art Centre.

Councillor Findlay returned to the meeting.

Ms. Kathleen Schmalz was not present.

Mr. David Sills, President, Guelph Civic League, would like to see the Urban Forest Management Plan, Open Government Framework, Community Energy Plan, Integrity Commissioner and adult crossing guard programs financially supported. He suggested charging for pick up of yard waste, increase dumping fees, and water user fees and tie development fees to asphalt. He suggested charging for overnight on-street parking, consider selling the Hanlon Creek Business Park and better engage volunteers. He said Council should not just suggest numbers but determine what is critical.

There were questions to staff regarding impacts on the budget if all requests were addressed; what the consequences would be if the 5% active transportation infrastructure was approved and how it would affect the current road infrastructure gap.

The safety issue on Woodlawn Road was raised and it was suggested that \$120,000 per year for the next ten years be allocated to complete the area from Nicklin Road to Elmira Road.

Staff were encouraged to work with the Downtown Guelph Business Association to address downtown concerns.

Council members requested information regarding the Hanlon Creek Business Park, clarity of numbers about salaries, benefits and pensions; feasibility of utilizing parking spots in the downtown core for bicycle parking and how to be proactive in the Laurine Avenue/King George school area pertaining to adult crossing guards.

Councillor Findlay left the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

1. Moved by Councillor Burcher
Seconded by Councillor Dennis
That the meeting of Guelph City Council of November 29,
2012 be adjourned.

Carried

The meeting adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

Minutes to be confirmed on December 17, 2012.

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Mayor

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Clerk