



Special Council Minutes

November 18, 2024, 5:30 p.m.
Council Chambers
Whitby Town Hall

Present: Mayor Roy
Councillor Bozinovski (Virtual Attendance)
Councillor Cardwell
Councillor Leahy
Councillor Lundquist
Councillor Mulcahy
Councillor Shahid
Councillor Yamada (Virtual Attendance)

Regrets: Councillor Lee

Also Present: M. Gaskell, Chief Administrative Officer
Brent Harasym, Associate Solicitor
M. Hickey, Fire Chief
S. Klein, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
J. Long, Head of Organizational Effectiveness
J. Romano, Commissioner of Community Services
R. Saunders, Commissioner of Planning and Development
F. Wong, Commissioner of Financial Services/Treasurer
M. Dodge, Executive Advisor to the Mayor
K. Narraway, Sr. Manager of Legislative Services/Deputy Clerk
K. Douglas, Sr. Legislative Specialist (Recording Secretary)

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1. Call To Order: The Mayor
 2. Call of the Roll: The Clerk
 3. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

4. Presentations

4.1 Elizabeth Roy, Mayor, F. Wong, Commissioner of Financial Services/Treasurer, and E. Watson, Senior Manager of Financial Planning/Deputy Treasurer

Re: 2025 Strong Mayor's Budget and 2025 Budget - Council Education Session

Elizabeth Roy, Mayor, F. Wong, Commissioner of Financial Services/Treasurer, and E. Watson, Senior Manager of Financial Planning/Deputy Treasurer provided a presentation regarding the 2025 Strong Mayor's Budget. Highlights of the presentation included:

- the Town's community vision and corporate mission;
- completion or commencement of over 95% of the Community Strategic Plan key action items;
- results of the hospital campaign;
- grant funding to support housing development;
- details of the 27-acre, zero carbon, and accessible Whitby Sports Complex design and development site;
- legislative requirements for the Strong Mayor's Budget, informed by the Community Strategic Plan and key action items, community engagement, and the draft budget prepared by staff;
- an outline of the 2025 Budget process and timelines;
- an overview of 2025 Budget engagement strategy and participation rates;
- results of the budget Prioritize Tool and citizen participation;
- demographics of Citizen Budget Survey participants;
- a comparison between the draft budget prepared by staff and the Strong Mayor's Budget;
- an overview of the priorities and budgetary pressures considered when building the 2025 Budget, such as the Consumer Price Index and previous Council decisions;
- budgetary pressures related to maintaining Town assets, resulting in an infrastructure funding gap of \$10.8 million;

- the Whitby Housing Pledge and the financial impact of planning for growth;
- assessment growth revenue and user fee increases that help offset budget pressures;
- a summary of the 2025 proposed budget, resulting in a 4.5% increase on the Town's portion of the property tax bill;
- an overview of the proposed property tax increases for lakeshore municipalities in Durham Region and throughout the Greater Toronto Area;
- the impact of the proposed 2025 Budget on the average residential property tax bill;
- a summary of the revenues and expenditures included in the proposed 2025 Operating Budget;
- a summary of the proposed 2025 Capital Budget, funded by Asset Management Reserves, Development Charges, the Growth Reserve Fund, and other reserves, grants and external contributions;
- the projected annual Municipal Accommodation Tax revenue;
- proposed investments into Economic Development and Downtown Whitby, other Whitby neighbourhoods, parks and active transportation, and roads and infrastructure;
- programs that support residents including tax rebate programs, the tax deferral program for seniors, the windrow snow clearing program, the Access Program for recreation, and support for housing programs;
- additional investments required to reduce the Town's annual greenhouse gas emissions as part of the Zero Carbon Whitby Plan; and,
- next steps in the 2025 Budget process.

A question and answer period ensued between Members of Council and Staff regarding:

- the ratio of management staff compared to non-management staff;

- the Town's approximate annual expenditures on third party consultants;
- implementing user fees for parking at the waterfront and past information presented to Council regarding this matter;
- clarification regarding the urgency to build a new fire hall in West Whitby to improve response times to the community;
- clarification regarding the Town's portion of annual Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) revenues;
- factors contributing to the dramatic decrease in Development Charges (DC) revenue since 2022;
- the potential property tax implications of MPAC's next province wide reassessment;
- factors prohibiting the Town from recovering 100% of costs associated with growth related infrastructure through DC revenue;
- whether Bill 23 impacts the collection of DC revenue;
- the advantages of a multi-year budget;
- insight gained from neighbouring municipalities that have previously implemented a Strong Mayor's Budget;
- expanding service hours to improve service levels;
- progress on acquiring land for the new West Whitby fire hall;
- the impact of growth on response times of Whitby Fire and Emergency Services (WFES);
- the ratio of WFES fire fighters compared to the number of citizens;
- incorporation of assessment growth into the proposed 2025 Budget;
- the financial impact of services downloaded from the provincial and federal levels of government;
- comparing the Town's services to the services offered by neighbouring municipalities;
- the efforts of staff to reduce the financial impact on taxpayers when preparing the draft budget;

- reviewing the Community Strategic Plan in 2026 and alignment with the next multi-year budget;
- the number of 2025 Budget community engagement sessions and public communication regarding the budget;
- proposed contributions to the Asset Management Reserve Fund;
- the Town's 2023 and 2024 greenhouse gas emissions, projected future emissions for 2025 and 2026, and factors impacting the Town's ability to meet annual targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- costs allocated for the installation of proposed electric vehicle charging stations;
- factors contributing to the proposed user fee increases;
- the Town's user fees compared to neighbouring municipalities;
- exploring the opportunity to partner with Ajax Fire and Emergency Services to service growth in West Whitby;
- the methodology for comparing the proposed property tax increases of neighbouring municipalities;
- a desire to align budget increases with the rate of inflation;
- projections regarding the Town's total annual debt repayment capacity; and,
- clarification regarding next steps of the 2025 Budget process, including the ability for the Mayor to veto budget amendments proposed by Members of Council, and motions from Council to override the Mayor's veto's.

5. Adjournment

Moved by Councillor Shahid

Seconded by Councillor Mulcahy

That the meeting adjourn.

Carried

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Kevin Narraway, Deputy Clerk

Elizabeth Roy, Mayor