

A Regular Council Meeting for the City of Coquitlam convened in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 3000 Guildford Way, Coquitlam, BC on Monday, December 7, 2020 at 7:05 p.m. All members of Council were present. Members of staff present were the City Manager, Deputy City Manager, General Manager Parks, Recreation, Culture and Facilities, General Manager Engineering and Public Works, General Manager Finance, Lands and Police, General Manager Planning and Development, General Manager Corporate Services, Director Development Services, Director Human Resources, Director Legal and Bylaw Enforcement, Manager Corporate Planning, Manager Corporate Communications, Manager Parks Planning and Forestry, Financial Planning Manager, City Clerk and Legislative Services Clerk.

CALL TO ORDER

The Mayor, on behalf of Council, recognized the anniversary of the École Polytechnique massacre and noted the need for continued condemnation of acts of hate against women.

OTHER BUSINESS

OB-1 Motion to Conduct a Regular Meeting of Council Without the Public in Attendance as Per the Current Provincial Health Officer Requirements Under the Order on Gathering and Events

The City Clerk noted the updated Public Health Orders from the Provincial Health Officer as part of the COVID-19 quarantine measures and provided an overview of the on-table motion for Council's consideration to address the new requirements.

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR MARSDEN
AND SECONDED

490 That Council:

1. Acknowledge the receipt of Provincial Health Officer Order dated December 4, 2020;
2. Note that the City has long facilitated remote public participation in the Council process for meetings held at City Hall (3000 Guildford Way) through the use of tools such as live webcasting of meetings, the electronic posting of agenda materials and the ability of the public to communicate with members of Council via electronic and other means;
3. Affirm that despite the City's best efforts, it is not possible to facilitate the safe attendance of the public in Council Chambers as per the Public Health Officer's Order;
4. Continue to support the holding of meetings in Council Chambers without members of the public continuously present in-person both today and for the public Council Meetings, Standing Committee Meetings and Public Hearings until March 15, 2021 or until the Public Health Officer rescinds their order;
5. Acknowledge that the City will continue to champion the principles of local government openness, accountability, accessibility and transparency through the

following existing practices:

- a. Live webcasting of meetings, and the posting of archived of video of meetings, on the City's website;
 - b. Public posting of information related to meeting agendas in advance of the meeting on both the City's official notice boards and website;
 - c. Encouragement of the use of the City's e-mail subscription service in order to facilitate distribution of meeting and agenda related information;
 - d. Posting and distribution of meeting minutes in a timely manner;
 - e. Publication of the notice of the Regular Council Meetings in the local newspaper;
 - f. The scheduling of virtual delegations to Council-in-Committee;
 - g. The use of an interactive format to facilitate public input and engagement at Public Hearings and other legislated public input opportunities; and
 - h. Active and ongoing opportunities to provide input directly to members of Council via e-mail, the website, letters, direct contact, et cetera; and
6. Direct staff to continue to monitor the opportunity to facilitate the return of in person attendance and report back to Council on their findings.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

1. Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held on Monday, November 23, 2020

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR HODGE
AND SECONDED

491 That the Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held on Monday, November 23, 2020 be approved.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

REPORTS OF STAFF

2021 BUDGET

2. Verbal Report of the Mayor – 2021-2025 Financial Plan

Introduction

Good evening.

I want to begin by acknowledging that our community is on the traditional territory of the Coast Salish people, and in particular the Kwikwetlem First Nation, from which the name Coquitlam has its origin.

Tonight we will consider the 2021 to 2025 Financial Plan and the budget to fund our City's operations, capital improvements and utilities for next year.

You may wonder if the pandemic has drastically changed the budgeting process. In many ways, it has not. As in other years, we've provided funding for our core services, assessed what's happening both within the City and in the world around us, and sought to identify both what the community desires, and what it requires to thrive and prosper. And like many other years, we've made sure to balance those needs and wants with the community's ability to pay.

In addition to the impact the pandemic has had on our service levels, it has changed the priorities of our residents. By and large, what's important to most people today is very different than it was a year ago.

City Council and staff have worked very hard to create a budget that reflects the changes and challenges COVID has brought to our community and to our lives. COVID response and recovery is our number one priority for 2021. We've had to make some tough decisions in order to direct our resources where they will do the best to help our community recover, build resilience and come out stronger on the other side.

And although this could be described as a somewhat frugal budget that considers the economic hardship everyone is facing, it is not a short-sighted, stripped-down budget that will leave our community worse off in the long run.

We continue to focus on the critical financial planning tasks that are the hallmark of sound municipal governance. We're planning for the coming years, and we're setting ourselves up for the future.

In essence, Coquitlam continues to adhere to the three principles that have put us on solid financial ground today. And those are:

1. **Ensuring our finances are sustainable over the long term**
2. **Maintaining stable property tax levels, and**
3. **Being flexible to respond** to emerging priorities and opportunities

I'm proud of the thoughtful, judicious approach we take with budgeting and our 2021 budget is no different in that regard. I believe it strikes the right balance between responding to the urgent needs of today while continuing to do the right thing for tomorrow.

There are a lot of people to thank for getting us here. It's always important to recognize that staff at all levels, and across the organization, do some heavy lifting to prepare for each year's budget. Their diligence is truly appreciated.

I'd also like to acknowledge my colleagues on Council for their vision and responsible approach in guiding the budget process.

Last but definitely not least, I thank those in the community who provide their input, particularly those who engaged with our online budget tools and survey. We had an amazing 38% increase in participation this year. Understandably, the input reflected a bit more of a cautious outlook and we've embraced that approach.

All in all, we have a stronger, more responsive budget because of all of that collective work and input.

Looking back at 2020

Now, to set the stage for the 2021 budget planning process, let's begin with a look back at the past year.

Not surprisingly, COVID continues to be the main story as we close out 2020. It's been a year that brought unforeseen costs and impacts to our City services and operations, capital planning and typical revenue streams.

To help keep people safe, and to follow Provincial orders, earlier this year we closed facilities and cancelled programs and events. But we continued to deliver essential services, moved many City services online, and made a variety of changes to protect the health and safety of staff. We coordinated our response through our Emergency Operations Centre with the involvement and cooperation of staff from all departments. The City also worked closely with our municipal neighbours, regional partners and Provincial staff to manage the ever-changing conditions of the pandemic.

As soon as we were able to do so, we gradually began to safely reopen facilities and programs, while remaining ready to respond to new provincial health orders. Early on, we kicked off our COVID-19 Community Support and Response Plan – or CSRP. This plan is financed by various reserve accounts, including a \$5 million allocation by Council, and was designed to assist all sectors of the community and target funds where they were needed most.

Some of the CSRP initiatives you may be aware of include: extensions for tax and utility payments, a variety of economic development activities, reduced fees for recreation drop-in, a meal program for isolated seniors, and grants to support community groups. More programs will continue to roll out into 2021.

Overall, our fiscally-prudent approach this year has not only protected our services, but has supported community-wide recovery by providing real help to people, businesses and groups that are struggling.

While the pandemic was a big focus in 2020, it wasn't the only one. We made progress on many other priorities, including adopting our new City Centre Area Plan after two years of planning and public consultation.

We broke ground on the new YMCA building and made a number of improvements to infrastructure and parks, consistent with the public's increased use of outdoor spaces.

We reviewed and improved our development application processes, and we continued to prepare for the future by planning for new recreation facilities – including the Northeast Community Centre and Place Maillardville – along with initiatives in housing, heritage, the environment, climate change, sports fields and other important matters.

We also received some recognition along the way, including receiving awards for our budget and financial plan, an Organizational Safety Excellence Award from the BC Municipal Safety Association, and being named one of B.C.'s top employers for the third year in a row. We even earned special achievement awards in the national Communities in Bloom competition.

One of the big highlights for 2020, however, was seeing how our Council, City staff and the community pulled together during this challenging year.

I take my hat off to those in the community who have supported their neighbours and those in need.

I also give kudos to our City staff for adapting and pivoting, both in their personal work situations and in coming up with creative ways to continue to do their jobs and serve the community.

Maintaining a Strong Financial Position

Now back to the topic at hand.

When it comes to our finances, Coquitlam is in an enviable position today because of those three financial management principles and best practices that I mentioned earlier. However, it's important to note that there are still challenges ahead due to COVID-19.

As mentioned, many of our typical revenue streams have diminished, including development, recreation fees, rentals, and the loss of host-community revenue sharing from the casino. Many of our capital projects also rely on collaboration and funding from other governments or agencies, some of which have deferred payments.

Operational costs have risen as well, including changes we've made to meet new health protocols along with labour and regional utility costs. You look at Council Chambers here and you'll see small elements of the kinds of changes that have had to be made. This is just plexi-glass but throughout the organization there have been adaptations and pivoting in order to make it so that we can provide the services of the City as safely as possible during a pandemic. All told, we will see cost inflation of 2.3% for 2021.

Throughout 2020, we took a number of steps to offset the changes in costs and revenue, such as reduced discretionary spending across the organization.

We've kept pushing our capital program forward, and not just because it brings much-needed improvements to our neighbourhoods and city. Construction is a major employer with a multitude of spin-off benefits to other businesses, while generating fees and taxes that help pay for improved community amenities and growth.

We're also actively seeking provincial and federal grants to support our infrastructure and other work.

Budget Approach for These Uncertain Times

As we plan for the uncertain times ahead, our approach is one of both caution and flexibility. In general, we've assumed that the financial pressures and social restrictions will continue to some degree throughout 2021, and that full in-person City services are not likely to resume until 2022.

With that in mind, our focus next year will be on COVID response and recovery and on maintaining existing services and capital programs, while shielding taxpayers as much as possible. For example, we're using one-time funding from provincial grants along with our own reserves to address some of the temporary impacts, including those related to the pandemic.

There is always a delicate balance between minimizing tax increases and ensuring the long-term stability of our services. While we always need to maintain our fiscal resiliency, our primary job now is to protect our community from COVID and from the economic realities associated with the pandemic.

That means that for 2021, we asked staff to focus on the essentials, look hard for efficiencies, and minimize requests for enhanced services. The resulting list is short and focused.

There are some things we won't take shortcuts on, such as emergency planning, that's really important and their current saturation underscores that, health and safety and infrastructure maintenance. We've also maintained the important planning processes that will affect many generations to come. These plans must be conducted diligently and with lots of deliberation.

That forward-looking lens was applied to the \$8.3 million in provincial COVID-19 Safe Restart funding our city received.

We'll apply \$1 million of the grant to cover unforeseen costs from 2020 – things like personal protective equipment, technology, and portable washrooms in parks for homeless people.

Another \$1 million will fund CSRP supports for community groups, and \$3.6 million will be used to help balance the 2021 budget and help to keep the tax rate down.

The remainder will be set aside to help protect taxpayers against the impacts of future costs or lost revenues.

Budget Alignment with 2021 Business Plan

One of the main ways we keep our budget on track is to align it with our Business Plan and Corporate Strategic Plan. As mentioned earlier, managing the impacts of COVID-19 on both the City and community will be our top priority for 2021.

With that in mind, here is a look at some of the work we will do next year.

Core Services

We'll continue our existing core services, with a few increases such as:

- An additional health and safety staff member to implement new protocols and guidelines;
- More resources to address the growing number of tax appeals;
- Inflationary increases for materials to maintain our parks, such as fertilizer and surfacing for trails and playgrounds; and
- Increased funding to improve our response to extreme weather events.

Planning for a Prosperous and Sustainable Future

As mentioned, we're continuing to plan for tomorrow by allocating resources to:

- The Southwest Housing Review;
- The Four Corners Master Plan and other initiatives related to the new City Centre Area Plan;
- Planning for the future Burke Mountain Village;
- Completing the Environmental Sustainability Plan;
- Developing a Water Conservation Strategy; and
- Increased outreach and communications required in response to the pandemic.

We'll also maintain resources to support growth and the Housing Affordability Strategy, and to consider new strategies for City revenue and financial sustainability. This work will be funded by developer fees or existing budgets.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Over the past six months in particular, we've seen the public spotlight shining on tragic incidents that underscore longstanding issues associated with equity, with diversity and inclusion. Coquitlam has long sought to be an inclusive community, one that reflects our remarkably diverse community. But we know we're not immune to the types of hatred and prejudice that challenge our very society.

With that in mind, we as Council, as a city, and as a community must acknowledge where we are, and must strive for continuous improvement. To that end, in this budget we've assigned \$100,000 from reserves to fund a new Business Plan priority of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. We want Coquitlam to continue to challenge itself to be better, to be more inclusive, and to strive to recognize and eliminate historic barriers to a truly inclusive society.

We've also approved ongoing operating funding to provide free menstrual products at 25 civic facilities, following a successful pilot project intended to assist in promoting gender equity.

Capital Investment

On the capital side, we need to continue investing in amenities that support the community and local economy. As I said earlier, we're pursuing federal and provincial grants to offset some of those costs.

We tend to get excited about new buildings and roads but we also do a lot of work maintaining what we have, and these projects are not optional. We need to keep retrofitting, repaving and renewing our assets. It's always possible to delay those kinds of things but delays come with increased costs and the optimum investments are to make those investments when they are needed.

The outdoor spaces of our community have also become more cherished this year – they've become living rooms, safe gathering places and mental health retreats. We know COVID will be with us for some time, and that will be reflected in various parks improvements in 2021.

Overall, the 2021 to 2025 Capital Plan includes funding of \$356 million over five years for a variety of important capital infrastructure projects. Some of the projects on the list for next year include:

- Renovating the Innovation Centre to meet some of our current demands for recreation space;
- Completing the planning and design of the Northeast Community Centre;
- Trail improvements, including expanding the Coquitlam Crunch, and connections to the Smiling Creek hydro corridor;
- A variety of playground, tennis court and other park infrastructure and equipment upgrades,
- Various roadway and streetscape enhancement projects;
- Transportation upgrades including replacement of the Scott Creek Bridge and Dewdney Pedestrian Bridge;
- New sidewalks at several high-priority locations, and a new program to install flashing beacons at crosswalks;
- New technologies to enhance the Coquitlam Connect app; and
- Strategic land purchases.

In addition, we've allocated \$8 million for phase one of the Spani Pool renewal project, which includes adding a leisure pool and enhanced spray deck. This project was advanced to take advantage of federal infrastructure funding.

Given the changes to our typical revenue sources, we'll be launching a comprehensive process next year to revisit how we will fund some of the bigger capital projects that are coming up.

Alongside that review, we'll be working on a long-term tax strategy with the plan to address future community growth and service needs while limiting fluctuations to tax increases where possible.

2021 Tax Rates

Now, let's turn to the information many have been waiting for: this year's tax rates.

This year's budget includes an average tax increase of 2.69%. This is primarily driven by contractual obligations and costs associated with sustaining the City's core services, but it is partially offset by the forecasted growth in property taxes from development.

To support businesses, we've continued the tax shift between residential and commercial properties, but reduced it somewhat to recognize the economic hardship being felt by everyone. Based on a .75% shift rather than the usual 1%, the rate for businesses will be 2.19%.

The average homeowner will see an increase of 2.94%, amounting to an increase of \$62 from 2020.

We've also adjusted our 2021 utility rates to provide some relief. Homeowners will see their water bill rise by 4%, an increase of \$23 rather than the \$35 that was originally envisioned. We also cut the sewer and drainage increase in half from 2% to 1%, an increase of \$6 instead of \$10. The solid waste levy is going up by 2%, or \$7.

We know that even a small increase will be a challenge for many people. We've worked hard this year to limit the burden on taxpayers while ensuring the long-term sustainability of our services and finances.

Conclusion

It's been a difficult year for everyone, and we know that more challenges lie ahead. We can take comfort that our city's low debt and sound financial practices have put us in good stead to manage the great financial uncertainty brought on by the pandemic.

In the months ahead, we'll continue to be nimble and diligent as we respond to the crisis and support our community. I have no doubt that we'll come out of this a stronger and more resilient city.

On a personal note, I'd like to say again how proud I am of how our community and staff have responded to these unprecedented times.

Everyone has been challenged in some way this year, but there's no doubt that some people are suffering more than others, whether from financial loss or impacts on their physical and mental health. There is pain out there, and the pain is not evenly distributed. My heart goes out to those who have lost cherished loved ones.

I am heartened, though, when I think about the many ways our community has come together in 2020, whether it's to lend a hand to a neighbour, to support a business down the street, or to simply try to spread some cheer and joy. It's been a ray of light amid what has been a dark time for many.

Coquitlam, you've shown your true spirit.

Thank you.

3. Report of the General Manager Finance, Lands and Police – 2021 Five-Year Financial Plan Bylaw

Discussion ensued relative to the following:

- Appreciation for the funding allocations within the 2021 Budget and the programs that will be established
- Appreciation for the work that was undertaken to establish the 2021 Budget

Mayor Stewart left the meeting at 7:38 p.m. and Councillor Kim assumed the role of Chair.

- The work City staff and Council undertook to balance a supportive 2021 Budget while limiting the burden on residents

Mayor Stewart returned to the meeting at this time and resumed the role of Chair (7:40 p.m.).

- Appreciation for the work of past City Council's to establish robust financial systems and reserves
- Support for the proposed 2021 Budget

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR MARSDEN
AND SECONDED

492 That Council:

1. Give first, second and third readings to *2021 Five-Year Financial Plan Bylaw No. 5086, 2020*;
2. Approve the attached updated Asset Replacement Funding policy; and
3. Approve the name change of the Infrastructure Reserve to City Initiatives Reserve.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. Report of the General Manager Finance, Lands and Police – 2021 Water, Sewer, Drainage and Solid Waste Rate Amendments

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR ASMUNDSON
AND SECONDED

493 That Council:

1. Give first, second and third readings to the *Water Distribution Amending Bylaw No. 5087, 2020*;
2. Give first, second and third readings to the *Sewer and Drainage Amending Bylaw No. 5088, 2020*; and
3. Give first, second and third readings to *Solid Waste Management Amending Bylaw No. 5089, 2020*.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

5. Report of the General Manager Finance, Lands and Police – 2021 Fees & Charges Bylaw No. 5090, 2020

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR TOWNER
AND SECONDED

494 That Council give first, second and third readings to *2021 Fees & Charges Bylaw No. 5090, 2020*.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

CORPORATE SERVICES

6. Report of the General Manager Corporate Services – 2021 Business Plan

The General Manager Corporate Services provided introductory comments relative to the development and finalization of the 2021 Business Plan.

Discussion ensued relative to whether or not the 'Diversity, Equity and Inclusion' item should be moved from a 'C' priority to an 'A' priority in the 2021 Business Plan.

In response to question from Council, the City Manager provided an overview as to how staff assign priority levels to items in the Business Plan. He further noted that the final priority levels of Business Plan items are set at Council's discretion.

Councillor Marsden left the meeting at 8:03 p.m. and returned at this time (8:05 p.m.).

Discussion continued relative to the following:

- The belief that the City's response to the COVID-19 pandemic should remain the overall priority of the City in 2021
- The understanding that the 'Diversity, Equity and Inclusion' item has received separate funding as part of the 2021 Budget
- Concern that should the 'Diversity, Equity and Inclusion' item not be advanced to an 'A' priority that it would not be addressed in a timely manner
- Clarification regarding the current proposed timeline for action on the 'Diversity, Equity and Inclusion' item by City staff

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR MANDEWØ
AND SECONDED

- 495 That Council re-prioritize the 'Diversity, Equity and Inclusion' item from a 'C' priority to an 'A' priority.

CARRIED

Mayor Stewart and Councillors Hodge and Marsden registered opposition.

Discussion continued relative to the following:

- The belief that each member of Council has different personal priorities for the Business Plan
- The desire for further conversation regarding the potential to reprioritize business plan items

In response to a question from Council, the City Manager provided an overview of the evolved priority setting process for the Business Plan.

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR ASMUNDSON
AND SECONDED

- 496 That Council approve the draft 2021 Business Plan identified as Attachment 1 of the report of the General Manager Corporate Services dated December 1, 2020 and entitled "2021 Business Plan" as amended.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

7. Report of the Director Development Services – Fourth and Final Reading of Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 4858, 2018, Housing Agreement Bylaw No. 4940, 2018, and Authorization of Development Permit No. 17 159829 DP at 503 and 511 Cottonwood Avenue, and 504 Clarke Road – Townline (PROJ 17-024)

Discussion ensued relative to the clarification regarding the re-configuration of the development to entirely rental units and the potential future process should the building owner eventually seek to stratify the building.

In response to a question from Council, the Director Development Services provided an overview of the difference of parking requirements between rental and strata buildings.

Discussion continued relative to the following:

- Clarification regarding the storm water management system being installed as part of the development
- Concern regarding the perceived inconsistencies in the detailed design drawings

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR MARSDEN
AND SECONDED

497 That Council:

1. Give fourth and final reading to *City of Coquitlam Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 4858, 2018*;
2. Give fourth and final reading to *City of Coquitlam Housing Agreement Bylaw No. 4940, 2018*; and
3. Approve the signing and sealing of Development Permit No. 17 159829 DP and that the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute this Permit on behalf of the City of Coquitlam.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

PARKS, RECREATION, CULTURE AND FACILITIES

8. Report of the General Manager Parks, Recreation, Culture and Facilities – Cottonwood Park Phase 1B Detailed Design

The General Manager Parks, Recreation, Culture and Facilities provided introductory comments relative to the proposed detailed design of this phase of the Cottonwood Park redevelopment project.

Discussion ensued relative to the following:

- The pros and cons of some of the elements of the detailed design and the selection of amenities proposed for Cottonwood Park

- The potential inclusion of Pickleball as an additional amenity
- The desire for additional seating around the sport field

In response to a question from Council, the Manager Parks Planning and Forestry provided clarification relative to specific features shown in the detailed design.

Councillor Zarrillo left the meeting at 9:11 p.m. and returned at this time (9:14 p.m.).

Discussion continued relative to the appreciation for the timeline of the redevelopment of Cottonwood Park prior to the larger redevelopment of the surrounding neighbourhood.

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR HODGE
AND SECONDED

498 That Council:

1. Approve the detailed design for Cottonwood Park Phase 1B improvements; and
2. Authorize staff to proceed with procurement and construction of this next phase of improvements to Cottonwood Park based on the approved capital project budget.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9. Report of the General Manager Parks, Recreation, Culture and Facilities – Robinson Memorial Park Cemetery Expansion Phase 1B Detailed Design

The General Manager Parks, Recreation, Culture and Facilities provided introductory comments relative to the Robinson Memorial Park Cemetery Expansion project.

Discussion ensued relative to the appreciation for the work that staff undertake to provide the cemetery service for residents.

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR HODGE
AND SECONDED

499 That Council:

1. Approve the detailed design for the Robinson Memorial Park Cemetery Phase 1B Expansion; and
2. Authorize staff to proceed with procurement and construction of Phase 1B Expansion based on the approved project budget.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

OTHER BUSINESS

NEXT MEETING DATE – December 14, 2020

ADJOURNMENT

The Mayor, on behalf of Council, recognized the anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbour during World War Two.

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR TOWNER
AND SECONDED

500 That the Regular Council Meeting adjourn – 9:23 p.m.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MINUTES CERTIFIED CORRECT

CHAIR

I hereby certify that I have recorded the Minutes of the
Regular Council Meeting held Monday, December 7, 2020
as instructed, subject to amendment and adoption.



Rachel Cormack
Legislative Services Clerk