

**Region of Queens Municipality Regular Council  
Tuesday, March 22, 2022, 6:00 p.m.**

**Minutes**

Present: Mayor Darlene Norman, Chair  
Deputy Mayor Kevin Muise  
Councillor David Brown  
Councillor Maddie Charlton  
Councillor Ralph Gidney  
Councillor Jack Fancy  
Councillor Carl Hawkes  
Chris McNeill, CAO  
Christine Watson, Admin. Assistant – Planning & Development

Regrets: Councillor Vicki Amirault

**1.0 Call to Order**

Mayor Norman called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**2.0 Changes / Approval of Agenda**

**It was moved by Councillor Brown and seconded by Councillor Hawkes that the Agenda be approved as circulated.**

**MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

**3.0 2022/2023 Budget**

**3.1 Budget Review**

Joanne Veinotte, Director of Corporate Services, stated significant changes to the proposed budget are an expenditure for upgrading of audio in Council Chambers, additional funding for the low income tax property rebate, policing cost increase, tax rate reduction of 3 cents per \$100 of assessment, appeals allowance reduced to .5% of assessment roll from 1%, and expenditure for Councillors and Mayor to attend the FCM conference in Regina was removed.

The proposed budget has a small surplus of \$310.

Mayor Norman stated that Council is pleased to present its 2022-2023 Operating, Capital, Water Utility, and Hillsview Acres budgets totaling in excess of \$34 million dollars.

The operating budget includes a 3-cent reduction in all tax rates across Queens County, with the exception of those assessed as seasonal commercial where the reduction is pro-rated to 2-cents.

2021 has seen significant increases in property sales and purchase prices, but those assessment increases will not be reflected in our assessment rolls until 2023. Despite that, the average assessment has still increased by 4.29% this past year and therefore our hope is that this tax rate reduction will help reduce the financial costs to our residents.

Like the rest of Nova Scotia, we are seeing increased costs to provide municipal services as well. Our policing costs are increasing \$245,000, our fire department funding is increasing \$48,000, and our fuel costs are increasing \$85,000. Provincial mandatory costs like education, housing, corrections and j-class roads have all increased.

To help our most vulnerable residents, Council is increasing the low income tax exemption amount from \$250 to \$300. If our senior residents also qualify for the provincial property tax rebate of up to \$800, they will see a significant reduction in the amount they pay for property tax. As well, we are increasing the maximum income level from \$24,645 to \$30,000. This will allow many more low income residents to access this \$300 reduction in their property taxes.

Finally, Council is pleased tonight to announce that the capital budget includes \$3,000,000 for the development and construction of a new Thomas H. Raddall Library without the need to borrow any money for the project, as well as \$250,000 for upgrades to Beach Meadows Beach which will greatly improve the user experience at this municipally owned facility.

3.2 2022/2023 Budget

- 3.2.1 It was moved by Councillor Charlton and seconded by Councillor Hawkes:

THAT the Council of Region of Queens Municipality authorize the levying of a four point five (4.5) cent area rate in Assessment Districts 5 and 6, to be provided to Brooklyn Recreation Committee.

**MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

- 3.2.2 It was moved by Councillor Charlton and seconded by Councillor Hawkes:

THAT the Council of Region of Queens Municipality authorize the levying of a one point five (1.5) cent area rate in Assessment Districts 5 and 6, to be provided to Brooklyn Cemetery Committee.

**MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

- 3.2.3 It was moved by Councillor Brown and seconded by Deputy Mayor Muise:

THAT the Council of Region of Queens Municipality authorize the levying of area rates for all assessment accounts according to the following rules:

Assessment Districts 1-12, excluding assessment account numbers 10148820, 10462223, and 00132837, a road levy charge of 75% of the provincially mandated road charge, as well as those properties in Assessment Districts 1, 3, 5, and 6 that are connected to, or have the ability to connect to, Liverpool's Water Utility hydrant charges at 100%.

Assessment District 13, as well as assessment account numbers 10148820, 10462223, and 00132837, debt charges for Assessment District 13 at 100%, roads, streets, and sidewalk expenses at 75%, engineering and public

works equipment expenses at 75%, Liverpool street paving expenses at 100%, and Liverpool Water Utility hydrant charges at 100%.

**MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

3.2.4 It was moved by Deputy Mayor Muise and seconded by Councillor Charlton:

**THAT the Council of Region of Queens Municipality authorize the levying of the following tax rates for Assessment District 13, as well as assessment account numbers 10148820, 10462223, and 00132837, effective April 1, 2022:**

**Residential and Resource base rates of \$1.04 per \$100 of assessment plus an area rate of 89 cents per \$100 of assessment for those properties connected to, or have the ability to connect to Liverpool's Water Utility, or 78 cents per \$100 of assessment for those unable to connect to Liverpool's Water Utility.**

**Commercial base rate of \$2.14 per \$100 of assessment plus an area rate of 89 cents per \$100 of assessment for those properties connected to, or have the ability to connect to Liverpool's Water Utility, or 78 cents per \$100 of assessment for those unable to connect to Liverpool's Water Utility.**

**AND THAT the Council of Region of Queens Municipality authorize the levying of the following tax rates for Assessment Districts 1-12, excluding assessment account numbers 10148820, 10462223, and 00132837, effective April 1, 2022:**

**Residential and Resource base rate of \$1.04 per \$100 of assessment plus an area rate of 3 cents per \$100 of assessment for the provincially mandated road charge, and on all assessment accounts in Assessment Districts 1, 3, 5, and 6, for those properties connected to, or have the ability to connect to Liverpool's Water Utility, 11 cents per \$100 of assessment.**

**Commercial base rate of \$2.14 per \$100 of assessment plus an area rate of 3 cents per \$100 of assessment for the provincially mandated road charge, and on all assessment accounts in Assessment Districts 1, 3, 5, and 6, for those properties connected to, or have the ability to connect to Liverpool's Water Utility, 11 cents per \$100 of assessment.**

**Commercial Seasonal base rate of \$1.61 per \$100 of assessment plus an area rate of 2 cents per \$100 of assessment for the provincially mandated road charge.**

**MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

#### 2022-2023 Water Utility Budget

**It was moved by Councillor Hawkes and seconded by Councillor Gidney:**

**THAT the Council of Region of Queens Municipality approve the proposed 2022-2023 Liverpool Water Utility Operating budget reflecting a deficit of \$14,964;**

**AND THAT Council also adopt the proposed three-year operating budgets for the years 2022-2023, 2023-2024, and 2024-2025, for submission to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board.**

**MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

#### 2022-2023 Capital Budget

**It was moved by Councillor Brown and seconded by Councillor Hawkes:**

**THAT the Council of Region of Queens Municipality approve the proposed 2022-2023 Capital Budget reflecting expenditures of \$8,701,527.**

**MOTION CARRIED with 6 in favour and 1 against.**

Due Date on Taxes

**It was moved by Councillor Charlton and seconded by Deputy Mayor Muise:**

**THAT the Council of Region of Queens Municipality establish June 1, 2022, as the due date for all property taxes, with no interest being charged for any taxes being paid on or before June 30, 2022.**

**MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

## **4.0 Presentations**

### **4.1 Queens Community Aquatic Society**

Mayor Norman welcomed Celeste Johnston, President, and Deborah Spartinelli, Vice President, Queens Community Aquatic Society to Council.

Some highlights included:

- A Long Time Coming – Funds were set aside from Bowater. A needs assessment was completed in 1996 and a pool was deemed a high priority. Again in 2007 another needs assessment was completed with 91% of respondents wanting a pool. In 2014, QCAS was formed.
- Nova Scotia Health Authority – They created “Engage4Health” which is an online space for public dialogue. Queens has a high rate of diabetes and osteoarthritis. Only half of the population engage in physical activity.
- Benefit of Aquatic Exercise including Swimming (From Cochrane Reviews) – Overall improved development in toddlers, mobility in seniors, increased lung capacity in persons with asthma, COPD, increased activity in persons with CFS, and calming for various mental health conditions.
- Demand – In 2021, 114 people took swimming lesson. In 2018, 48 swim team kids participated and now many are certified lifeguards / swimming instructors. In 2021, 16 participated on the swim team.

- Donor – A donor has come forward and indicated they will donate \$3 Million for a pool. They have requested naming rights but do not care to be involved in the details. We can only move on this if there is a commitment of Council to proceed in a timely manner.
- Cost for Outdoor Pool – Deborah Spartinelli investigated costs for an outdoor pool with things such as solar panels. The overall cost is \$3,366,222 over and above lands donated by RQM as well as excavation and infrastructure.
- Obstacles – In the past 8 years the Society has been working towards a pool. Construction cost is not an obstacle. RQM had set aside \$2.5 Million. There is a possibility for a tax rebate for NPO or municipalities. The cost to maintain the Milton Pool is approximately \$32,000.
  - Operating costs are variable as the solar panels, construction materials, liquid blankets, staffing and fees fluctuate.
  - Staffing should be less of a problem during summer months; currently have a list of 8 lifeguards. Investigate offering lifeguard certification to post-secondary groups who live in the area. When school is in session, the hours of operation will be reduced.
  - North Queens Aquatic Centre has a small pool and lifeguards travel from South Queens.
- People want an indoor year-round pool. The outdoor pool needs to be built in such a way that it can be covered in the future.
- Where? – The location of the pool is up to RQM to decide, but there are benefits having it close to QPEC.
- The Ask – This project proceeds soon. One member of the QCAS Board to be involved with the planning.
  - QCAS plans on fundraising which can be invested to generate income to help with operating costs.

Councillor Charlton enquired if a committee could be created to plan for a pool as for the library.

Mayor Norman stated Council will need to have discussions on this. RQM has several commitments for the upcoming year. Once discussions are held, the Society will be contacted.

## **5.0 Tabling of Petitions**

There were no petitions to come before this meeting.

## **6.0 Public Question / Comment Session**

There were no public questions or comments at this meeting.

## **7.0 Approval of Minutes**

7.1 Regular Council – March 8, 2022

**It was moved by Councillor Gidney and seconded by Councillor Charlton:**

**THAT the minutes of the Regular Council meeting held March 8, 2022 be approved as circulated.**

**MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

## **8.0 Recommendations**

8.1 Administrative Policy 9 – Tax Exemptions

**It was moved by Councillor Gidney and seconded by Councillor Charlton:**

**THAT Council of Region of Queens Municipality approve Administrative Policy 9 respecting Tax Exemptions.**

Mallory Plummer, Manager of Finance, stated during budget deliberations, the income threshold per household income is being recommended to \$30,000 with an exemption amount increase to \$300 per eligible resident.

**MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**



8.2 Landfill Community Monitoring Committee – Membership Reappointments

**It was moved by Councillor Hawkes and seconded by Councillor Brown:**

**THAT Council of Region of Queens Municipality approve the reappointments of Charlie Greer of Greenfield, Ken Minard of Milton, and Norman Wentzell of Mill Village to the Landfill Community Monitoring Committee. This is effective immediately with a term ending April 1, 2024.**

**MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

8.3 Asset Retirement Obligation RFP

**It was moved by Councillor Brown and seconded by Councillor Hawkes:**

**THAT Council of Region of Queens Municipality approve the appointment of AECOM Canada to complete a Future Remediation Cost Liability report in compliance with PSAS 3280 Asset Retirement Obligations, with the cost having been included in the Fiscal 22/23 Operating Budget.**

Ms. Veinotte stated as part of the Public Sector Accounting Standards, an evaluation of all assets of the Municipality is a requirement. This would include all Municipal property such as Hank Snow, the two former incinerators, etc.

A Request for Proposal was issued and closed on February 23, 2022. One submission was received from AECOM Canada. The cost of this report is \$235,326 plus HST and is budgeted.

**MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

8.4 Policy 93 – Vaccine Mandates - Repeal

**It was moved by Councillor Hawkes and seconded by Councillor Brown:**

**THAT Council of Region of Queens Municipality repeal Policy 93 respecting Vaccine Mandates.**

Adam Grant, Director of Engineering and Public Works, Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee Co-Chair, stated the response to the COVID-19 pandemic has changed and the vaccine mandates are no longer required.

**MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

8.5 Tax Exemption Bylaw, second reading

**It was moved by Councillor Brown and seconded by Councillor Charlton:**

**THAT Council of Region of Queens Municipality gives second reading to Bylaw 14 respecting Tax Exemptions.**

**MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

## **9.0 Discussions**

9.1 Steering Committee Terms of Reference – Thomas H. Raddall Library

Mayor Norman stated the Steering Committee will examine the requirements to build a new library. The Committee will consist of two members from the Library Board, 2 members from the Library Staff and 2 members of the public who frequent the library often and represent different interest groups. Thomas Raddall II will sit on the Board as an honorary member.

**It was moved by Councillor Charlton and seconded by Councillor Brown:**

**THAT this issue be referred to the next Council meeting for a recommendation.**

**MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

## 9.2 Queens County Historical Society

Mayor Norman stated a letter was received from the Queens County Historical Society expressing concerns for the deterioration and fading of the heritage murals on the building on Main Street.

Councillor Gidney stated in conversations with the Chamber of Commerce, he understood that in 2017, they raised \$56,000 to use for this and would like to investigate this further.

Councillor Charlton enquired if the business owners of the building contributed to the murals. Chris McNeill, CAO, stated this would have been done through the former Town of Liverpool and was most likely through BID taxes with provincial and federal funding as well.

Councillor Brown stated he felt the murals beautified the town and would be worth investigating.

Councillor Charlton enquired if the business owners were contacted about their future plans. Mayor Norman stated she would reach out to them.

**It was moved by Councillor Charlton and seconded by Councillor Brown:**

**THAT this issue be deferred to the next Council meeting for further discussion.**

**MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

## 10.0 In-Camera Items

**It was moved by Councillor Charlton and seconded by Councillor Brown that the proceedings go In-Camera at 7:23 p.m. to discuss the following:**

- 10.1 Personnel
- 10.2 Personnel
- 10.3 Sale of Municipal Property

**MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

**Mayor Norman announced a 10 minute break at 7:23 p.m.**

**It was moved by Councillor Charlton and seconded by Councillor Gidney that the proceedings exit In-Camera at 9:30 p.m.**

**MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

## **11.0 Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

  
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Mayor Darlene Norman, Chair

  
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Chris McNeill, CAO

  
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Christine Watson, Administrative Assistant – Planning & Development

Date Approved:   
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