

TOWN OF AJAX REPORT OF THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE 2016 OPERATING BUDGET

For consideration by the Council of the Town of Ajax on February 16, 2016

The General Government Committee met at 7:00 p.m. on February 1, 2016

Present: Councillor M. Crawford, Chair
Regional Councillor C. Jordan
Councillor R. Ashby
Councillor J. Dies
Councillor P. Brown
Mayor Parish

Regrets Regional Councillor S. Collier

1. Call to Order (7:00 p.m.)

Chair Crawford called the meeting to order.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

3. Opening Comments

Chair Crawford advised that the Town's 2016 Capital Budget had been approved in December 2015 and that this meeting would address the 2016 Operating Budget. The proposed total operating budget of \$51.4 million would result in a Town residential tax rate increase of 2.52%. Chair Crawford noted that Council wishes to reduce annual tax rate increases over the present term of office.

Ms. S. Strain, Director of Finance/Treasurer, delivered a presentation that explained key features and impacts of the 2016 Operating Budget, such as the distribution of taxes between the Town, Region and School Boards, property assessment growth, general budget items and the breakdown of a typical tax bill. Ms. Strain thanked Finance Department staff and all Town departments for their effort and contributions in developing the budget.

Chair Crawford also thanked staff for preparing and recommending a comprehensive and responsible budget plan.

4. Opening Public Comments/Questions

Members of the public were invited to provide questions or comments for the Committee to consider during their review of the budget.

Rob Tyler Moran, Keeble Crescent, advised that he respected the Town's cautious approach due to the uncertain future of the Slots Revenues; however, if this revenue source is secured over the long term, he encouraged Council to utilize at least a portion of these revenues to directly reduce tax rates. Ms. Strain advised that the practice of dedicating Slots Revenues primarily to reserves, which are then used to finance capital budget projects, has significantly reduced the amount of taxation and debt required to fund these projects; which supports lower tax rate increases.

5. Review of Budget

The Committee then reviewed the entire budget document, section by section. Members posed numerous questions on departmental matters such as the Town's strengthening relationship with Chinese investors, the memorial wall concept for the Fire and Emergency Services Headquarters, improvements to the entrance road to the Greenwood Park and pavilion, efforts to improve beautification and maintenance of spaces such as parks, boulevards and roundabouts, use of the waterfront lands and parking and other issues related thereto, and efforts to maintain the Riverbreeze community programming.

The Committee also directed questions on the proposed New/Expanded Programs & Initiatives and additional staffing.

6. Closing Public Comments/Questions

No comments were made.

7. Budget Recommendation

Chair Crawford and all members of the Committee remarked that the annual budget process is continually improving and again commended staff for their efforts.

Moved by: S. Parish

That the following 2016 Budgets be approved:

Budget Item	Amount
Town of Ajax	
Net Operating Budget	\$51,116,300
New/Expanded Programs & Initiatives	51,000
Full and Part Time Staff Requests	268,400
Total Town	51,435,700
Ajax Public Library	
Operating Grant	4,253,900
New/Expanded Programs & Initiatives	60,000
Part Time Staff Requests	34,800
Total Library	\$4,348,700
Overall Total	\$55,784,400

CARRIED

8. Adjournment (7:50 p.m.)

Moved by: C. Jordan

That the February 1, 2016 meeting of the General Government Committee be adjourned.

CARRIED

M. Crawford, Chair