



**CORPORATION OF THE
CITY OF CLARENCE-ROCKLAND
BUDGET MEETING MINUTES**

November 18 and 19, 2024
Council Chambers
415 rue Lemay Street, Clarence Creek, Ont.

PRESENT: Mario Zanth, Mayor
Kyle Cyr, Councillor Ward 1
Stephane Fournier, Councillor Ward 2
Carl Grimard, Councillor Ward 3
Samuel Cardarelli, Councillor Ward 4
André J. Lalonde, Councillor Ward 5
Simon-Olivier Péladeau-Houle, Councillor Ward 6
Trevor Stewart, Councillor Ward 7
Diane Choinière, Councillor Ward 8

Staff Present Pierre Voisine, Chief Administrative Officer
Monique Ouellet, Clerk
Karine McCulloch, Deputy Clerk

1. Opening of the meeting

Mayor Mario Zanth calls the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. on November 18th, 2024.

2. Adoption of the agenda

Moved by Samuel Cardarelli

Seconded by Carl Grimard

THAT the agenda be adopted as presented.

CARRIED

3. Disclosure of pecuniary interests

None

4. Public Comments

All comments that have been sent by emails on or before November 18th, 2024 at 3:15 p.m. have been received and are on the agenda.

5. Delegations / Presentations

None

6. Presentation of the 2025 Draft Budget

The mayor speaks up to greet the residents.

Frederic Desnoyers, Treasurer, introduces the preliminary budget.

Frederic Desnoyers presents the major changes to the Council budget.

Pierre Voisine presents the major changes to the Chief Administrative Officer budget.

In response to questions, Pierre Voisine confirms that the City is applying for federal grants for summer students, but at this time it is not possible to confirm the amount the City might receive.

Michel Cousineau presents the major changes to the Corporate Services budget.

In response to questions, Pierre Voisine confirms the positive impact that park cameras have had in the past.

Martin Saumure presents the major changes to the Protection and Building Services budget.

In response to questions, Pierre Voisine explains the exchange of services with The Nation and Casselman Fire Departments, and how the costs incurred are covered by these municipalities.

In response to questions, Frederic Desnoyers mentions that the amount paid to the OPP is approximately \$4 million per year.

Jean-Luc Jubinville presents the major changes to the operations budget.

In response to questions, Jean-Luc Jubinville mentioned that the lifespan of a new dehumidifier would be 20 to 25 years, hence the surprise of having to replace it after about 10 years.

In response to questions about the ice surface coating system, Jean-Luc Jubinville mentions that the budgeted amount includes storage and transportation.

Council members take a break from 7:35pm to 7:50pm.

In response to questions, Jean-Luc Jubinville mentions that the need for two additional full-time employees for 6 months is due to the increase in the number of roads and sidewalks.

Julian Lenhart presents the major changes to the Community Development budget.

In response to questions, Julian Lenhart mentions that the Clarence-Rockland Festival lasts 3 days, not including Canada Day. The cost of the festival is approximately \$140,000, before sponsors. Julian Lenhart recalls that it was the Council's decision to offer the activities free of charge.

Directive:

The Mayor, supported by Council members, gives a directive.

That the administration returns tomorrow with the total cost of the Clarence-Rockland Festival and the revenues, including the possibility of residents paying to participate in the festival.

Frederic Desnoyers continues his presentation of the preliminary budget.

In response to questions, Frederic Desnoyers clarified that user fees can be used for a reserve, as long as the money is spent on the services for which the fees were collected.

In response to questions, Julian Lenhart explained that the parking reserve is used when a builder doesn't have enough parking on the property, so he contributes to this reserve, with the aim of helping to create and maintain parking spaces on the street.

In response to questions, Frederic Desnoyers explains that the \$1 million surplus from 2023 went into the road reserve and reducing the long-term debt.

In response to questions, Frederic Desnoyers clarifies that if Council decreases the money allocated to a reserve for one year, this is perpetual and means that there is a decrease in funds every year thereafter.

Frederic Desnoyers presents the financing of the capital budget.

Frederic Desnoyers presents the changes for Water, Sewer and Waste.

In response to questions, Jean-Luc Jubinville mentions that the savings made by changing the garbage collection contract have been invested in garden waste collection.

In response to questions, Jean-Luc Jubinville explains that the \$35,000 is to explore the feasibility of a tree-planting project to extend the life of the landfill

site. If the project goes ahead, it will cost \$300,000 for tree planting, which will be less expensive than land purchase and contaminant management. The City is also in contact with South Nation Conservation, to see if there are any subsidies for tree planting.

In response to questions, Frederic Desnoyers clarifies that there is no surplus in the current year's budget. The money left over is to pay for projects already underway and for which invoices have not yet been received. What's more, any anticipated surplus for capital projects has already been taken into account in the budget presented for 2025.

In response to questions, Pierre Voisine mentions that he plans to have speed cameras in action and employees for the processing center by April 1, 2025. The details have recently been worked out with the UCPR. He adds that their revenues have not been included in the budget, as there will also be expenses related to this project.

In response to questions, Jean-Luc Jubinville mentions that data from the composting machine program will be included in the master waste management plan to be presented to Council early next year.

Frederic Desnoyers presents some information that has changed or been confirmed since the budget was put together on November 1, 2024, and which impacts the 2025 budget.

- Increase in Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund
- Decrease in WSIB rates
- Increased in advertising revenues from sponsors
- Conference and convention expenses reduced by directors
- Training expenses reduced by directors.

The proposed tax rate increase is now 8.05%.

At 9:30 pm, the mayor suggests to adjourn the meeting until tomorrow, November 19, at 6 pm. Council votes in favor.

Mayor Mario Zanth called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. on November 19.

Councillor Diane Choinière is not present.

Recommendation

Proposed by : Simon-Olivier Péladeau-Houle

Seconded by : Stephane Fournier

That the following changes proposed by the Treasurer be approved:

- 1) Increase in Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund - \$47,600
- 2) Decrease in WSIB rates - \$75,000
- 3) Increase in advertising revenues - \$20,000
- 4) Decrease in conferences and conventions - \$25,000
- 5) Decrease in training - \$20,000

CARRIED

Frederic Desnoyers mentions that work-in-progress documents have been revised.

Councillor Diane Choinière joins the meeting at 6:03 p.m.

Julian Lenhart presents his report on the Clarence-Rockland Festival.

In response to questions, Julian Lenhart explains that it is not possible to know how much revenue has been generated by the contract with KB Media, which is in charge of finding sponsors.

Council debates the possibility of charging residents to participate in the Clarence-Rockland Festival. Most councillors are against the idea of charging residents, as it would affect participation.

Recommendation

Proposed by : Samuel Cardarelli

Seconded by : Carl Grimard

That the amount of \$37,100 added to the Clarence-Rockland Festival budget be removed from the 2025 budget.

CARRIED

Recommendation

Proposed by: Trevor Stewart Trevor Stewart

Seconded by : Simon-Olivier Peladeau-Houle

That the part-time student positions requested in the budget be eliminated:

- Part-time student in the clerk's office at \$20,000.
- Part-time student in protective services at \$12,000
- Part-time student engineer for community development at \$14,000.

DENIED

The Council debates the number of students to be maintained in the budget. Councillors all agree that students are good for the city.

In response to questions, Frederic Desnoyers describes how vacancies are managed and the savings obligations that departments must meet when there are vacancies.

Recommendation

Proposed by : Carl Grimard

Seconded by : André Lalonde

That \$15,000 be left to the discretion of the CAO for part-time students and that the three part-time student positions be withdrawn.

CARRIED

The mayor mentions that the proposed tax increase rate is now 7.80%.

Councillors briefly discussed the \$11,842 requested by the Economic Development Department and the \$11,842 for Expo Clarence-Rockland.

Councillor Kyle Cyr proposes an investment of \$10,000. The Truth and Reconciliation Committee would like to create a mural at the YMCA to immortalize the image of the community that came together after the discovery of unmarked graves.

In response to questions, Michel Cousineau mentions that there may be federal or provincial subsidies for this, but that the search for grants has not yet begun.

In response to questions, Jean-Luc Jubinville mentions that the town has only provided lights for the mural in St-Pascal.

Councillors present other options for paying for the mural. Reserves, grants, sponsorship. Councillors would also like to see the project refined further, before considering a budget.

Pierre Voisine proposes that the entire committee come and present their action plan to Council. He also suggests that the money be taken from a reserve, as a budget is not necessary every year.

The mayor closes the subject to return to the Expo. He mentions that the Expo is now asking the city for a \$5,000 sponsor for the event, plus free use of the arena for 4 days.

In response to questions, Jean-Luc Jubinville mentions that in 2023, the Expo's bill was 4800\$. If we add the value of in-kind funding for tables and chairs, we're looking at around \$6,000, without taking into account the possible loss of income from ice rental.

Councillors debated the request from the Clarence-Rockland Expo, given that they are not a non-profit organization, have not presented a financial statement in the past and make a profit from the event.

Recommendation

Proposed by : Kyle Cyr

Seconded by : Carl Grimard

That status quo be maintained for the \$11,842 for the Clarence-Rockland Expo and that the administration come back with a report on how to proceed in the future.

CARRIED

Council members take a break from 7:43 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Recommendation

Proposed by : André Lalonde

Seconded by : Kyle Cyr

That the \$11,842 requested by Economic Development be taken from the existing reserve.

Following Julian Lenhart's explanation, André Lalonde withdrew his recommendation.

In response to questions, Julian Lenhart explains the economic development work plan for the next two years. He also reminds Council of the projects that have been approved and whose amounts will be taken from the reserve.

Councillors discuss the possibility of cutting one of the two operator positions of 6 months.

Jean-Luc Jubinville talks about the impact that cutting one of the two positions could have on service levels.

Frederic Desnoyers gives an overview of what the proposed 7.80% tax increase represents on an average home.

Councillors discuss the possibility of taking money from the tax stabilization reserve to cover part of the tax rate increase. Councillors expressed concerns.

Frederic Desnoyers explains that the tax stabilization reserve is the municipality's only emergency reserve.

Recommendation

Proposed by : Stephane Fournier

Seconded by : Diane Choinière

That the budget be adopted with a tax increase of 7.80%.

CARRIED

- 7. Budget consideration for the Member's Motion presented by Mayor Zanth and seconded by Councillor Cyr to commit to the allocation of a grant of \$11,842 to the 2025 Clarence-Rockland Expo.**

Deferred from Council Regular Meeting of November 13, 2024.

Discussed during presentation of preliminary budget 2025 (item 6).

- 8. 2025 Preliminary Budget Wrap-Up**

The draft budget was presented at 8.74% and the budget was accepted at 7.80%.

For water and sewer rates, the proposed increase was 4.8% on average and there was no change.

For waste rates, the proposed increase was \$7 and there was no change.

For the capital budget, there was no change, for a total of \$44.8 million.

- 9. Adjournment**

The Mayor adjourns the meeting on November 19th, 2024 at 8:26 p.m.

Mario Zanth, Mayor

Karine McCulloch, Deputy Clerk

