



DISTRICT OF SECHELT

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

January 22, 2025, 10:00 am
Community Meeting Room
1st Floor, 5797 Cowrie St., Sechelt
and Via Zoom Online Meeting Platform

PRESENT: Councillor B. Rowe (Chair for a portion of the Meeting), Mayor J. Henderson (Chair for a portion of the Meeting), Councillor D. Bell, Councillor D. McLauchlan, Councillor A. Shepherd, Councillor A. Toth

ABSENT: Councillor D. Inkster

STAFF: Chief Administrative Officer A. Yeates, Director of Planning and Development A. Allen, Director of Financial Services and Information Technology D. Douglas, Director of Engineering and Operations M. Lee, Director of Corporate and Community Services L. Roberts, Manager of Financial Services B. Smith, Accountant E. Johnson, Administrative Assistant J. Seguin, Corporate Officer K. Poulsen, Administrative Assistant C. Kidd (Recording Secretary)

1. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Chair acknowledged their gratitude for living on the traditional lands of the shíshálh Nation and noted that the Nation had just received funding for a new water reservoir project on the Sunshine Coast.

2. CALL TO ORDER AND DECLARATION OF CONFLICT

The Chair called the Special Committee of the Whole Meeting to order at 10:00 am and asked for declarations of conflict. There were none.

3. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Recommendation No. 1

Moved/ Seconded

That the January 22, 2025 Special Committee of the Whole Meeting Agenda be adopted.

CARRIED

4. BUSINESS ITEMS

4.1 SEWER & SEPTAGE

Staff provided a brief review of the presentation from the Budget meeting on December 18, 2024.

a. Base Budget

Staff confirmed that an increase of 3.95% to the sewer user fees would be sufficient to cover the increased cost of operation, and capital requests for 2025.

Recommendation No. 2

Moved/ Seconded

That a sewer user fee increase of 3.95 % be included into the Five-Year Financial Plan.

CARRIED

b. Additional Operating Requests

In response to questions from Council, it was confirmed that the Wastewater Operations Laboratory Operator position was critical. It would enable mandatory testing and reporting, while allowing the Operators to focus on operating as the Water Resource Centre is already short staffed.

c. Capital

Recommendation No. 3

Moved/ Seconded

That a septage fee increase of 6% be included in the Five-Year Financial Plan.

CARRIED

4.2 GENERAL OPERATING FUND

a. Additional Operating Requests

Council discussed the Connect the Coast project.

Recommendation No. 4

Moved/ Seconded

That the Connect the Coast contribution of \$75,000 be referred to a regional budget discussion for 2026.

CARRIED

In response to questions, staff confirmed that operating funds for the Consultant Technical Support are required for the provision of specialist reports such as geotechnical and environmental assessments, which are often needed when responding to emergency infrastructure damage. Staff noted that approximately \$41,000 out of the total \$100,000 request would be covered by savings in wages due to vacant staff positions.

Recommendation No. 5

Moved/ Seconded

That the \$100,000 Consultant Technical Support budget be approved.

CARRIED

Recommendation No. 6

Moved/ Seconded

That the following operating expenses be approved

- SQL (Structured Query Language) Server Upgrade - \$10,000
- Adobe Upgrade - \$15,000
- GIS Enhancements - \$15,000
- Airport Storage - \$3,500

CARRIED

Staff confirmed that with the approved items so far, the tax rate would be at 8.34%.

A conversation was brought forward by the Chair of the Community Safety Select Committee around community safety measures. Council spoke of continuing security patrols, adding new resources, and converting a Bylaw Officer position to a Community Safety Officer.

Recommendation No. 7

Moved/ Seconded

That \$120,000 for 2025 be budgeted to continue downtown private security patrols in the Five-Year Financial Plan.

CARRIED

OPPOSED Councillor McLauchlan

Mayor Henderson joined the meeting at 11:12 am.

Recommendation No. 8

Moved/ Seconded

That staff prepare a report on the cost and implications of converting an existing Bylaw Officer to a Community Safety Officer position; and

That \$7,000 be added to the 2025 budget as a placeholder of the Community Safety Officer position.

CARRIED

Recommendation No. 9

Moved/ Seconded

That \$5,000 be approved to create and deliver a community safety communications strategy in the 2025 Five-Year Financial Plan.

CARRIED

Recommendation No. 10

Moved/ Seconded

That staff prepare a report on the cost and legal implications of a community safety surveillance camera system as a pilot project.

CARRIED

Meeting was recessed at 11:32 am.

Meeting reconvened at 11:38 am.

Recommendation No. 11

Moved/ Seconded

That a total of \$137,000 for community safety be funded for 2025 in the Five-Year Financial Plan, with \$100,000 from the Community Safety Reserve, and \$37,000 from Taxation for the following uses:

- Downtown private security patrols
- Converting an existing Bylaw Officer to a Community Safety Officer position
- Creating and delivering a community safety communications strategy.

CARRIED

b. Capital

Council discussed Capital Projects, and the potential of specific projects being postponed to mitigate a budget deficit, projects discussed include repairs and redesign to the RCMP parking lot, and replacement of the Airport fuel pump.

Staff clarified that the air curtain burner on the budget would be purchased in partnership with the Community Forest pending them receiving funding, but we would own the asset.

Recommendation No. 12

Moved/ Seconded

That the RCMP parking lot project #7965 be referred to the 2026 budget process for consideration.

CARRIED

Recommendation No. 13

Moved/ Seconded

That the Airport Fuel Pump replacement project #4017 be referred to the 2026 budget process for consideration.

CARRIED

Recommendation No. 14

Moved/ Seconded

That the 2025 Capital Plan as presented on pages 112-113 of the December 18, 2024, Special Committee of the Whole Agenda be approved with the funding sources identified on page 155 of the December 18, 2025, Special Committee of the Whole Agenda, with the exception of:

- The Connect the Coast project
- RCMP parking lot project #7965
- Airport Fuel Pump replacement project #4017

CARRIED

OPPOSED Mayor Henderson.

Meeting was recessed at 12:31 pm.

Meeting reconvened at 1:00 pm.

Councillor Rowe left the meeting, and Mayor Henderson assumed Chair.

Recommendation No. 15

Moved/ Seconded

That early approvals for capital projects approved in Recommendation No. 14 from this meeting be granted.

CARRIED

Council discussed the potential of service reduction scenarios to reduce budget deficit. It was noted that discussion should happen prior to discussions for the 2026 budget process.

Recommendation No. 16

Moved/ Seconded

That staff bring forward options to remove \$2 million from the District of Sechelt's operational spending for 2025 for Council's consideration prior to adoption of the Five-Year Financial Plan.

DEFEATED

OPPOSED Councillors Bell, McLauchlan, Toth, and Shepherd

Councillor Toth left the meeting at 1:37 pm.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Recommendation No. 17

Moved/ Seconded

That the January 22, 2025 Special Committee of the Whole Meeting be adjourned at 1:44 pm.

CARRIED

Certified correct by:

John Henderson, Chair

Certified correct by:

Kerianne Poulsen, Corporate Officer