

**MINUTES OF THE  
FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE STANDING COMMITTEE  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
SAANICH MUNICIPAL HALL, 770 VERNON AVENUE  
MONDAY, APRIL 19, 2021 AT 10:00 AM**

Present: Chair: Councillor Susan Brice  
Members: Mayor Haynes, Councillors Harper and Mersereau  
Staff Members: Paul Thorkelsson, Chief Administrative Officer; Valla Tinney, Director of Finance; Angila Bains, Manager of Legislative Services; Paul Arslan, Senior Manager; Karen Coates, Manager of Accounting Services; Jennifer Downie, Administrative Assistant.

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**MEETING BY ELECTRONIC PARTICIPATION**

Due to COVID-19 measures, the Saanich Municipal Hall is closed to the public. As per the Order of the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Emergency Program Act, Ministerial Order M192, public attendance at the meeting is not required if it cannot be accommodated in accordance with the applicable requirements or recommendations under the Public Health Act.

Members of the public were provided with information on how to access and listen to the proceedings.

**MINUTES FOR ADOPTION**

**MOVED by Councillor Harper and seconded by Mayor Haynes: "That the minutes of the Finance and Governance Standing Committee meeting of March 15, 2021 be adopted as circulated."**

**CARRIED**

**3RD TRIMESTER REPORT – January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020**

The Director of Finance presented the following report: 3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester Results Report, January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020.

The report is prepared on a trimester basis by the District of Saanich as a means of providing the community, Council and the organization with regular information on the strategic and financial performance of the municipality.

Committee members suggested that it would be beneficial to have Directors attend future Finance and Governance meetings to provide updates and report out on Capital Program Results.

In response to the Councillor Harper, the Chief Administrative Officer noted that the most accurate Building Permit Statistics are provided to Council during the quarterly CAO/Council check-in. The next report will be provided in May.

**MOVED by Mayor Haynes and seconded by Councillor Mersereau: "That the Finance and Governance Standing Committee receive the Trimester Report - January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020 for information."**

**CARRIED**

### **COUNCIL STRATEGIC INITIATIVES CONTINGENCY POLICY**

The Director of Finance presented the Council Strategic Initiatives Contingency Policy dated March 15, 2021.

At the January 18, 2021 meeting of the Committee the following motion was passed:

**“That the Finance and Governance Standing Committee direct staff to bring back to a future meeting a policy framework with some guiding principles for the fund. The Committee will review and evaluate the framework and options at the future meeting.”**

In response to Mayor Haynes, the Chief Administrative Officer noted that a summary of expenditures from the Council’s Strategic Initiatives Contingency will be provided at the next Financial Plan Meeting to be held on Tuesday, April 20, 2021.

Councillor Mersereau requested information on circumstances under which staff might propose to use of the Strategic Initiatives fund in contrast to putting something into the budget, ie. the Community Amenity Contribution and Inclusionary Housing Program that is coming forward to Council, April 19, 2021. Councillor Mersereau inquired as to why this report was not included in the budget process and noted that the Committee may want to consider having additional clarity in the policy to address this.

In response, to Councillor Mersereau, the Director of Finance noted that in this case, is was strictly based on timing; the one time resource budget process had been finalized and then this report came through. If this funding request had come forward two months ago, it may have made it into the budget process but in this case there was a very tight timeline. It was noted that requests with a specific dollar amount being put forward during the budget process can be incorporated into the budget process. Outside of that, the only avenue is for strategically aligned requests to go through the contingency process.

The Director of Finance noted that staff would not bring forward requests asking for ongoing funding from this one time funding source. There may be a need to put some clarity into the policy around this.

Chair Brice suggested that the policy not be advanced to Council at this time; but be returned to staff for further work. Chair Brice will work with staff around language and incorporate the essence of the Committee discussion into the policy.

**MOVED by Councillor Mersereau and seconded by Councillor Harper: “That the Finance and Governance Standing Committee return the policy to staff for further work.”**

**CARRIED**

### **PERMISSIVE TAX EXEMPTION POLICY – AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

The Director of Finance presented the Permissive Tax Exemption Policy – Affordable Housing report dated April 7, 2021.

The Director of Finance noted that this is an update for the Committee’s information. There is a recommendation coming from another process.

The Director of Finance noted that work had started on the policy for Affordable Housing at the same time the Housing Task Force work was coming forward. In reviewing the document, it was noted that included in the report, the statement that the Task Force was looking at facilitating the development of affordable housing and property tax exemptions. Given that there is public participation and a whole process that is moving forward that incorporates reviewing permissive tax exemptions for affordable housing, it was felt that coming forward with something completely separate from that process to this Committee may not be in the best interest of either bodies of work, Council or the community in general.

The work of this Committee is on hold pending the outcome of the Housing Task Force process.

**MOVED by Councillor Mersereau and seconded by Councillor Harper: “That the Finance and Governance Standing Committee seek endorsement from Council that any recommendations regarding permissive tax exemptions developed through the Housing Strategy process be referred to the Finance and Governance Committee for consideration and comment prior to presentation to Council.”**

**CARRIED**

#### **PERMISSIVE TAX EXEMPTIONS – AFFORDABLE HOUSING – SUPPLEMENTAL**

The Director of Finance presented the Permissive Tax Exemptions – Affordable Housing – Supplemental Report dated March 8, 2021.

The Director of Finance advised that this report is to provide updated information subsequent to the report brought to the Committee on Permissive Tax Exemption Policy – for Affordable Housing and on the topic of the properties that are owned by the CRHC but were taxable at the time.

A recent decision by the Property Assessment Appeal Board has resulted in properties owned by the Capital Regional District becoming exempt from taxation.

The result of the CRHD properties in Saanich converting from taxable to statutorily exempt in 2021 is a loss of taxable assessments which provided relief of approximately \$140,000 to the CRHD service and shifts approximately \$87,000 in Saanich property taxation over to other taxable properties.

**MOVED by Councillor Mersereau and seconded by Councillor Harper: “That the Finance and Governance Standing Committee receive the Permissive Tax Exemptions – Affordable Housing – Supplemental Report dated March 8, 2021 for information.”**

**CARRIED**

#### **PROCUREMENT OVERHAUL PROJECT UPDATE**

The Director of Finance presented the Procurement Overhaul Project Update report dated April 8, 2021.

The Director of Finance advised that this report is coming to the Committee flowing out of the original Council motion regarding signing authority limits of council. At the time this Committee

recommended and Council has approved an adjustment to the Council limit to \$500,000. The Committee was also advised that additional work was being undertaken corporately in relation to procurement. This report is provided to give the Committee a general overview on work that is happening on that project. In particular with respect to one of the recommendations that came out of the findings from the Procurement Law Office (PLO) with respect to Council's approval levels. It was noted that in the Procurement Law Office's opinion they are strongly recommending a real separation of Council's role from the procurement process for a variety of reasons.

This is a large corporate project that will see significant benefits to the organization in terms of efficiency and flow through and the District's ability to conduct fair and transparent procurement and also streamline operational ability to procure and get projects done in the future.

In response to Councillor Mersereau, the Director of Finance noted that the Finance Department would participate in the Coastal Communities Social Procurement Initiative upon receiving Council direction as this is not something that the Finance department would participate in on its own. The Director of Finance expressed concern about staff being able to make the time commitment as this is an additional body of work. Finance Department staff are currently working through the overhaul project and the CCSP could be a future consideration.

The Director of Finance will reach out to the CRD, Chief Financial Officer, to discuss the potential benefits of participating in the CCSP Initiative.

**MOVED by Councillor Mersereau and seconded by Councillor Harper: "That the Finance and Governance Standing Committee receive the Procurement Overhaul Project Update report dated April 8, 2021 for information."**

**CARRIED**

**MOVED by Councillor Mersereau and seconded by Councillor Harper: "That the Finance and Governance Standing Committee request staff bring back information on the Coastal Communities Social Procurement Initiative to a future meeting."**

**CARRIED**

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The Director of Finance left the meeting at 11:01 am  
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**RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE POLICY**

Chair Brice noted that this item was sent to the Committee by Council. At the Council level, a respectful workplace policy (Code of Conduct policy) has been in place for a number of years. The Committee was to discuss whether a similar relationship documentation policy should be in place for Advisory Committees.

The Director of Corporate Services advised that further to the memo dated March 19, 2021, Respectful Workplace Policy, the District has a Respectful Workplace policy in place for staff dating back to June 2014 and Council has their own Code of Conduct policy which was adopted in November 2016. In discussions with the Manager of Legislative Services, it was determined that Legislative Services provides an orientation program for the committee members; however,

there is nothing that is signed by members acknowledging their roles, responsibilities, Terms of Reference for the Committee, expectations, respectful workplace, or FIPPA sections. Committee members receive the training and gain exposure, but are not required to sign any documentation. The Director of Corporate Services advised that the District needs to be thoughtful and sensitive in its approach and not inadvertently put a process in place which would cause people to not want to volunteer on our Committees or Commissions.

In response to Chair Brice, the Manager of Legislative Services noted that in-depth Advisory Committee Member information packages are provided to all the committees noting the Respectful Workplace policy, Code of Conduct, and access and privacy as it is managed in the District as well as legislatively throughout the province. All this orientation information is provided to committee members as well as a two to three hour training session with a consultant. Although members are not required to sign a declaration; an attendance record is on file and all members are encouraged to attend.

The Manager of Legislative Services advised that throughout the region Advisory Committee members are not required to sign Code of Conduct or Code of Ethics agreements. The CRD, does however, require Commission members to sign a Code of Conduct agreement. It is believed that in other Municipalities, Advisory Committee members are advised of their roles and responsibilities, and legislative requirements of the municipality and how they play a role; but members are not required to sign any documentation.

In response to Chair Brice, the Manager of Legislative Services noted that once a Committee is appointed, each Committee chair and members for each Advisory Committee receive the Council Policy on Council Advisory Committees, Terms of Reference for the Committee, Council Procedure Bylaw – this is to regulate the proceedings of Council and Council Committees, the administrative policy on Respectful Workplace, as well as the Access and Privacy guide for members of Advisory Committees. This is all the documentation that is received at the front end of a Committee being established. Once the Committee is established, (based on a motion that Council endorsed a few years back asking for more work to be done on Advisory Committees) members receive annual training when Committees are topped up with new and reappointed members. This training is facilitated by a consultant who provides all members with all the documentation again. District staff are constantly working with Committee chairs and individual members of Committees that have raised concerns

The Director of Corporate services provided the Committee with information and scope of each policy; noting that the Code of Conduct is a policy for members of Council and the Respectful Workplace policy is defined by WorkSafe and written for Saanich staff.

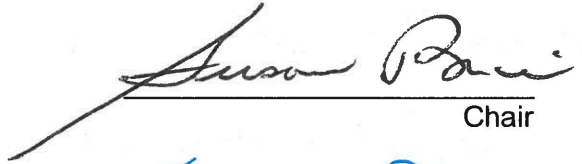
Chair Brice noted that it would be beneficial for the orientation packages be recirculated to members of Council.

**MOVED by Mayor Haynes and seconded by Councillor Mersereau: “That the Finance and Governance Standing Committee receive the Respectful Workplace Policy memo dated March 19, 2021 and that all members of Council receive the Advisory Committee Member information package for information for future reference.”**

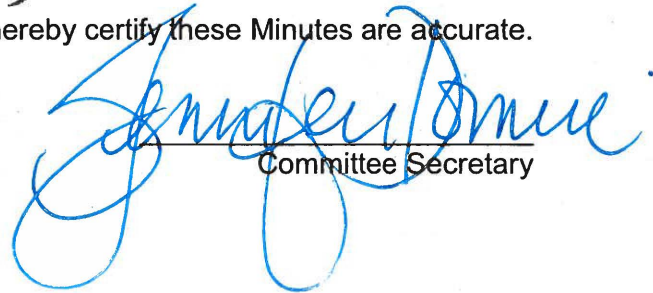
**CARRIED**

**ADJOURNMENT**

On the motion from Councillor Brice the meeting adjourned at 11:31am.

  
Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

  
Committee Secretary