

## Committee of the Whole – Strategic Planning

### October 15, 2020

Grey County Council met on the above date at 9:30 AM through electronic means. Warden Paul McQueen assumed the Chair and called the meeting to order.

The Roll was called by the Clerk with all members present except Councillor Gamble.

Kim Wingrove, Chief Administrative Officer; Heather Morrison, Clerk; and Tara Warder, Deputy Clerk/Legislative Coordinator were also participating.

The following staff members were participating:

Kevin Wepler, Director of Corporate Services; Anne Marie Shaw, Director of Housing; Barbara Fedy, Director of Social Services; Pat Hoy, Director of Transportation Services; Randy Scherzer, Director of Planning and Development; Kevin McNab, Director of Paramedic Services; Michael Letourneau, Director of Legal Services-County Solicitor; Jennifer Cornell, Director of Long-Term Care; Savanna Myers, Director of Economic Development, Tourism and Culture and Jody MacEachern, Senior Manager of Information Technology.

### Declaration of Interest

There were no disclosures of interest.

### Context and Strategic Questions

Kim Wingrove addressed Council, noting that this session is an opportunity to assess the County's priorities.

Ms. Wingrove then introduced Rebecca Sutherns, the facilitator of the session.

Ms. Sutherns introduced three main questions to consider relating to the County's Strategic Plan:

1. What is the capacity of the public to accept further tax increases?
2. What could we do now to make the biggest difference to the health of our businesses?
3. What should we be attending to today to preserve residents' quality of life for the future?

- **Administration Goal**

Council discussed the first question related to capacity of tax increases. Points were raised regarding:

- A lack of understanding on how taxation works at the County level

- Differences between municipalities on the amount of tax revenue that is kept after the school board and County receive their share
- Increases in uncontrollable costs such as insurance and policing and an inability to pay for increases
- Need to prioritize projects and help the most vulnerable, and not invest in frills
- Service provision costs money and if the County can spend money this year to bring more people here next year, that is money well spent.
- There is tolerance for a small to modest increase in taxes.
- 0% increases in the face of increasing costs is irresponsible.

- **Economic Growth Goal**

Council discussed the second question related to how to make the biggest difference to the health of the County's businesses. Points were raised regarding:

- Reducing red tape to ensure a business's own survival and expansion.
- Opportunities to undertake a review of operational processes and policies and improving customer service to businesses and residents.
- Working towards tangibles in broadband
- Continued efforts to support businesses locally and looking at their needs
- Support for restaurants through promotion
- The importance of Shop Local support
- Attracting more workers to the workforce
- Lifestyle flexibility at the beginning of the pandemic is becoming increasingly difficult over the long term. Need employers to be even more understanding
- Attainable housing
- We need to promote local business, including in our operations. We shouldn't be buying outside our local area if local options exist.

- **Healthy and Connected Communities Goal**

Council discussed the third question related to preserving residents' quality of life. Points were raised regarding:

- Long-term care
- Climate Change and Waste Disposal
- Transit
- Opportunities in Planning and Housing

Ms. Sutherns then reviewed the priority projects outlined by staff, including intercommunity transportation, labour force development, updated asset management plan, CityWorks implementation, homelessness support system, IT hardware upgrades, LTC Human Resources Strategy, Rockwood Terrace redevelopment and the Climate Change Action Plan, among others.

Council then reviewed the priority projects to determine if anything should be moved up or down the list and how to align the projects with our current capacity and resources.

Ms. Sutherns then asked what criteria councillors used to make these determinations as they moved through the list of priority projects.

The following were noted:

- Sustainability
- Cost Benefit
- Growth
- Supporting quality of life
- Priority
- The public's input
- Value
- How many sectors of the population are affected

Discussion then occurred on the Transportation Master Plan and the need to look at electric cars and charging stations.

Ms. Wingrove then spoke to emerging projects, such as the Hanover-Owen Sound Task Force, waste management and source separated organics and the Wiarton Keppel International Airport emerging as a regional asset.

She then spoke to staff resources and capacity related to the projects.

Ms. Sutherns asked if there were any gaps that Council has noticed. None were identified.

Ms. Wingrove noted that green spaces and forests are very important and that this was demonstrated during this past summer and the pandemic with residents and visitors looking for ways to enjoy the outdoors. There is a need to look after the shorelines, stormwater and drainage as part of our commitment to the environment.

Ms. Sutherns then outlined next steps. Ms. Wingrove noted that a follow up report on the strategic plan will be brought forward to an upcoming meeting. She thanked Ms. Sutherns for her time today.

## Adjournment

On motion of Councillors Desai and Potter, Committee of the Whole adjourned at 12:31 PM to the call of the Chair.

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Paul McQueen, Warden

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Heather Morrison, Clerk