



MINUTES
SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
Tuesday, October 24, 2023
9:00 a.m.
City Hall Council Chambers

Livestream Recording: <https://kenora.civicweb.net/Portal/>

Present:	Mayor A. Poirier Councillor R. Bernie Councillor G. Chaze Councillor L. Koch (arrived at 10:16 a.m.) Councillor B. Manson
Regrets:	Councillor L. Moncrief Councillor K. Van Belleghem
Staff:	Kyle Attanasio, CAO, Heather Pihulak, Director of Corporate Services/City Clerk, Greg Breen, Director of Engineering & Infrastructure, Ryan Marsh, Director of Finance, David Pratt, Director of Fire & Emergency Services, Roberta Marsh, Director of Human Resources, Risk & Insurance, Janis Pochailo, Director of Planning & Building Services

Call Meeting to Order

Mayor Poirier called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

Land Acknowledgement
Delivered by Councillor Bernie

As we gather, we recognize that we are on Treaty Three Lands which are steeped in rich Indigenous history and home to many First Nations and Metis people today. We continue to be thankful for the partnerships with Indigenous people.

We give thanks for the many blessings we enjoy in the City of Kenora. We seek wisdom in our minds, clearness in our thinking, truth in our speaking and always love in our hearts, so that we may try always to unite the Citizens of Kenora. Let these principles guide us in our decision making.

Public Notices

Take Notice that as required under Notice By-law #160-2022, Council intends to adopt the following items at this Special Meeting of Council:

N/A

Declaration of Pecuniary Interest & General Nature thereof

i) On Today's Agenda

- ii) From a Meeting at which a Member was not in Attendance
There were none declared.

Deputations

None.

1. 2024 Budget Requests

All Nations Health Partners Professional Recruitment Committee – Ray Racette, Chair

This is a very active committee that the City of Kenora is represented on. Its key role is to provide oversight and support for our Professional Recruiter, Jennifer Savage, while ensuring we are making progress in recruiting professional staff for our region.

The Professional Recruiter role is critically important and leads the effort to recruit Professional Staff, such as family physicians, emergency room physicians, specialists, nurse practitioners, and visiting locum physicians to our Region. The Professional Recruiter also engages with medical students and residents, welcoming them, and creating a connection with them which ultimately could result in their interest in returning to work in Kenora and its surrounding communities when they graduate.

As we look at our local health system today, there is no question we have been impacted by the pandemic like every other community and region in the country. We are now facing critical shortages of both physicians and nurse practitioners which directly impacts primary care throughout the region, as well as other services, such as emergency coverage. This places a further burden on our present physicians and nurse practitioners who are stretched to maintain as much service as possible. It is truthful to state that our professional staff workforce has done everything humanly possible to maintain services, and they are exhausted.

There has never been a more important time to support recruitment. The recruitment model has changed. Physician recruitment is an on-going, long-term investment of time, energy, people, and resources – a marathon, not a sprint – and ultimately influenced by establishing a meaningful relationship with potential candidates that are recruitable. This begins by investing in our local medical students so they can see their future in setting roots in Kenora and this region.

To be successful, we must begin by supporting our current professional staff in staying. They have the best knowledge of what it is like to work here, the services we offer, and the practice environments. They can be influential in advocating for the value of practicing in this area.

We have welcomed family physicians, said farewell to retirees, recruited a full team of psychiatrists, a new general surgeon who will start in January, and new visiting specialists in urology, gynecology and ophthalmology. We anticipate a funding announcement shortly on a pediatric team for our region. We have significantly expanded our teaching capacity for NOSM students and residents.

We are fortunate to have a committed physician Local Education Group (LEG) who offer teaching opportunities in a wide variety of disciplines. Hosting medical students and

residents is a really great way of showcasing our community, and this would not be possible without our dedicated group of professional and hospital staff, working in collaboration with our Professional Recruiter. These positive experiences are augmented by local activities, shops, restaurants, and community members.

To be competitive, we must widen our reach with continuous marketing and advertising for the professional staff opportunities that are available in our communities. We must work on maintaining and strengthening these relationships, as well as welcome new locum physicians in various disciplines. We must encourage the physicians who have previously enjoyed positive locum experiences with us to refer their colleagues and friends. Many communities are offering significant recruitment incentives, with return in service agreements, and housing subsidies, to attract new physicians.

The City of Kenora has provided \$25,000 per annum to support the Professional Recruiter position, which the ANHP has greatly appreciated. In January 2023, we requested the City of Kenora to increase their contribution to \$40,000 per annum to support increased advertising and marketing initiatives, increased travel expenses for the Professional Recruiter to attend recruitment fairs, and increased travel expenses to support site visits for potential recruits. I understand this increase has been included for consideration in your draft budget for 2024.

We extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to the City of Kenora for their longstanding support and engagement with our recruitment efforts.

We have tried to reduce barriers with getting physicians from Manitoba. We have been able to negotiate special arrangements for faster licensing in Ontario. It is an important discussion we need to have with Manitoba and health information needs to be expedited.

We have three psychiatrists and could add one more .6 position. We are in a bigger discussion with Sioux Lookout to expand our model as they also have a need there. We are short 10-12 primary care physicians, and in the emergency department we are short about 40%. It is also on the nurse practitioner side which takes pressure off the physicians. We have a funding model that is being negotiated right now and if we do receive that it will solve the salary inequities which creates problems recruiting here.

Triple P.L.A.Y

Barry Reynard, Triple Play Coordinator and Darcia Curtis, Triple Play Board Chair presented Council with their 2024 budget request.

Triple P.L.A.Y. is a local program fund that gives Kenora & area children and youth facing financial barriers the opportunity to participate in recreation, leisure, arts and cultural activities offered in the community. A few of the ways include: financial assistance for registration of activities in our community; a lending program of gently used equipment; hosting with other local organizations to host fun family friendly events.

There are impacts from COVID and time away from participation. Triple P.L.A.Y. and our partners continue to see the impacts of covid pandemic (2020-2022), in all aspects of sports, recreation, arts and cultural programming. Significant barriers to sports and cultural activities with increased pressures financially on parents. Costs of living increases and decisions to register kids for programs or food on the table. 4 in 10 parents continue to report adverse effects in their children from reduced participation in

sports, play, and cultural leisure activities, including signs of being less physically fit, feeling of loss, resentment and anxiety.

There is increased pressure and support from Triple Play with sports, recreation and cultural programs to focus on supporting registration and participation fees. Continued support for equipment locker room, increased support for equipment loans and exchange.

Sponsor and partnerships are key to this program. There have been numerous local events that would not have been possible without community partnerships.

The City budget request for 2024 is \$12,000 with a three year forecasting is \$12,500 in 2025, and \$13,000 in 2026.

It was questioned if there are partnerships with the OPP and any kind of support for the local partnership and support developing that relationship. Triple Play continues to have conversations with the Detachment Commander and the OPP officers regarding partnerships. They are strong supporters of the bike program at BBSS and positive ticketing is a program they would like to get off the ground.

Mayor Poirier thanked Barry and Darcia for the presentation and a copy was left with the Clerk.

Kenora Public Library Board

Marj Poirier, from the Kenora Library Board, Tim Fulmer, Board Member and Crystal Alcock, CEO of Library were present to present the 2024 budget request and highlight what is happening in the library.

The Library is held accountable under the Public Library Act. It establishes free public library services in Ontario for fair and equitable services. It must be managed and controlled by the Public Library Board. The Board is responsible for the oversight for it's library system and hires a CEO who reports to the Board. The CEO is aware of the municipal strategic plan and works to bring the best library service to the community.

The proposed operating budget for 2024 is \$762,396 up from the 2023 contribution of \$690,268. The largest increase is in salaries and benefits. Other increases are audit, contracted services and cleaning.

The library aims to provide a safe and welcoming environment for everyone with cultural expression and pursuit for lifelong learning. Canopy is now available through the library which is video streaming and is free with your library card. The library is now a dementia friendly place so people living with dementia will be better understood and supported.

This summer the library was full of children programming and they continue to have numerous programming opportunities for kids of all ages.

A 2022 year in review was provided to Council and a copy of their presentation was left with the Clerk.

The Muse

Brayden Murray, new Director of the Muse was present to discuss the excitement happening at the Muse.

There were 10 different exhibits in the Art Centre this year which were all very exciting exhibits and all very well attended.

The facilities have seen various events for special events such as birthday parties, receptions, weddings, and other special events. They launched a new fund this summer with the Lake of the Woods Community Foundation as the Lori Nelson community fund which will help support the community. The Art Centre legacy fund total funding envelope is about \$1.3M and is nice to have the partnerships and continue to grow the funds.

From programming at the Art Centre they had 36 school visits, 39 classes which had various craft classes, 20 different adult programming. At the Museum had 36 different programs and class visits. The new Curator is working hard for new and exciting programs. There is 390 memberships for approximately 1,000 people. 13,762 visits in 2023 to date and will easily surpass 15,000 visits for the year.

At the Museum they have March break programming being planned, the food history, the quilt show in early summer and a summer exhibit on camps on Lake of the Woods.

The Muse budget was presented to Council for consideration.

Council took a short recess at 9:55 a.m. and returned to the meeting at 10:09 a.m.

2. 2024-2026 Draft Operating Budget Summary Presentation

Kyle Attanasio, CAO, outlined the process for today's budget presentation.

Ryan Marsh, Director of Finance provided a draft operating budget summary. The operations budget includes the 2022 unaudited actual, along with the 2023 YTD amount and the draft 2024, projected 2025 and 2026.

The cumulative FTE is 182 for the operating budget. The 2024 draft budget is sitting at \$32,256,376 which is a 7.24% increase. We started the budget at \$33,395,311 which would have left us at 11.02% increase. The first item we had was the OCIF of \$1,220,000 which brought us down to 6.97%.

With the GFL contract, the one-time pause on reserve contributions. Succession planning, docks and wharfs, pedestrian sidewalks, parkade, rec equipment, muse & art centre reserves based on balance and recent spending. On top of that, there were additional department reductions of \$188,720. We were in a high inflationary environment back then at over 8% and the inflationary rate is on it's way down, but have taken the most current information we have and developed on the information that we have.

The assumption is that some of the parts replacement items can be pushed out further. The useful life for some items are lasting longer than expected. There is no need to build an internal inventory and can just order parts as needed again. There are different

approaches and new set of eyes on department lines which resulted in department cost savings.

Investment income is rising, we are able to budget a little higher, increase in building services revenue and programming revenue in the rec area. The draft budget does not include any additional fees which has not been approved.

OPP increase of \$216,063 which is the increase over the forecasted budget. It is around \$938,000 – we built into the forecast 3% plus the rebate.

Council directed capital budget projects on October 12th of \$891,292 which brings us to the \$32,256,376.

Council requested Administration to provide a list of departmental reductions in detail. Finance will put something together to share with Council.

The corporate area demonstrates an appropriation from the tax rebate reserve to provide fiscal stabilization of \$653,360, a decrease in property tax penalties of \$70,000, some sponsorship revenue-naming rights of \$57,500 and increase in interest income of \$50,000.

Under General Government which includes Finance, HR, Corporate Services, CAO and Mayor and Council.

The increase in software for the FileHold program and Microsoft licenses were added to the budget as these are costs that we must now pay and were not previously paying for.

The increase in transfer to capital for the CCTV was direction by Council of the October 12th Council meeting.

Insurance claims premiums has been recognized which was a 28% increase for a total of \$155,000 and we have started to budget for claims. When there is a claim we know of, we have budgeted for that. These are things that we will start to plan and show for in terms of our budget.

Increased support to the physician recruitment committee of \$15,000 from the \$25,000 to \$40,000.

There has been a decrease in the Human Resources legal budget and this is due to primarily the positive result of some of the labour relations matters.

Council questioned if they could have more detail in what the current amounts and what we are increasing or decreasing it to. It would help circumvent further questions, and more information will help answer some of those questions.

Protection there is an increase in revenue with two executed leases for fire station 2 as well as small increase for animal services.

There is an increase in appropriations to reserve, a 1% dedicated tax increase to the vehicle and equipment replacement reserve of \$300,792. There was an increase in insurance across the board, property alone was over \$100,000 and we will be looking at

evaluating the Fire Hall's so that we can better reflect the contents and see if there is a better way of costing.

Under Transportation, the revenue side sees a decrease in transfer from reserves for one-time projects. The funding came through the reserves to fund the projects so the money will sit in reserves until the team gets to all of the various plans/studies.

There is an increase to various garage and shop expenses such as fuel, parts and materials.

Recycling is a shared service provide alongside our curbside collection with solid waste at the transfer facility. There is an increase to revenue from our GFL contract.

Recreation and Culture revenue increases included added swimming lessons and additional unique programming.

With the external organizations, we have budgeted for a 3% increase as we don't always have their budget requests in time for budgeting planning and it has seemed to be accurate with requests year over year. The OPP policing costs are the biggest portion of that. We are waiting for KDSB, NWHU and the Home for the Aged has not been received. If one does come in prior to our next meeting, we would update that amount.

Debt financing shows the outstanding debt which is at \$8,997,864 with annual interest at \$227,977 and principal payments of \$846,168 for a total of \$1,074,145. We don't have the hospital project on this list so any infrastructure planned will add to the debt load for us. With the debt we get an annual repayment limit which is based off annual return. Our limit is set at \$12.3M which is not recommended to have debt at this level, and we are working on a policy for Council to consider which would outline our upper limit.

The schedule of reserves essentially the opening balance is forecasted right now as there is 2023 adjustment and the 2022 is unaudited. It takes into account planned spending, account transfers to get us to the opening balance. The transfers to reserves which are items coming in from operating, and the capital contributions which are funding capital projects to get us to the closing balance.

3. Motion to Adjourn to Closed Session

That pursuant to Section 239 of the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended, authorization is hereby given for Committee to move into a Closed Session at 12:48 p.m. to discuss the following items:

- Labour Relations (1 matter-negotiations)

Reconvene to Open Meeting

Council reconvenes to open session at 1:04 p.m. with no reports from its closed session.

Meeting adjourned at 1:04 p.m.