



The Corporation of the City of Stratford Committee of the Whole In-camera Session Minutes

A meeting of the Committee of the Whole was held in In-camera Session on Monday, May 11, 2020 electronically at 1:04 p.m.

Present in Chambers: Mayor Mathieson - Chair presiding

Present Electronically: Councillors Beatty, Bunting, Burbach, *Clifford, Gaffney, Henderson, Ingram, Ritsma, *Sebben and Vassilakos

Regrets:

Staff Present in Chambers: Joan Thomson – Chief Administrative Officer, Jacqueline Mockler – Director of Human Resources, Tatiana Dafoe – City Clerk, Janice Beirness – Acting Director of Corporate Services

Staff Present Electronically: Ed Dujlovic – Director of Infrastructure and Development Services, David St. Louis – Director of Community Services, John Paradis - Fire Chief, Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services, Michael Mousley - Manager of Transit, *Joani Gerber - CEO, investStratford

Prior to going to In-camera session, Item 1.0 was dealt with in open session.

Call to Order by Mayor Mathieson

1.0 Adjournment into In-camera Session

Motion by Councillor Beatty and Councillor Burbach

"Strengthening Our Community: Attracting People and Investment"

THAT the meeting adjourn to an In-camera Session to discuss:

**4.1 Stratford Transit COVID-19 Service Reduction Follow-up
[Personal matters about an identifiable individual(s) including
municipal employees or local board employees (section 239.(2)(b))];**

5.1 [REDACTED]

Carried

The meeting then adjourned to an In-camera session.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

4.0 Report of the Director of Community Services

- 4.1 Stratford Transit COVID-19 Service Reduction Follow-up
[Personal matters about an identifiable individual(s) including municipal employees or local board employees (section 239.(2)(b))]

Objective: To consider a cost savings transit service reduction plan during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Background and Analysis: At the April 27, 2020 In-camera Session of Council, the following direction was given:

THAT the implementation of a one-hour transit service be reviewed and referred to Community Services staff;

AND THAT additional components to reduce the transit service and increase cost savings be reviewed.

Stratford Transit service changes could include a service that operates hourly Monday to Saturday from 6:00am – 6:00pm, along with the current Sunday service 11:00am – 6:00pm:

- One bus servicing - #1 Huron/#2 East end
- One bus servicing - #3 McCarthy/#5 Devon
- One bus servicing - #4 Queensland/#6 Downie
- Buses would alternate routes on every arrival to the terminal resulting in a one-hour service per route (as it would operating a Sunday service presently)
- #7 Industrial route would be cancelled as most industry is shut down
- To accommodate the #7 cancellation, the #4 Queensland route and #6 Downie route would take over certain popular stops when requested (we do this presently on Saturday mornings when needed as the #7 does not run Saturday)
- If Industry gradually returns and the above mentioned becomes difficult to perform, the #7 can be re-introduced during the morning/afternoon peak service times in order to service Industry Employees.

If Sunday service also ceased this would represent a savings of approximately \$700 plus a fuel savings of approximately \$650 for a total of \$1,350 per week.

Timeline and Staffing Requirements

Administration would require approximately five business days to provide layoff notices, changes to operational requirements and media releases. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The daily uncertainty of front line worker's wellbeing as we navigate through the pandemic could encounter numerous challenges. Staffing levels fluctuate from day to day which may make it difficult to recall laid off drivers at a moment's notice. Accordingly, we may plan for a compliment of part time staff to be retained to address the variable nature of demands.

Financial impact: The new hourly schedule would be 274 operational hours with a labour cost savings of \$13,797 per week and a fuel savings of approximately \$1,500 per week for a total of \$15,297 per week.

If Sunday service was also removed there would be an additional savings of \$1,350 per week.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Developing our Resources

Optimizing Stratford's physical assets and digital resources. Planning a sustainable future for Stratford's resources and environment.

Staff recommendation: THAT Council approve Stratford Transit moving forward with a one-hour service Monday – Saturday from 6:00am – 6:00pm to August 30, 2020.

In-camera Discussion: The Manager of Transit advised that direction was given at the April 27, 2020 In-camera Session to [REDACTED]

The Manager reviewed potential Stratford Transit service changes. He advised staff would require approximately five (5) business days to provide layoff notices, complete changes to operational requirements and issue media releases. [REDACTED]

It was questioned how many people rode the bus on Sunday, May 10, 2020. The Manager advised approximately 125-130 people rode the bus and they were travelling from the west end to the east end.

If a service reduction is pursued the length of time required to return to full operation was questioned. The Manager advised it would take 1-2 weeks.

Concern was expressed with reducing the service at this time. It was noted a number of essential workers rely on public transit. The Province has also begun to re-open businesses quickly which will increase the need for public transit. A reduction in service could also make social distancing more difficult.

It was noted the Premier extended the emergency order until June 2, 2020 and support was expressed for reducing the transit service. The status of parallel transit was questioned. The Manager advised ridership is down and that they are delivering a variety of meals to users.

It was questioned whether ridership had increased over the past week. The Manager advised it had marginally increased by 10-15 riders. There is greater ridership in the morning and the assumption is that riders are travelling to work.

In-camera Direction: Motion by Councillor Gaffney and Councillor Clifford THAT Council approve Stratford Transit moving forward with a one-hour service Monday – Saturday from 6:00am – 6:00pm to August 30, 2020.

Discussion was held on the Province's plan to re-open establishments. It was suggested a reduction in service would have been beneficial in April, 2020. Concern was expressed that a reduction in service would need to be approved by Council which would result in a further delay for implementation.

Support for the motion was expressed as the City needs to be vigilant on reducing costs and there is the ability to re-instate the service. [REDACTED]

Concern was expressed with the current service and the shelters being closed to members of the public. It was noted a safe way for people to get in and around the City is necessary.

Discussion was held on the process to be followed if direction is given to proceed with a service reduction. The Director of Human Resources advised there are notification processes outlined in the collective agreement. Time would be required to discuss this matter with the union and to notify employees.

Support was expressed with reducing the cost of transit. A suggestion was made to list this matter for consideration if there is a second wave of the virus.

*Councillor Sebben departed the meeting at 1:31 p.m., and returned at 1:33 p.m.

Mayor Mathieson called the question on the motion.

Defeated

It was questioned whether Stratford Tourism Alliance had provided an update on their activities and ability to find efficiencies. Councillor Bunting advised a report has been prepared by the Executive Director on financial matters. Councillor Bunting was asked to request a report for Council's consideration.

It was suggested alternative payment systems should be investigated for transit. This would assist with the cost to provide the service and maintain the health and safety of both drivers and passengers. Members were advised the City is looking at screening and will be installing new fare boxes.

A request was made for staff to review the closure of the bus shelters to members of the public. This matter was referred to staff for review.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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