



MINUTES - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

March 03, 2025, 9:00 A.M.

COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL, 1 CENTENNIAL SQUARE

The City of Victoria is located on the homelands of the Songhees Nation and Xwsepsum Nation

Meeting will recess for a lunch break between 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Alto in the Chair, Councillor Caradonna, Councillor Coleman, Councillor Dell, Councillor Gardiner, Councillor Hammond, Councillor Kim, Councillor Loughton, Councillor Thompson

STAFF PRESENT: J. Jenkyns - City Manager, S. Thompson - Deputy City Manager / Chief Financial Officer, C. Kingsley - City Clerk, S. Johnson - Director of Communications and Engagement, P. Rantucci - Director of Strategic Real Estate, T. Soulliere - Deputy City Manager, D. Newman - Director of Parks, Recreation and Facilities, J. Jensen - Director, People and Culture, K. Hoese - Director of Sustainable Planning and Community Development, A. Hudson - Assistant Director of Community Planning, B. Roder - Deputy City Clerk, S. Maichen- Legislative Coordinator

A. TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Committee recognized that the City of Victoria is situated on the traditional lands of the Songhees and Xwsepsum First Nations communities and expressed their gratitude for the work that has been undertaken for so many generations to enable us to sit on these territories.

B. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

There were no late items.

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved and Seconded:

That the agenda be approved.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

D. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

D.1 2025-2029 Draft Financial Plan

On the motion referred from the February 27, 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting:

2. That Council set the city's portion of the 2025 property tax increase at 4%.

Amendment:

Moved and Seconded:

2. That Council set the city's portion of the 2025 property tax increase at 4%.
 - a. **Direct Staff to add \$100,000 to Canada Day celebrations, taking the funds from the Major Community Initiatives and Events Grant Program.**

Amendment to the amendment:

Moved and Seconded:

2. That Council set the city's portion of the 2025 property tax increase at 4%.
 - a. **Direct Staff to add up to \$100,000 to Canada Day celebrations, taking the funds from the Major Community Initiatives and Events Grant Program, contingent on staff verbally reporting back on what changes are possible.**

OPPOSED (1): Councillor Gardiner

CARRIED (8 to 1)

On the amendment as amended:

2. That Council set the city's portion of the 2025 property tax increase at 4%.
 - a. **Direct Staff to add up to \$100,000 to Canada Day celebrations, taking the funds from the Major Community Initiatives and Events Grant Program, contingent on staff verbally reporting back on what changes are possible.**

OPPOSED (1): Councillor Kim

CARRIED (8 to 1)

Amendment:

Moved and Seconded:

2. That Council set the city's portion of the 2025 property tax increase at 4%.
 - a. Direct Staff to add up to \$100,000 to Canada Day celebrations, taking the funds from the Major Community Initiatives and Events Grant Program contingent on staff verbally reporting back on what changes are possible.
 - b. **Direct staff to add a one-time grant of \$100,000 to this year's budget to fund Our Place Society operating hours and the storage program for one year to be funded by 2024 surplus.**

OPPOSED (2): Councillor Gardiner, Councillor Hammond

CARRIED (7 to 2)

Councillor Coleman left the meeting at 9:51 a.m.

Amendment:

Moved and Seconded:

2. That Council set the city's portion of the 2025 property tax increase at 4%.
 - a. Direct Staff to add up to \$100,000 to Canada Day celebrations, taking the funds from the Major Community Initiatives and Events Grant Program contingent on staff verbally reporting back on what changes are possible.
 - b. Direct staff to add a one-time grant of \$100,000 to this year's budget to fund Our Place Society operating hours and the storage program for one year to be funded by 2024 surplus;
 - c. **Direct staff to give an additional and permanent \$50,000 to Silver Threads Services to pay for their shortfall of their lease expenses, reducing the funds from the Major Community Initiatives and Events Grant Program until an arrangement has been made with Silver Threads to cut their rental costs.**

The Chair ruled a portion of the amendment out of order.

On the amendment:

2. That Council set the city's portion of the 2025 property tax increase at 4%.
 - a. Direct Staff to add up to \$100,000 to Canada Day celebrations, taking the funds from the Major Community Initiatives and Events Grant Program contingent on staff verbally reporting back on what changes are possible.
 - b. Direct staff to add a one-time grant of \$100,000 to this year's budget to fund Our Place Society operating hours and the storage program for one year to be funded by 2024 surplus;
 - c. **Direct staff to give an additional and permanent \$50,000 to Silver Threads Services to pay for their shortfall of their lease expenses, reducing the funds from the Major Community Initiatives and Events Grant Program.**

Amendment to the amendment:

Moved and Seconded:

2. That Council set the City's portion of the 2025 property tax increase at 4%.
 - a. Direct Staff to add up to \$100,000 to Canada Day celebrations, taking the funds from the Major Community Initiatives and Events Grant Program contingent on staff verbally reporting back on what changes are possible.
 - b. Direct staff to add a one-time grant of \$100,000 to this year's budget to fund Our Place Society operating hours and the storage program for one year to be funded by 2024 surplus;

- c. **Direct staff to give an additional and permanent \$50,000 to Silver Threads Services to pay for their shortfall of their lease expenses, on the condition funding is used at the Victoria location, reducing the funds from the Major Community Initiatives and Events Grant Program.**

Absent (1): Councillor Coleman

CARRIED (8)

On the amendment as amended:

- 2. That Council set the city's portion of the 2025 property tax increase at 4%.
 - a. Direct Staff to add up to \$100,000 to Canada Day celebrations, taking the funds from the Major Community Initiatives and Events Grant Program contingent on staff verbally reporting back on what changes are possible.
 - b. Direct staff to add a one-time grant of \$100,000 to this year's budget to fund Our Place Society operating hours and the storage program for one year to be funded by 2024 surplus;
 - c. **Direct staff to give an additional and permanent \$50,000 to Silver Threads Services to pay for their shortfall of their lease expenses, on the condition funding is used at the Victoria location, reducing the funds from the Major Community Initiatives and Events Grant Program.**

Absent (1): Councillor Coleman

CARRIED (8)

Committee recessed at 10:21 a.m. and reconvened at 10:37 a.m.

Amendment:

Moved and Seconded:

- 2. That Council set the city's portion of the 2025 property tax increase at 4%.
 - a. Direct Staff to add up to \$100,000 to Canada Day celebrations, taking the funds from the Major Community Initiatives and Events Grant Program contingent on staff verbally reporting back on what changes are possible.
 - b. Direct staff to add a one-time grant of \$100,000 to this year's budget to fund Our Place Society operating hours and the storage program for one year to be funded by 2024 surplus;
 - c. Direct staff to give an additional and permanent \$50,000 to Silver Threads Services to pay for their shortfall of their lease expenses, on the condition funding is used at the Victoria location, reducing the funds from the Major Community Initiatives and Events Grant Program.
 - d. **Direct staff to not draw down \$50,000 from the Tree Reserve.**

Absent (1): Councillor Coleman

DEFEATED (8)

Amendment:

Moved and Seconded:

2. That Council set the city's portion of the 2025 property tax increase at 4%.
 - a. Direct Staff to add up to \$100,000 to Canada Day celebrations, taking the funds from the Major Community Initiatives and Events Grant Program contingent on staff verbally reporting back on what changes are possible.
 - b. Direct staff to add a one-time grant of \$100,000 to this year's budget to fund Our Place Society operating hours and the storage program for one year to be funded by 2024 surplus;
 - c. Direct staff to give an additional and permanent \$50,000 to Silver Threads Services to pay for their shortfall of their lease expenses, on the condition the funding is used at the Victoria location, reducing the funds from the Major Community Initiatives and Events Grant Program.
 - d. **Direct staff to not reduce contributions to the Local Amenities Reserve.**

OPPOSED (5): Mayor Alto, Councillor Caradonna, Councillor Gardiner, Councillor Hammond, Councillor Kim

Absent (1): Councillor Coleman

DEFEATED (3 to 5)

Amendment:

Moved and Seconded:

2. That Council set the city's portion of the 2025 property tax increase at 4%.
 - a. Direct Staff to add up to \$100,000 to Canada Day celebrations, taking the funds from the Major Community Initiatives and Events Grant Program contingent on staff verbally reporting back on what changes are possible.
 - b. Direct staff to add a one-time grant of \$100,000 to this year's budget to fund Our Place Society operating hours and the storage program for one year to be funded by 2024 surplus;
 - c. Direct staff to give an additional and permanent \$50,000 to Silver Threads Services to pay for their shortfall of their lease expenses, on the condition the funding is used at the Victoria location, reducing the funds from the Major Community Initiatives and Events Grant Program.
 - d. **Direct staff to not reduce contributions to the Climate Action Reserve.**

OPPOSED (5): Mayor Alto, Councillor Dell, Councillor Gardiner, Councillor Hammond, Councillor Loughton

Absent (1): Councillor Coleman

DEFEATED (3 to 5)

Amendment:

Moved and Seconded:

2. That Council set the city's portion of the 2025 property tax increase at 4%.
 - a. Direct Staff to add up to \$100,000 to Canada Day celebrations, taking the funds from the Major Community Initiatives and Events Grant Program contingent on staff verbally reporting back on what changes are possible.
 - b. Direct staff to add a one-time grant of \$100,000 to this year's budget to fund Our Place Society operating hours and the storage program for one year to be funded by 2024 surplus;
 - c. Direct staff to give an additional and permanent \$50,000 to Silver Threads Services to pay for their shortfall of their lease expenses, on the condition the funding is used at the Victoria location, reducing the funds from the Major Community Initiatives and Events Grant Program.
 - d. **Direct staff to eliminate the budget reductions on transit network and multi modal corridors.**

OPPOSED (6): Mayor Alto, Councillor Caradonna, Councillor Dell, Councillor Gardiner, Councillor Hammond, Councillor Loughton

Absent (1): Councillor Coleman

DEFEATED (2 to 6)

Amendment:

Moved and Seconded:

2. That Council set the city's portion of the 2025 property tax increase at 4%.
 - a. Direct Staff to add up to \$100,000 to Canada Day celebrations, taking the funds from the Major Community Initiatives and Events Grant Program contingent on staff verbally reporting back on what changes are possible.
 - b. Direct staff to add a one-time grant of \$100,000 to this year's budget to fund Our Place Society operating hours and the storage program for one year to be funded by 2024 surplus;
 - c. Direct staff to give an additional and permanent \$50,000 to Silver Threads Services to pay for their shortfall of their lease expenses, on the condition the funding is used at the Victoria location, reducing the funds from the Major Community Initiatives and Events Grant Program.
 - d. **Direct staff to reduce the hanging baskets program by 50% immediately.**

OPPOSED (6): Mayor Alto, Councillor Caradonna, Councillor Dell, Councillor Gardiner, Councillor Hammond, Councillor Loughton

Absent (1): Councillor Coleman

DEFEATED (2 to 6)

Committee recessed at 11:56 a.m. and reconvened at 1:01 p.m.

Councillor Coleman rejoined the meeting at 1:01 p.m.

On the motion as amended:

2. That Council set the city's portion of the 2025 property tax increase at 4%.
 - a. Direct Staff to add up to \$100,000 to Canada Day celebrations, taking the funds from the Major Community Initiatives and Events Grant Program contingent on staff verbally reporting back on what changes are possible.
 - b. Direct staff to add a one-time grant of \$100,000 to this year's budget to fund Our Place Society operating hours and the storage program for one year to be funded by 2024 surplus;
 - c. Direct staff to give an additional and permanent \$50,000 to Silver Threads Services to pay for their shortfall of their lease expenses, on the condition the funding is used at the Victoria location, reducing the funds from the Major Community Initiatives and Events Grant Program.

OPPOSED (3): Councillor Gardiner, Councillor Hammond, Councillor Kim

CARRIED (6 to 3)

Motion to suspend the rules:

Moved and Seconded:

To exert the Chair's authority to seek Council's support to provide a temporary suspension of section 80(9)(d) to allow an additional 5 minutes for each Council member to address each of the two upcoming motions despite the fact that they pertain to the same agenda item.

OPPOSED (1): Councillor Gardiner

CARRIED (8 to 1)

Moved and Seconded:

3. That Council direct staff to use the proposals in the 4% option for the 2026 budget captured in the December 4, 2024 staff report "2025-2029 Draft Financial Plan – Tax Increase Reduction Options", including impacts of the Crystal pool project, as a baseline for the 2026 City Budget, recognizing that this initial direction for 2026 is a starting point that still allows decisions for 2026 to be made as part of that year's process.

Amendment:

Moved and Seconded:

3. That Council direct staff to use the proposals in the 4% option for the 2026 budget captured in the December 4, 2024 staff report "2025-2029 Draft Financial Plan – Tax Increase Reduction Options", including impacts of the Crystal pool project, as a baseline for the 2026 City Budget, **and to further**

direct staff to investigate additional cuts of up to \$1 million. ~~recognizing that this initial direction for 2026 is a starting point that still allows decisions for 2026 to be made as part of that year's process.~~

Amendment to the amendment:

Moved and Seconded:

3. That Council direct staff to use the proposals in the 4% option for the 2026 budget captured in the December 4, 2024 staff report "2025-2029 Draft Financial Plan – Tax Increase Reduction Options", including impacts of the Crystal pool project, as a baseline for the 2026 City Budget, **and to further direct staff to investigate additional cuts different reduction options of up to \$1 million. recognizing that this initial direction for 2026 is a starting point that still allows decisions for 2026 to be made as part of that year's process.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

On the amendment as amended:

3. That Council direct staff to use the proposals in the 4% option for the 2026 budget captured in the December 4, 2024 staff report "2025-2029 Draft Financial Plan – Tax Increase Reduction Options", including impacts of the Crystal pool project, as a baseline for the 2026 City Budget, **and to further direct staff to investigate different reduction options of up to \$1 million. recognizing that this initial direction for 2026 is a starting point that still allows decisions for 2026 to be made as part of that year's process.**

OPPOSED (2): Councillor Dell, Councillor Kim

CARRIED (7 to 2)

On the motion as amended:

3. That Council direct staff to use the proposals in the 4% option for the 2026 budget captured in the December 4, 2024 staff report "2025-2029 Draft Financial Plan – Tax Increase Reduction Options", including impacts of the Crystal pool project, as a baseline for the 2026 City Budget, and to further direct staff to investigate different reduction options of up to \$1 million.

OPPOSED (2): Councillor Kim, Councillor Thompson

CARRIED (7 to 2)

Moved and Seconded:

4. That Council direct staff to implement a tax policy to gradually reduce the business/residential property tax ratio from the current 3.67/1 to 3/1 over 5 years, starting with a reduction to no more than 3.5/1 in 2025, and following to

no more than 3.4/1 in 2026, no more than 3.3/1 in 2027, no more than 3.2/1 in 2028, no more than 3.1/1 in 2029 and no more than 3.0/1 in 2030.

OPPOSED (2): Councillor Gardiner, Councillor Hammond

CARRIED (7 to 2)

Moved and Seconded:

That Council:

2. Following all budget presentations and deliberations:
 - a. Approve direct-award grants and other grants as outlined on pages 21-23 of this report.
 - b. Approve allocating any remaining 2024 surplus to the Buildings and Infrastructure Reserve.
 - d. Direct staff to bring forward the 2025-2029 Financial Plan Bylaw, incorporating any changes directed by Council, to the April 24, 2025 daytime Council meeting for consideration.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

E. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

There were no Notices of Motions.

F. CLOSED MEETING, IF REQUIRED

There was no closed meeting.

G. ADJOURNMENT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Moved and Seconded:

That the Committee of the Whole Meeting be adjourned at 2:28 p.m.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

CITY CLERK

MAYOR