

MINUTES
SPECIAL FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING
SHAW AUDITORIUM, VANCOUVER ISLAND CONFERENCE CENTRE,
80 COMMERCIAL STREET, NANAIMO, BC
WEDNESDAY, 2022-NOV-23, AT 9:00 A.M.

Present: Mayor L. Krog, Chair
Councillor S. Armstrong (vacated 11:58 a.m.)
Councillor T. Brown (joined electronically; entered the Shaw Auditorium at 1:00 p.m.)
Councillor H. Eastmure
Councillor B. Geselbracht (joined electronically)
Councillor E. Hemmens
Councillor P. Manly (arrived 9:02 a.m.)
Councillor J. Perrino
Councillor I. Thorpe

Staff: J. Rudolph, Chief Administrative Officer
D. Lindsay, General Manager, Development Services/Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
R. Harding, General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture
B. Sims, General Manager, Engineering and Public Works
L. Fletcher, Supt L. Fletcher, Nanaimo Detachment RCMP
T. Doyle, Fire Chief
J. Le Masurier, Deputy Fire Chief, Administration
G. Whiting, Deputy Fire Chief, Operations
B. Corsan, Director, Corporate and Business Development
J. Elliot, Director, Public Works
A. Groot, Director, Facilities and Parks Operations
J. Holm, Director, Development Approvals
L. Mercer, Director, Finance
P. Rosen, Director, Engineering
J. Van Horne, Director, Human Resources
D. Bailey, Manager, Accounting Services
W. Fulla, Manager, Business, Asset and Financial Planning
K. Robertson, Deputy City Clerk
S. Gurrie, Director, Legislative Services
A. Mac Coll, Recording Secretary

1. CALL THE SPECIAL FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING TO ORDER:

The Special Finance and Audit Committee Meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

It was moved and seconded that the Agenda be adopted. The motion carried unanimously.

3. PRESENTATIONS:

(a) 2023-2027 Draft Financial Plan Overview

Introduced by Laura Mercer, Director, Finance.

A video was played regarding property taxes and how they are utilized in the City.

Councillor Manly entered the Shaw Auditorium at 9:02 a.m.

Committee and Staff discussion took place. Highlights included:

- The video displayed will be posted on the City's YouTube channel, social media channels, and the City's website
- Draft budget preparation starts in January and February of each year and Staff work on their 10-year project plans
- All managers have to justify each line item in their department's budget to ensure there are adequate resources for the year
- When project and operating budgets are completed, the Financial Planning Team provides the results to the Senior Leadership Team and business cases are evaluated for inclusion into the draft plan
- An additional Special Finance and Audit Committee Meeting has been planned for 2022-DEC-02
- The current projected increases for Property Taxes in 2023 are 1% for the Asset Management Reserve contributions and 5.2% for general use totalling 6.2%
- A 1% tax increase in Nanaimo is \$1,272,000
- In 2021, Council used the Special Initiative Reserve to reduce taxes over 4 years with the funds from the COVID-19 Restart Grant
- The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is not a reliable tool to use for municipalities to assess inflationary pressures as it does not adequately reflect the goods and services that are purchased specifically by municipalities
- The recommended projected 2023 user fee increases are 4% for sewer, 5% for water, and 0.9% for sanitation
Three new garbage trucks are to be received by March 2023 and will impact the current truck rental costs and debt repayment plan
- The average tax increase in the past 10 years is 2.7%
- The business class tax rate is three times higher than the residential tax rate
- A 6.2% tax increase is \$2,608 for a home assessed at \$718,471, which does not include the Home Owner Grant reduction or user fees
- \$8 million of general taxation was used to fund projects in 2023 which included things like furniture and equipment replacement, condition assessment programs, new drainage, and trail rehabilitation
- Revenue for 2023 is \$234.7 million which provides funding for annual operating and maintenance projects and contributions to infrastructure renewal services
- The largest revenue source for the City is taxation which is 59.9% of the \$234.7 million
- The operating budget for 2023 is \$181.4 million, which is to be spent on annual operating and maintenance resources that deliver day to day City services

- The largest cost for the 2023 operating budget is the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) which is 17.9% of the \$181.4 million operating budget
- The budget drivers that make up the 6.2% tax rate (7.904 million) for 2023 are the following:
 - Asset Management
 - Community Clean Teams
 - Debt
 - Elector Approval
 - Fire Dispatch
 - Insurance – Corporate
 - Internal Support – Sewer/Water
 - Interest Expense
 - Landscaping – Park Operations
 - Management Consulting
 - Project Expenditures – Annual General Revenue Funding
 - RCMP Contract (Budgeted at 95%)
 - Utilities – Heating
 - Wages and Benefits

Councillor Brown joined the meeting electronically at 9:46 a.m.

- 29 Staff positions were added in 2022 and the majority were related to public safety, with the full costing for the Downtown Safety Action Plan applied in 2023
- Business Cases for 2023 put forward for consideration to Council are not included in the 6.2% tax rate for 2023
- New planned debt for 2022 relates to Fire Station #1 and three new garbage trucks
- Internal borrowing will fund the Sewer Development Cost Charges (DCC) Millstone Trunk South project in 2022
- New planned debt for 2023-2027 Financial Plan will be property purchases funded through short term debt in 2023 and an internal borrowing budgeted for Sewer DCC Millstone Trunk Central in 2024
- Current projected outstanding external debt does not include the South End Community Centre, Waterfront Walkway, Nanaimo Operations Centre, or the Police Operations Building
- Legislation does not allow the City to borrow outside of its allowable limits, which is 25% of the municipality's controllable and sustainable revenues for the year
- As of December 31, 2021, the City is at 13.4% of its current debt limit
- When new or renewed debt is undertaken, the rates will be higher than the past, due to inflation

(b) Chief Administrator's Office Business Plan

Jake Rudolph, Chief Administrative Officer, provided a PowerPoint presentation. Highlights included:

- The Chief Administrative Officer position is the senior management position for the organization and is hired by City Council

Councillor Geselbracht disconnected from the meeting at 10:06 a.m.

- Business Plans were received from the following groups:
 - Vancouver Island Conference Centre
 - Systems Planning Organization
 - Tourism Nanaimo Society
 - Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation
 - Vancouver Island Regional Library
- The value for money regarding property taxes is relative to the expected delivery of services
- Governance was a large pillar in the strategic plan of the last Council
- Protocol agreements and relationships are important to the City and Council
- Three new organizations have been created called the following:
 - Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation
 - Tourism Nanaimo Society
 - Systems Planning Organization
- Administration programs being implemented are the Electronic Document Records Management System, Enterprise Resource Planning, and the Corporate Asset Management System
- Several major capital projects were undertaken in 2022 such as the Fire Station #1, Metral Drive project, Serausmen Stadium and the Fourth Street Search and Rescue
- The Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness was launched last Council's term and was very successful
- The Mayor's Leaders' Table was a large community effort over the past several years

Councillor Geselbracht re-joined the meeting electronically at 10:23 a.m.

- The aquatic centres are very expensive to operate and to maintain
- Key issues in 2023 are Governance, Growth Management, Organizational Resilience, Indigenous Relations, Housing, and Fiscal Sustainability
- The City of Nanaimo is continuing to work on its reputation as a City and as an employer as it helps the recruitment process
- Council's debt philosophy and how it could be used to inform decision making for future borrowing
- There is a partnership with BC Transit, the Regional District of Nanaimo, the Ministry of Transportation, and the City for a section of property on Terminal Avenue
- The largest capital project underway for the City is worth \$40 to \$50 million and it is a 100 year investment
- The Marriot Hotel downtown Nanaimo should be completed in March 2023
- The artificial turf fields are to be tendered in 2023 after the budget is approved

Councillor Brown disconnected from the meeting at 10:41 a.m.

- Future projects related to growth in Nanaimo are Sandstone, Bowers District, Woodgrove Shopping Centre, Te'tuxwtun project, 1 Terminal Avenue, and 1 Port Drive
- If more time is required to approve the budget, Staff can book in more meetings for Council to approve the provisional budget

The Finance and Audit Committee recessed at 10:47 a.m.

The Finance and Audit Committee reconvened at 11:04 a.m.

(c) Legislative Services and Communication Business Plan

Introduced by Sheila Gurrie, Director, Legislative Services. Highlights included:

- Legislative Services is 1.8% of the total City budget
- The City Clerk is one of the oldest public servant positions in Local Government
- Legislative Services supported all the logistics, agendas, minutes taking, record keeping and follow up for 72 meetings in 2022
- Meeting process modifications were ongoing due to COVID-19, and contributed to a large amount of work for Staff to implement
- The Committee operating guidelines were updated as well as facilitating changes for Public Hearings, virtual meetings, hybrid Committee meetings and Council meetings
- The largest achievement and greatest success of 2022 was the General Local Election
- Videos, news releases, a table at the night market, bus wraps and many other mediums were used for advertisement and to create public engagement for the 2022 General Local Election
- Over 200 Staff were recruited, trained, and appointed as Election Officials
- Staff processed mail in ballot applications, which are not required under legislation
- Sign sections in multiple City bylaws were amalgamated into one
- Staff reached out to seniors' facilities to provide mail in ballots and picked them up once completed
- 6165 bylaws were recorded under the Bylaw and Policy Renewal project; 100 bylaws dating back to 1875 were repealed and 19 bylaws were abandoned
- A Code of Conduct bylaw, Ethics Commissioner Establishment Bylaw and the Elected Officials Oath of Office bylaws were established
- Staff amended the Council Spending and Amenities Policy, Re-developed the Leisure economic and Access Policy, repealed several outdated Human Resources Policies as well as compiled all administrative policies and transferred them to new templates
- The 2022 General Local Election will be completed with evaluations and appraisal and a debriefing on what could be improved
- Council support from Legislative Services will include Chair training, eScribe training, continuation of the Bylaw Renewal Project and the review of the City's agreements, contracts and leases
- Phase 6 of the records management project has been completed with three departments transferred into Laserfiche with 45 active users

- The Records Management Project has been going since 2017, and its goal is to have documents and records managed and stored in a manner that satisfies all governmental regulations and provides a streamlined way for employees to search and access records
- 12 records management policies have been completed with a custom records classification system
- Significant legislative changes regarding the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* created the need for Staff for update procedures and templates to align with the updates
- The Privacy of Information and Security Committee is a group of Senior Staff who discuss privacy matters that affect the City as a whole and help review and improve privacy and security of information

Councillor Brown re joined the meeting electronically at 11:19 a.m.

- Liability claims and risk assessments are handled by Legislative Services in conjunction with the Municipal Insurance Association of British Columbia (MIABC)
- Legislative Services is working with Information Technology Staff to create Cybersecurity Training
- Electronic Records Management Phase 8 will be implemented in 2023 and the Records Information and Privacy will be transitioned to training Staff and Council in a virtual format

Trish Webb, Manager, Communications, presented a PowerPoint to the Finance and Audit Committee. Highlights included:

- The Communications Plan that the department is operating under is from 2013, and it established a distributed responsibilities model
- Media relations is coordinated centrally, but Staff rely on the subject matter experts relating to the item the media is interested in
- Communications Staff support and advise City departments on graphic design, editing, writing, photography, video creation, social media strategies, use of the public engagement tools, and other digital tools
- Website content and design is supported by Communications
- Achievements for September 30, 2022, included the completion of 274 media requests, 26 videos, 91 news releases, 44 Council and Committee summaries and 39 My Nanaimo This Week e-News releases
- Feedback is gathered from the public using multiple media mediums
- The core job of communications is to keep relationships, trust, and to improve the City's reputation
- Values of the priorities identified through the City Plan will be reflected by the Corporate Communications plans and materials with the strategic priorities driving the Corporate Communications Business Plan
- The old Corporate Communications plan adopted in 2013 focused on transparency, two-way communication and the distributed responsibility model
- The aspirations of the 2013 Corporate Communications plan have been realized and the department has an opportunity to advance it by

- effectively engaging the public to improve addressing communication needs for those with diverse abilities
- New initiatives are being looked at to help Council share information and better tell the City of Nanaimo's story
- Elected Officials are not involved in recruitment of City Staff
- "Bang the Table" is a software application used for public engagement
- The number of communications Staff is driven by what the City is wanting done
- Communication by mail costs \$30,000 or more, and there are few opportunities to mail out communication besides sending it with the Tax Notice every year in May
- All notices regarding the election were advertised in the Newspaper

(d) Human Resources Business Plan

Introduced by John Van Horne, Director, Human Resources. Highlights included:

- Employee relations in Human Resources (HR) pertains to labour relations, bargaining, grievances, respectful workplace investigations, and job evaluations
- Employee services include HR administering benefits, identification swipe cards, social and wellness activities, and the annual service recognition event
- Healthy and Safety addresses claims management, injury prevention, and how to return to work
- Recruitment covers job description development, interview questions, selection processes, and the ability find new Staff for the organization as well as moving forward existing Staff in their careers
- Currently there are many candidates withdrawing at the end of the recruitment process making it difficult to fill postings with qualified candidates
- Training and development are provided by in house programming to cover safety related training as well as softer skills, supervisory skills, and management courses
- Niche courses for Staff are able to be offered more frequently than previous years due to virtual classes now being widely accepted
- HR managers' vacant positions have caused a download of their workload to the HR advisors and associates

Councillor Armstrong vacated the Shaw Auditorium at 11:58 a.m.

- 2022 has been a record year for recruitment not including the 500 interviews completed for the General Local Election hires
- Each vacancy in the organization represents a gap in work being completed
- The 12 new Community Safety Officer (CSO) positions created in 2022 were negotiated successfully and quickly implemented
- A formal remote work policy was created and implemented in 2022
- HR implemented a COVID-19 vaccination policy and rapid testing for Staff in 2022 with wellness and social events for Staff now being reinstated

- Local Government is shorthanded for Staff across the Province and recruitment is highly competitive against other municipalities
- HR has to be cautious in what things are to be agreed to currently when hiring, as any special circumstance decisions have longstanding effects into the future
- There are long standing difficult positions to fill in the City, and Staff are finding creative ways to fill them in other manners
- The BC Municipal Safety Association, in conjunction with S. Weatherby, Manager, Occupational Health and Safety, are developing a module for mental health in the workplace
- The collective agreements CUPE local 401 and the IAFF Local 905 are expiring in 2022, and the exempt staff salary survey is overdue as well as Council's remuneration coming up in 2023

The Finance and Audit Committee recessed at 12:20 p.m.
Councillor Brown, entered the Shaw Auditorium at 1:00 p.m.
The Finance and Audit Committee reconvened at 1:01 p.m.

(e) Corporate Services Business Plan

Introduced by Jake Rudolph, Chief Administrative Officer.

Presentations:

1. Finance – Laura Mercer, Director, Finance. Highlights included:
 - The duty of the Finance department is to safeguard all City assets and to give support to all departments
 - The Finance department is made up of 43 Staff under the following 5 subsections:
 - Accounting Services
 - Business, Asset & Financial Planning
 - Purchasing and Stores
 - Revenue Services
 - Payroll
 - Revenue Services now has an assistant manager position to cover the day-to-day operations which will be overseen by the Manager of Financial Services and Special projects who will remain the tax collector
 - The Finance department is 2.8% of the City's overall budget
 - Many Staff have accounting designations that require professional development credits each year to keep them
 - The Sustainable Procurement Policy has been in effect since July 2021, and Staff have completed 16 opportunities with the sustainable criteria component with another 9 in the queue
 - Staff continue to engage and learn through the British Columbia Social Procurement Initiative (BCSPI) and the Canadian Collaboration for Sustainable Procurement (CCSP) as both provide support to Staff for sustainable procurement
 - Each year a progress report will be brought forward to Council to show the Sustainable Procurement Policy and its advances

- The Enterprise Resource Planning Software, a financial software system, will no longer be able to be used by 2027 and a new system is budgeted for replacement from 2022 to 2024
 - A vendor to replace the Systems Application Product (SAP), which is the current software being used by Finance, will be chosen by the end of 2022
 - New online web forms were created to help residents electronically authorize and request changes to their property accounts
 - 21 grant submissions have been completed in 2022 for a total of \$16.7 million and the City has been awarded 10 grants amounting to \$5.4 million
 - 9 grant submissions are still waiting to be announced worth \$11.2 million dollars that the City could receive if selected
 - Financial planning and analysis software is in the final stages of testing, and it is intended to be used for the 2024-2028 Financial Plan
 - “Bids and Tenders” is the new e-bidding software to publish open market opportunities and to operate the manual evaluation tasks to allow for completion of electronic documents and signatures
 - The City’s 2020 Annual Municipal Report was awarded the Governance Finance Officers Association (GFOA’s) Canadian award for Financial Reporting
 - An invoice automation solution has been reviewed by Staff to help create an efficient invoice approval system to have the majority of the invoices processed electronically
 - A new accounting standard for the Asset Retirement Obligations will be implemented in the 2023 Financial Statements
 - The new accounting standard requires Staff to identify hazardous materials that may be present in City owned assets, and what the cost of remediating the hazardous material would be by recording the liability to amortize it over the life of the asset
 - The Asset Management and 20 Year Investment Plan is in the final stages of updating, which will update the asset inventory and their valuations showing whether the funding gap identified in 2017 has grown or shrunk
 - The Finance Department will be supporting the Development Cost Charges Bylaw (DCC) review which will be undertaken in 2023
 - Revenue Services will be looking at the use of credit cards for payment of Property Tax Bills and Utility Bills
 - New water meter reading technology improvements allow for meter readings by cellphone, and a meter replacement project in future years of the plan would allow for radio reads
 - A temporary Cemetery Clerk position has been proposed to help digitize the cemetery records, as there is a risk of records being lost
2. IT – Abe Lang, Acting Manager, IT Application Services & Derrick Blackwood, Manager, IT Technical & Client Services provided a presentation. Highlights included:
- Application Services has an Application Support team, a Financial Systems and Reporting Team, a Geographical Information Systems Team, and a Computerised Asset Management Team

- Information Technology is 2.8% of the total budget and is evenly split between wages, benefits, services, and supply contracts
- A Digital and an Intelligent City Strategy is currently being worked on; however, it can't be approved until a Director is hired
- Microsoft 365 will better perform regarding data security due to multifactor identification and will work in conjunction with Legislative Services to uphold good data governance and classifications
- A focus for 2023 in IT is on enhancing privacy, security, data governance, improvement of service, managing IT complexity and enabling Nanaimo's digital future
- The replacement of the Building Permitting System will enable better online applications and improve accountability
- A customer relationship management solution is being considered to help manage the relationships with the public by being people centric rather than property centric

3. RCMP/Police Services - Supt. Lisa Fletcher, OIC, RCMP, Nanaimo Detachment. Highlights included:

- The Hurley report in 2021 contributed to an approval of new positions, but new criminal case law in Section 490 required RCMP to make a shift in the positions by creating two paralegal positions
- The four areas that make up the RCMP are General Duty, Operational Support, Plain Clothes, and the Forensic Identification Unit
- The RCMP is 17.9% of the municipal budget in the City
- There are time lags between when positions are approved and when RCMP positions can be filled
- Some of the drugs being used in the community are not responding to the antidotes and it can cause significant hardship
- Multi-sensory packages are used by RCMP Staff to help during interactions with the public who are affected by developmental challenges
- School District 68 (SD68) has been a strong support for the RCMP while working together regarding prevention, education, restorative justice, and investigations with youth
- The current trend in youth is extortion through images of male and female students
- All wellness checks should have a 2 person police response and there is an excess of 300 calls per month in Nanaimo
- Traffic Services works with the Ministry of Transportation, the City of Nanaimo and the SD68
- 2022 has been an unprecedented year for homicides, and in the last 18 months there have been 11
- The Serious Crime Unit in Nanaimo is recognized by other agencies for the quality of their investigations
- The 150th anniversary for the RCMP will be in 2023 with a community open house held on May 13th, 2023
- Four positions approved for the Downtown Core have not been staffed, so the Youth Unit in the summer months were reallocated to cover
- The National RCMP training site was shut down during COVID-19, and is currently backlogged contributing to a shortage of police officers

- Liaison officers have been working with 2SLBGTQ+ identities successfully in our local communities
- Nanaimo has a high rate of civilianization, which is a very active and effective cost saving approach
- Security gates at the detachment have been put in place creating a positive impact in the detachment and trailers are used to address shortages of space
- RCMP are in the process of moving to the Fire Administration building as well as using space at 580 and 575 Fitzwilliam Street

Committee and Staff discussion took place. Highlights included:

- The Regina RCMP training facility is back open, but not running at full capacity which is 32 persons per troop at 30 troops per year
- Pre COVID-19 there were 10,000 applications per year for the RCMP, and now there is only 2,000 applications per year
- Pre COVID-19 it would take 6 months to fill a vacancy

Councillor Manly vacated the Shaw Auditorium at 2:05 p.m.

- 3600 wellness checks per year is a large increase from 5 years ago
- RCMP must hand over a person apprehended in a wellness check to a physician, as it is written in the legislation
- Repeat calls and chronic offenders may have more than one responding agency attending the call

(g) Nanaimo Fire Rescue Business Plan

Introduced by Tim Doyle, Fire Chief. Highlights included:

- The City has changed the Emergency Management Manager position to report to the Fire Chief after the previous Manager retired
- The Emergency Management budget accounts for .1%
- ESS was activated 11 times in 2021 using 244 volunteer hours
- Once the new Emergency Management Coordinator is hired, training will resume at a higher capacity in 2023
- A Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) was implanted at Fire station #1
- A Regional Airport Exercise and a Regional Wildfire Exercise was completed in 2022
- The Coastal Emergency Communications Association (CECA) is comprised of 25 volunteers who deploy jump kits to keep contact between locations when landlines and cellphones are down
- Achievements for 2022 included the following:
 - Virtual EOC model for COVID-19 response
 - Virtual EOC tabletop training
 - Earthquake Emergency Preparedness
 - Flood sandbag control program
 - Heat emergency preparedness
 - Extreme heat Risk Mapping Grant

Committee and Staff discussion took place. Highlights included:

- The primary site for the Nanaimo Operations Centre is Fire Station #1 on the third floor
- A space was made available on the second floor of Fire Station #1 for CECA to have their radios set up and to have monthly meetings

Councillor Manly returned to the Shaw Auditorium at 2:20 p.m.

- The Nanaimo Fire Rescue is a paramilitary organization that is an all hazards first responder group that responds to over 26 emergencies per day such as the following:
 - Structure Fires
 - Motor Vehicle Accidents
 - Hazardous Materials Incidents
 - Wildfire Medical Emergencies
 - Technical rescues
 - Animal rescues
 - Bomb threats
 - Airplane crashes
- Firefighters must train for 1000 hours per year, maintain certifications and maintain training to be able to respond to any emergency
- The Fire Loss Prevention Branch is responsible for fire inspections, fire investigations, and public education
- The Pre-Planning Division manages all technology and ensures firefighters have the correct building information pre arrival
- Vancouver Island Emergency Response Academy (VIERA) is one of 70 pro board agencies around the world that certify firefighters to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards
- Fire Rescue accounts for 11.8% of the City budget
- The Fire department responded to over 8600 incidents in 2022 which is a 25% increase from the previous year
- The move to the new Fire Station #1 impacted the call response times as there was a temporary structure out front being used
- Special events, road construction, parking issues and other things can impact response times, but there is communication with the City to avoid affected areas
- Data from 2017-2019 regarding concurrent incidents showed an increase of 25%, which has been estimated to be higher in 2022
- The Nanaimo Fire Department is responding to more incidents than all of their peers except for one, have less firefighters than all of their peers, respond to more incidents per firefighters than all of their peers, and have less firefighters per thousand people in the community except for one peer

Councillor Brown vacated the Shaw Auditorium at 2:44 p.m.

Geoff Whiting, Deputy Fire Chief, Operations, continued the presentation. Highlights included:

- The Operations Division returned to normalcy in 2022 and phased out the COVID-19 protocols

- Training is advocate led with in-house experts, which was not present during the pandemic as most of the training had been modified
- A prescribed burn was completed in the Dumont Road area, which is a new step in working with BC wildfire
- 37 Staff have trained to the Emergency Medical Responder level
- Two new fire engines and a Wildland unit were purchased in 2022
- Purchasing decisions involved Staff as equipment is critical in life saving situations
- Staff have chosen to purchase battery powered equipment over gas
- FireSmart grants applied for through the Union of BC Municipalities were used on Protection Island and Long Lake heights to clean up organic matter with neighbourhood volunteers
- Public education programs were reinstated in 2022, including the installation and checking of smoke alarms and the bystander CPR presentation to all the grade 10 students in Nanaimo

The Finance and Audit Committee recessed at 3:00 p.m.

The Finance and Audit Committee reconvened at 3:15 p.m.

Councillor Brown returned to the Shaw Auditorium at 3:15 p.m.

Jodi Le Masurier, Deputy Fire Chief, Administration, continued the presentation. Highlights included:

- Fire station #1 project will be substantially completed by the Spring
- The Fire Department had to hire four new firefighters as well as one new dedicated manager for the VIERA training academy
- New software is being used for fire loss prevention, training and pre planning to enhance services and increase efficiency
- More than 5,000 bottles of water were distributed to vulnerable citizens in the extreme heat emergency in July after grant funding was secured
- A publicly accessible AED is being installed on Protection Island
- The Fire Academy increased its revenue by \$794,000, with VIERA servicing customers from 267 fire departments in 2022
- Comox Live Fire Training Facility collaborated with VIERA to help more firefighters have access to the NFPA 1001 Firefighter Certification
- The new course Hazardous Materials Technician Program has been delivered to the Capital Regional District Hazmat Team with success
- VIERA is part of two provincial working groups with the Ministry of Health Medical Assistance Licensing Board to update the licensing and practical exam
- VIERA developed a process to deliver live online training evaluations and is the first pro board academy approved to execute this type of evaluation which will reduce travel costs and environmental impacts
- VIERA has been nominated by the Pro Board for the Chief V. Kenneth Elmore Memorial Award

Committee and Staff discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Continuing to increase the number of subject matter expert instructors available to provide more opportunities for revenue generation

- The 2016 public health opioid crisis has created enormous pressure on Staff and resources, with conditions worsening every year
- Bill 9 was enacted in 2018 for a mental health disorder presumption for individuals exposed to traumatic events during their employment
- 16%-37% of firefighters experience Post Traumatic Stress and the Canadian Mental Health Association stated firefighters have a 30% greater rate of suicide than the general public
- Green Nanaimo and anti idling technology can be used with an electric firetruck, but its performance at other municipalities will need to be monitored before purchasing
- The Fire Bylaw 7108 and the mutual aide agreements will be updated in 2023
- The Fire service has a high ability to recruit, but the recruitment process is intensive over a 3–4-month period with additional time for equipment to arrive for the candidate
- The Cancer rate is higher in the firefighter population than the general public
- Decontamination processes have been upgraded for Staff with improvements and elevated precautions
- Two rescue units require 20 Staff to be available 24 hours a day
- Rescue units are a great tool, but they aren't able to complete all the work of a Fire Engine and aren't as effective

6. QUESTION PERIOD:

Council received no questions from the public regarding agenda items

7. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 3:52 p.m. that the meeting adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

C H A I R

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

CORPORATE OFFICER