

A Strategic Session is a standing Committee of Council for the purpose of reviewing specific municipal matters in an informal meeting setting.

Capital Equipment Replacement Reserves

Council met to discuss the allocation of reserve funds for the replacement of County equipment as required over the next several years. Council is committed to long-term fiscal planning, both for capital projects as well as for the replacement of equipment like graders, plows and fire trucks.

The County currently maintains a fleet of equipment that maintains road and utility infrastructure and services the public. The cost of this fleet is estimated at \$12,619,066 for general County equipment (like plows and graders) and \$3,789,774 for the County's Fire Services department. To date, the County's practice has been to review equipment annually and then budget for the replacement of equipment where necessary. In the interest of better long-term planning, Administration has proposed the County set aside a Capital Equipment Replacement Reserve and a Capital Fire Apparatus Replacement Reserve that will continuously fund equipment replacement as required over the long-term. In order to decide how much money to put away, Administration based the numbers on the estimated replacement cost less possible salvage value. For the program to work, it would be necessary to budget funds annually for the replacement reserves.

Administration recommended that Council budget an initial \$6,155,696 for the Capital Equipment Reserve and \$2,465,517 for the Capital Fire Apparatus Reserve to create reserves sufficient to service the current fleet, and that Council budget an annual reserve contribution for 2015 of an additional \$1,435,216 and \$233,950, respectively.

Council discussed the program and directed Administration to bring back the equipment reserve funding for ratification at a future Council meeting.

2015 Capital Project Reserve Allocations

At the April 14, 2015 Regular Council Meeting, Council authorized the transfer of \$26 million from County surplus towards the creation of a capital reserve fund.

Council met to discuss the allocation of this capital reserve towards future projects and objectives. After discussion, Council recommended that the reserve fund be allocated towards the following capital projects, and that the funding of these projects be brought forward for ratification at a future Council meeting:

- Four-year hamlet sidewalk replacement program: \$3,600,00
- Four-year hamlet resurfacing program: \$5,600,000
- Old Trail paving project: \$19,500,000
- Replacement of underground utilities, 104 Street from 101 Avenue to 101B Avenue: \$1,222,000
- Replacement of underground utilities, Lakeview Crescent: \$3,320,000
- Class 3 cell at Beaver Lake Landfill: \$605,000

2016 County Budget Guiding Principles

In the interest of facilitating efficiency, accuracy and timeliness in creating the 2016 budget, Council discussed the guiding principles they'd like Administration to follow while creating draft budgets for their review in early November. This will give County management the direction required to prepare operational and capital budgets reflective of Council's priorities.

Some of the guiding principles for the 2016 budget include:

- Current service and staffing levels are to be maintained.
- Additional programs and positions will require a full business case for Council's review.

Councillors will also be providing Administration with a list of priority capital projects for their ward. Council will discuss what projects will be greenlit for 2016 during budget deliberations in the fall.

Council also directed Administration to prepare a calendar of dates for budget deliberations, to start in November, and committed to the goal of completing the 2016 budget by the end of December, 2015.