



**VILLAGE OF SAYWARD
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES
March 11, 2025
COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

The Village of Sayward respectfully acknowledges that the land we gather on is on the unceded territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, the traditional keepers of this land.

Present: Mayor Mark Baker (via Teams)
Councillor Scott Burchett
Councillor Debbie Coates
Councillor Jason Johnson (meeting chair)
Councillor Sue Poulsen

In Attendance: John Thomas, Acting CAO/Corporate Officer
Lisa Clark, Chief Financial Officer
Jennifer Redshaw, Office Administrator

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm.

2. Public Input

- a) Sophia Spence of 1730 Smit Rd explained that she is an employee of the Kelsey Centre and explained that the reason pool expenses were overbudget was not only because of the increased cost of chemicals, but also that the pool temperature was not able to be turned down during the summer months due to the CAO being off work. Ms. Spence suggested public works employees obtain dangerous goods certification to transport pool chemicals from Campbell River since freight charges are approx. \$500.00/order. She also explained that since the pool has been closed there has been a significant reduction in various program attendance and revenues. Ms. Spence is looking for more information about the status of the pool and thought Council would benefit from hearing from the perspective of a Kelsey Centre employee.

Cllr Johnson said he appreciated the comments.

- b) Jan Bakker of 200 Kelsey Way observed that the revised budget appears to just be increased 4-5% from last year. Mr. Bakker suggested starting with a \$0.00 based budget, reviewing all suppliers, determining if each expenditure is required.

Cllr Johnson reminded the gallery to be respectful of staff and that the budget process is complicated.

CAO Thomas explained that the CFO, CAO, Department heads, and Mayor & Council have spent dozens of hours during the last four months on creating the three versions of the budget presented so far. Numbers were not increased by 4% across the board.

- c) Cassie Schmidt of 437 Community Rd explained that she is also a Kelsey Centre employee and has two young children who use the pool. Ms. Schmidt watched the SRD Kelsey Centre Committee meeting and believes that it may take a long time, even years, to be able to provide the SRD with the documents they require before they will vote on contributing financially to the Kelsey Centre. Ms. Schmidt inquired how much funding is required to keep the Kelsey Centre operational annually because she is interested in soliciting donations door to door or a GoFundMe platform.

Cllr Johnson responded that they are in the process of gathering data.

CAO Thomas responded that it will not take years to get the Kelsey Centre Committee the information they require. Some information is already publicly available. Some assessment reports do need to go before Council first. There is some information needed that will require some services to be procured to get the information. CAO Thomas advised that the Kelsey Centre deficit is expected to be \$251,344 in 2025.

3. Introduction of Late Items

- a) Cllr Johnson requested a Sayward Futures request for a Letter of Support for maintaining their Tourist Information Centre designation through Destination BC be added to the agenda as 12.a).

MOTION C25/18

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the Sayward Futures Society request for a Letter of Support for maintaining their Information Centre designation be added to the agenda as 12.a)

Opposed Cllr Burchett, Cllr Poulsen

CARRIED

4. Approval of Agenda

MOTION C25/19

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the agenda for the Committee of the Whole Meeting of Council for Tuesday March 11, 2025, be approved as amended.

CARRIED

5. Petitions and Delegation - None

6. Correspondence - None

7. Council Reports - None

8. Reports of Committees - None

9. Mayor's Report- None

10. Unfinished Business - None

11. Staff Reports

a.) Village of Sayward Audit Planning Report

MOTION C25/20
MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT Council receives this report for information.

CARRIED

b.) Financial Plan 2025-2029

MOTION C25/21
MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT Council hold a Special Meeting of Council in March to discuss the priorities and the Kelsey Centre.

CARRIED

MOTION C25/22
MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the Kelsey Centre pool re-open as soon as repairs to the boilers are complete.

Opposed Mayor Baker, Cllr Coates, Cllr Johnson

DEFEATED

MOTION C25/23
MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the Special Meeting of Council to discuss priorities and the Kelsey Centre be held on Wednesday March 19, 2025, at 7:00pm.

CARRIED

MOTION C25/24
MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT \$3,000 be added to the Administration budget for First Nations Relations Expenses.

Opposed Cllr Burchett, Cllr Coates, Cllr Poulsen

DEFEATED

MOTION C25/25
MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the Contingency budget line item be increased from \$5,000 to \$20,000.

Opposed Cllr Burchett, Cllr Coates, Cllr Poulsen

DEFEATED

MOTION C25/26
MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT staff invite the non-profit society that oversees the Sayward Health Clinic to do a presentation to Council regarding their budget and funding.

CARRIED

MOTION C25/27
MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the Parks budget for Diesel & Oil- Kubota Mower be increased from \$1,100 to \$2,500.

Opposed Mayor Baker

CARRIED

MOTION C25/28

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT a new gazebo ramp be funded from the Growing Communities Fund.

Opposed Mayor Baker, Cllr Johnson CARRIED

MOTION C25/29

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the Property Tax Rate for Class 1 – Residential increase by 6.61% for 2025.

Opposed Cllr Burchett, Cllr Poulsen CARRIED

MOTION C25/30

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT Council approves the Capital Budget as written.

Opposed Cllr Burchett CARRIED

12. New Business

- a) Sayward Futures Society requests a Letter of Support for maintaining their Tourist Information Centre designation through Destination BC.

Cllr Johnson recused himself from the meeting at 9:35pm, passing meeting chair duties to Cllr Poulsen.

MOTION C25/31

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT Council provides Sayward Futures Society with a letter indicating that the Village of Sayward recognizes Sayward Futures Society as the organization providing visitors services in our community.

Opposed Cllr Burchett, Cllr Poulsen DEFEATED

MOTION C25/32

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the topic of a Letter of Support for Sayward Futures Society to maintain their Tourist Information Centre designation through Destination BC be included on the agenda of the next meeting of Council.

Opposed Cllr Burchett CARRIED

Cllr Johnson returned to the meeting at 9:49pm, resuming his role as meeting chair.

13. Public Question Period

- a) Milena Gradisar of 261 Ambleside Drive inquired if the Special Council Meeting held next Wednesday will be open to the public. She also inquired how many houses in the village have an income under \$40,000. Ms. Gradisar also suggested turning off every second streetlight in the village to reduce light pollution and save half of the cost of street lighting.

Mayor Baker said there would be an in-camera portion of the next meeting due to labour.

CAO Thomas agreed that staffing is discussed in-camera, and service levels are discussed in public.

Cllr Coates advised that 55 houses have income under \$40,000 and that information can also be found in the Strathcona Regional District's Financial Plan.

- b) Maureen Haslehurst of 520 MacMillan Drive stated she believes an exorbitant amount of money has been spent on legal fees, and now her taxes are going up, she will have limited access to the Kelsey Centre, and Council wants to turn off the lights. Ms. Haslehurst inquired how much of the legal expenses were for the betterment of the village and how much was spent on personnel matters, and in the spirit of accountability, who should she vote for based on how tax dollars were spent. Ms. Haslehurst also inquired about the \$44,000 Housing Needs Report for which a public meeting with the engineers was supposed to be held in January.

CAO Thomas responded that there can be no compromise of solicitor/client privilege under any circumstances. He said voting is a personal decision so we cannot advise. CAO Thomas also explained that the initial Housing Needs Report was due December 31, 2024, the full report is due this year and that a public engagement session will happen this year.

- c) Jan Bakker of 200 Kelsey Way stated he understands that the infrastructure is decrepit, and the water system requires a lot of money, however the Kelsey Centre is the heart of the Village and with it open you will get more residents moving in, more children and a larger tax base.
- d) Maureen Haslehurst of 520 MacMillan Drive stated that she attended a Sayward Futures Annual General Meeting in the fall which showed an exponential increase of visitors to the wharf due to their affiliation with Destination BC.

14. In Camera – None

15. Adjournment

MOTION C25/33

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the Committee of the Whole Meeting of Council on Tuesday March 11, 2025 be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 9:57pm.

Original Signed

Mayor

Original Signed

Corporate Officer